

Doc. RNDr. Zdeněk Hubálek sexagenarian

JIRÍ KUNERT and MIROSLAV NĚMEC

Dr. Zdeněk Hubálek was born on 22th August 1942 in Brno, Moravia. Since 1959 he attended J. E. Purkinje University (now again Masaryk University) in Brno where he studied biology and chemistry, and graduated in 1964. While still an undergraduate he took great interest in microbiology and participated in research.

He started his professional career at the Fodder Research Institute at Pohořelice near Brno but since 1966, he has continuously worked at the institutes of the Academy of Sciences, namely the Institute of Parasitology, Institute of Vertebrate Research, Institute of Systematic and Ecological Biology, Institute of Landscape Ecology and Institute of Vertebrate Biology. Presently, Dr. Hubálek is senior scientist and deputy director of the Institute of Vertebrate Biology. Since 1999, he is also head of the Institute of Microbiology at the Faculty of Sciences, Masaryk University in Brno.

In 1966, he became a member of the Mycoparasitology Group at the CSAS Institute of Parasitology in Pardubice, together with MUDr. J. Dvořák DSc. and RNDr. M. Otčenášek DSc. In this period, he participated in mycological examinations of human patients and domestic animals. He continued to study microfungi when he later moved to the Laboratory for Natural Focality of Diseases of the Institute of Parasitology at Valtice.

During his PhD work (1969-1971) he began to investigate the ecology of microfungi associated with free-living birds, especially keratinolytic fungi. He also mycologically examined hundreds of small mammals trapped during five expeditions of the Institute of Parasitology in Czechoslovakia and abroad. The results of this research were submitted as the PhD thesis "Dispersal of microfungi by free-living birds" and published in two monographs and 22 papers.

Dr. Hubálek's work on keratinolytic fungi led to the description of a new dermatophyte species - *Microsporium ripariae*, isolated from sand martins (*Riparia riparia*). He also studied the ecology of cellulolytic fungi of the genus *Chaetomium* associated with wild birds and mammals and detected the presence of an opportunistic pathogenic fungus - the basidiomycetous yeast *Cryptococcus neoformans* in pigeon droppings for the first time in Moravia.



Zdeněk Hubálek

The studies by Dr. Hubálek on the ecology of microfungi in soil, wild birds and small mammals were highly appreciated by the scientific community. His critical evaluation of coefficients of association and similarity in fungal and general ecology was published in Biological Reviews (United Kingdom). According to the Science Citation Index, this paper has been cited 55 times.

In cooperation with the Institute of Chemistry of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Bratislava (Dr. A. Kocková-Kratochvílová DSc.) he developed an efficient technique for long-term cryopreservation of yeasts. His broad experience in methods of preservation of various strains of microorganisms was summarised in the book "Cryopreservation of microorganisms at ultra-low temperatures" that appeared in 1996.

Dr. Hubálek devoted much effort to the biology of *Emmonsia crescens* and the disease adiaspiromycosis, caused by this opportunistic soil fungus mainly in rodents but occasionally also in humans. The presence of *E. crescens* in small animals was studied in many areas of Czechia and Austria and ecological variables determining its distribution have been revealed.

Dr. Hubálek's scientific interests were very broad and not limited to mycology. At present his interests focus on the ecology of arthropod-borne pathogenic bacteria and viruses, medical zoology, and cryobiology. However, he is still investigating the ecology of the dimorphic pathogenic fungus *Emmonsia crescens*.

As a renowned scientist he published over 220 scientific papers, one book and contributed to eight international monographs. A list of congresses and conferences held abroad in which he took an active part would be very long. In this way he stayed in seven European microbiological laboratories and participated in several field expeditions to study natural foci of diseases in Austria, Bulgaria and the former Yugoslavia.

Dr. Hubálek has been a member of the Czech Scientific Society for Mycology since 1967 and participated in the activities of several other Czech scientific societies. He is also a regular member of the International Society for Human and Animal Mycology. The results of his scientific research were appreciated many times. He received the Purkinje medal for achievements in biological sciences (1988) and three awards of the Czechoslovak Academy of Sciences for collections of papers (the first two collections being mycological).

At present, he is a member of the Scientific Council of the Academy of Sciences of the Czech Republic, Scientific Council of the Faculty of Sciences of Masaryk University, and commissions for postgraduate studies at three universities.

Our contribution, focusing on Dr. Hubálek's mycological activities does not mention further fields of his scientific interest, his like and hobbies. It is our sincere wish that he will, in the many years ahead, retain his subtle sense of humor and above all, his appetite for life and desire to do creative work.

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Errata

Czech Mycology 53(4), 2002, article by J. Gönczöl and L. Marvanová:
p. 311, bottom line: 50 μ m (instead of 50 mm: printing error)
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