

=== IN MEMORIAM ===

Dan Munteanu, PhD,
Corresponding member of the Romanian Academy
(2 June 1937 - 25 February 2017)



Some people don't show their age. They are constantly in motion, dynamic, take initiatives, have never-ending ideas, are cheerful but firm, wise but flexible, optimistic, sometimes caustic and dedicated warriors for noble causes connected to their areas of activity. This is how Dr. Dan Munteanu was, a dreamer, a great connoisseur and a lover of nature.

He was born on June 2nd, 1937, in a family of intellectuals with ancient Transylvanian roots. Father, Didi Munteanu, paediatrician, associate professor at the Medical University and director of the Cluj orphanage. The mother, Maria Cupcea, was an emeritus artist of the National Theater in Cluj, the descendant of an erudite family of teachers and priests from Maramureș.

Young Dan attended the General School “I. Bob”, then “Emil Racoviță” High School in Cluj. Although the parents wanted him to study medicine, the passion for nature and especially for birds led him to study biology at the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Department of Biology and Zoology at the “Victor Babeș” University of Cluj. Since childhood, he captured birds with glue from oak mistletoe, kept them in captivity in winter and studied their song and their changes according to the food they fed on. All these experiments were the roots of his further research.

During his student years, the ornithological adventures with Mircea Mătieș and Alexandru Filipașcu succeeded uninterruptedly. The “Flobert” pistol and sling were handled skilfully, but in secret. All experiences from his school years and student hood are later reflected in his competence and inventivity as a mature researcher.

After his faculty graduation, he held a position as a trainee researcher at the “Stejarul” Research Center in Pângărați, Neamț County. In 1965 he enrolled in a PhD program at the University of Bucharest addressing a theme referring to the mountain basin of the Moldavian Bistrița, under the supervision of Professor Alexandru V. Grossu. After graduating and obtaining his PhD degree in biology - ornithology, at the University of Bucharest (1969), he became the director of the “Stejarul” Research Station, from where, in 1973, he moved to the Biological Research Institute in Cluj. Over the years he was promoted to Senior Scientific Researcher in the Biological Research Center in Cluj-Napoca. Since January 29th, 1999, he has been a correspondent member of the Romanian Academy. In 2004 he changed positions from the Institute of Biological Research in Cluj to the Romanian Academy, where he has been chairman of the Commission for the Protection of Natural Monuments since 2000. Because of his loyalty to Cluj, Dr. Dan Munteanu keeps his office at the Institute for Biological Research on 48 Republicii Str., but he was also present in Bucharest whenever it was required to solve the many nature-related problems in Romania. He also obtains the right to supervise doctorates, but he prefers to run this noble activity at the Babeș-Bolyai University in Cluj-Napoca.

Dan Munteanu spent a lifetime studying the birds in Romania. The studies were of a faunistic, distributional, systematic, ecological and biological nature, but also about human-bird interrelations, with emphasis on protection and conservation measures. Alone or together with the most well-known ornithologists in the country, Dan Munteanu initiates and coordinates the most important avifaunistic research projects in Romania (Werner Klemm, Kohl Stefan, Valeriu Pușcariu, Korodi Gál, Dimitrie Radu, Mircea Mătieș, Ion Cătuneanu, Matei Tâlpeanu, Sergiu Pașcovschi, Aurel Papadopol, Alexandru Filipașcu, Kalabér László, Peter Weber, Victor Ciochia, Dan Stănescu, Eugen Petrescu, Beres Josif, Cătălin Rang, Iordache Ion, Nicolae Valenciuc, Maria Paspaleva, Peter-Klaus Zsivanovits, Kiss János Botond, Kelemen Attila, Szabo Josef, Kiss Andrei etc.). We are grateful to them for the high level reached by ornithology and ornithological volunteering in Romania today.

There is no established Romanian ornithologist, who wasn't at least once with Dan Munteanu somewhere in the field.

Dan Munteanu participated in all important ornithological events in Romania since 1960. He, together with a handful of ornithologists, founded in the spring of 1990 the Romanian Ornithological Society (S.O.R.) and wrote its first publications, being considered the "father" and **the elected president-founder** of this NGO, that is so appreciated today. **Therefore, the president-founder of S.O.R. was implied in the elaboration of several European projects on the bird knowledge and protection in South-Eastern Europe.** Later on, many important works followed, opening new roads in the knowledge of the bird fauna from Romania, e.g. the provisional atlas of the nesting birds in Romania etc. (see bibliography).

