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## Obituary for Miklós Puky, PhD (1961–2015)

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*Figure 1: Miklós Puky  
(Photo: zVg: IENE)*

Miklós Puky was born in Budapest, on 10 March 1961. Even as a child he showed a particular interest in, and was attracted to the beauty and wonders of nature. He soon learnt to love the world of amphibians and reptiles, and he wanted to become a veterinary assistant or surgeon, or an animal tamer. In secondary school, he specialized in Biology, and took his final exams with excellent results. In 1986, he graduated as a biologist and professional translator in English from the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest. As of September that year, he started work as a researcher at the Hungarian Danube Research Station of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (today, Danube Research Institute of the HAS Centre for Ecological Research). He remained in this post till the day of his death. As a young researcher, for six years he had the opportunity to attend postgraduate courses

mostly in conservation biology in the United States of America, England, Belgium, Cyprus and Scotland. In 1992, he defended his doctoral thesis, titled “Heavy metal accumulation in *Anura* populations”. He got his PhD in 2005, with his work “Conservation of amphibians in Hungary”.

His work as a scholar involved mostly conservational topics. He was concerned with the fragmentation, colonization and invasion issues of endangered amphibians, reptiles and also Decapods. Recently, he had broadened his aspects of study so as to include the possible effects of climate change. The conservation of the above mentioned species groups and their habitats formed a great part of his activity.

Apart from his work in Hungary, he took part in the conservation programmes of several countries from England to Nepal and the United States. He held lectures, titled “Conservation Ecology”, at the Eötvös Loránd University for fourteen years, awakening the interest of many students. He also regularly gave lectures at international conferences and universities of other countries, such as – apart from the ones mentioned above – Mexico, China, South Africa and New Zealand.

His special vocation led him to environmental education, the recognition and protection of the treasures of nature, mainly those of the Hungarian wetlands, lakes and running

waters. Within his special area of expertise, he made valuable contributions to the regional research programmes of the Danube Research Institute, which were conducted regularly on the 417 km long Hungarian section of the Danube. The Toad Action Group Association, of which he was founder and leader, served as the framework for most of his indefatigable practical activity in nature and environment conservation and in raising environmental awareness. This organization, beside the distribution of valuable, high standard postcards, calendars and conservational publications, also pursued dedicated educational work, available to a wide spectrum of children, from the age of primary school students upwards.

He authored and co-authored over 110 scientific and educational publications (including books and book chapters), published in Hungary and also in other countries, followed by considerable professional interest and appreciation.

He was a member of the Hungarian Hydrological Society and the Hungarian Biological Society, of which he also served as a functionary. He also held memberships in the Infra Eco Network Europe, the ASG, and he was chairman of the

Hungarian team of the IUCN Species Survival Commission, Declining Amphibian Populations Task Force.

He had been a member of the IAD for 29 years, during which time he attended nearly all of its conferences. His intelligence, his love for his profession and his colourful personality made him a well-known, esteemed member of the great family of Danube researchers.

His activities were honoured in Hungary with the much-valued "Pro Natura" and "For Our Environment" medals and the "sen. Entz Géza" award, and he also won the Ford European Conservation Award.

In the early spring of 2015, he was returning from a tour of South-East Asia, where he acted as advisor, and as ever, he was full of experiences and plans for the future, but he shortly suffered a heart attack. Despite the devoted attempts at treatment, on 20 March he left his beloved mother, his dear colleagues and co-workers, and the entire earthly field of his comprehensive scientific activity.

He was buried in Budapest, on 9 April 2015. We hold him in loving memory.

## Obituary for Rüdiger Schmid (1942–2015)

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*Figure 1: Rüdiger Schmid, 2003  
(Photo: Government of Upper Palatinate, Regensburg)*

On August 2, 2015 our highly respected and popular colleague Rüdiger Schmid died at the age of 73. Rüdiger has rendered outstanding services to IAD over many years with a great foresight to improve the water quality of the Danube across borders long before the EU Water Framework Directive came into force. He has played a significant role in the international Danube expedition of IAD in 1988, a forerunner of the actual Joint Danube Surveys performed every 6 years by ICPDR, to assess the quality of the Danube from Vienna to the Black Sea and to present the results in an extensive publication. In 1998 he was designated as leader of the IAD expert group Saprobiology, a task which he fulfilled until his retirement in 2004. Due to his expert knowledge and his restless commitment the water quality map of the whole Danube could be published at the turn of the millennium. This map was completed three years later by adding the major tributaries. The required relevant information was collected during a memorable workshop in Regensburg attended by competent

experts of the eastern Danube countries due to a generous sponsorship. The highlight of his professional activities was the organization of the first German "Danube Day" in Regensburg, where people participated in a great summer.

Rüdiger Schmid was born in Bayreuth on 27 March 1942. After a teacher-training in chemistry, biology and geography in Munich he began his service in the Bavarian Water Authority in 1971. As a technical officer of Upper Franconia's government he established the chemical-biological monitoring of Bavaria's first drinking water reservoir in Mauthaus and edited a regional water quality map of running waters which was a pioneer work at that time.

In 1976 he was entrusted with the leadership of the Middle Franconia's water quality supervision, before joining the government of Upper Palatinate in 1980, where he published the first water quality map of this administrative district. In 1993 Rüdiger Schmid was elected as administrator of the water management office in Regensburg that he headed until his retirement. He was the first natural scientist in Bavaria holding this position. Because of his scientific background he was able to focus not only on water quality issues, but also on hydromorphology and restoration of streams.

Until his death he indulged his passion for the recreational angling which was reflected in memberships of some fishery associations. Moreover, his retirement was characterized by numerous travel activities together with his wife not only in Europe but also in the most remote parts of the world.

All those who have known Rüdiger will treasure his memory.