In order to boost the knowledge of bird fauna in Romania, obtaining the right to translate the well-known "Illustrated bird guide of Europe", adapted to the birds in Romania, was probably a crossroads-point. Dan Munteanu was also behind the initiative and adaptations for Romania of this guide.

But Dan Munteanu was also, together with Acad. Nicolae Botnariuc, Acad. Nicolae Boşcaiu, Prof. Valeriu Puşcariu and others, a permanent militant for the protection and conservation of nature in Romania. Before, but especially after having served as chairman of the Commission for Natural Monuments Protection within the Romanian Academy, Dan Munteanu visited and researched almost all the protected areas in Romania. He supported the initiatives to create many new protected areas. Under his signature, the number and surface of protected areas in Romania has increased significantly.

During the years, he has participated at numerous and prestigious international conferences, where he started collaborations and lasting friendships with the world's most well-known ornithologists. Many of them later visited the country, and were impressed by the nature and ornithological fauna of Romania.

He has trained a number of young ornithologists, students and PhD students. He responded to any request with excitement and a word of advice, with patience and goodwill. Through his knowledge, publishing activity, his presence at scientific events and field trips, Dr. Dan Munteanu made the transition from the classical 1960's to the modern-day ornithology.

Over the years his work has been appreciated and admired. He obtained more than 20 diplomas and medals, including "Academic Merit" in 2013, "Senior Citizen" in Cluj-Napoca, 2009, the "Emil Racovita" Award of the Romanian Academy in 1978.

He published more than 100 scientific articles in Romania and abroad, 10 books as main author, he wrote 13 book chapters, of which 8 abroad, wrote over 140 popular-science articles. He was editor of major scientific journals in Romania and a member of other editorial committees. I would like to mention here also the numerous ornithological and other contributions he wrote in the Romanian journal "The Hunter and the Fisherman".

IN MEMORIAM: DAN MUNTEANU, PHD,
CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE ROMANIAN ACADEMY

Dan Munteanu was married to Monica Coprean, a medical doctor, who gave up her medical career to follow her husband to Pângărați, where she dedicated herself to the biology and pathology of fish. After settling in Cluj-Napoca, Dr. Monica Munteanu led the fish pathology laboratory, with emphasis on salmonids at the Forest Research Centre and Forestry Institute. They had two children, Claudia and Victor. Claudia followed his father's example, studied biology and became a biology teacher in Cluj-Napoca, and Victor is an economist at an important Cluj company.

Personally, I met Dan Munteanu during my study years, but only got to know him better after 1985, when we became colleagues at the Institute of Biological Research in Cluj. His friendly, communicative nature combined with a fine sense of ironic humour, and especially the joint research projects, made us close friends. Perhaps the most interesting common activities were the nocturnal ones, Dan recording tapes of the songs of night birds, trying to find out their composition and abundance, and myself, with baits and various types of lights, to study moth communities. That's how I spent memorable nights in Tișitei Gorge, the Retezat, the Cozia, the Călimani, the Cozia, the Ceahlău, the Rarău Mountains etc. But perhaps the most beautiful trip, and the last one for us, was the one in the Rodna Mountains National Park, in 2014, when we were accompanied by three other members of the Park's Scientific Board. We climbed into the alpine zone to see the Black grouse. We slept under the open sky, at 1900m altitude, next to an uninhabited sheepfold. At the melody of the fire, the cracking of the coals and the symphony of the sky, we shared memories and Dan was the one who told us about things only he knew. In the morning, at sunrise we were on the top of the mountain and we were able to see four Black grouses. For me they were the firsts, for Dan they were the lasts.

He manifested obvious signs of disease since 2013. Like many of us, he made the mistake of ignoring them, continuing to work with dedication and self-sacrifice. He managed to finish and publish the comprehensive book vol. XV, fasc. 2 from *Aves*, in Romanian.

But the disease is unforgiving, not slowing down, not withdrawing, giving him no respite. He worked hard and especially never regretted that he chose biology, nature, birds, and not medicine.

On February the 25th, 2017, at dawn, the academician Dan Munteanu's soul rose to the heavens carried by a flock of mournful birds.

We thank you Dan, for everything you did and what you left behind!
Rest in peace!

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