



Miscellaneous

Professor Dimitar Bechev, DSc., at the Age of Seventy

Ivelin A. Mollov*

University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski”, Faculty of Biology, Department of Ecology and Environmental Conservation, 24 Tzar Asen Str., Plovdiv 4000, Bulgaria

*E-mail: mollov_i@uni-plovdiv.bg

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-9022-896X>

Abstract. Updated overview of the scientific, academic, and editorial achievements of Prof. D.Sc. Dimitar N. Bechev during the period 2016–2026, complementing the biographical review published on the occasion of his 60th anniversary. Summary of his continued contributions to zoology and entomology, with particular emphasis on the taxonomy and faunistics of Diptera, especially fungus gnats (Sciaroidea and related groups), including the description of taxa new to science and studies on the biodiversity of Bulgaria and the Balkan Peninsula.

Keywords: academic biography, Bulgaria, Dimitar N. Bechev, entomologist, zoologist, University of Plovdiv



Prof. D.Sc. Dimitar Nikolaev Bechev was born on 21 April 1956 in the town of Vratsa, Bulgaria. He graduated in Biology from the University of Plovdiv and subsequently worked as a secondary school biology teacher, a doctoral researcher in entomology, and a head of biological units. Since 1989, he has been a faculty member at the University of Plovdiv. In 2008, he was awarded the degree Doctor of Biological Sciences (Entomology), and in 2011 he was appointed Professor of Zoology. His principal research interests encompass entomology, insect systematics, morphology and faunistics, as well as zoogeography.

In 2016, on the occasion of his 60th anniversary, a special biographical review dedicated to the life, career, and scientific achievements of Prof. Bechev (Fig. 1) was published in the Bulletin of the Natural History Museum - Plovdiv (Mollov & Georgiev, 2016). Therefore, the present summary aims to supplement the information provided therein, with particular emphasis on his activities and accomplishments during the last decade.

Available information for the period 2016–2026 indicates that Prof. D.Sc. Dimitar Bechev continued his active research and teaching career as Professor of Zoology in the Department of Zoology, Faculty of Biology at the University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski”

Professor Dimitar Bechev, DSc., at the Age of Seventy

until his retirement in 2021. During this period, Prof. Bechev remained actively engaged in teaching the courses Invertebrate Zoology, Biogeography, and Entomology to students enrolled in bachelor's and master's degree programmes of the Faculty of Biology. He supervised numerous students and PhD candidates, participated in academic committees and evaluation panels for the awarding of scientific degrees and academic positions, published a substantial number of scientific papers devoted to insect taxonomy and faunistics, and maintained a high level of scientific productivity.



Fig. 1. Prof. Dimitar Bechev, DSc during an expedition in Nepal in 2006.

Prof. Bechev is recognized as one of Bulgaria's leading specialists in Diptera, particularly in fungus gnats (Diptera: Sciaroidea and related groups). His scientific work has focused on the description of taxa new to science, the documentation of insect species newly recorded from Bulgaria, investigations of the fauna of the Balkan Peninsula, and contributions to the understanding of biodiversity and zoogeography in Bulgaria. Among the insect species that he described or co-described during the last several years are: *Stenophragma borneense* (Bechev & Kazandzhieva, 2020) – Fig.2; *Chetoneura lagangensis* (Kazandzhieva & Bechev, 2022); *Dziedzickia longistyla* (Bechev & Kazandzhieva, 2024) – Fig. 3; *Ectrepesthoneura arturi* (Bechev, 2025) – Fig. 4; *Chalastonepsia vumanhi* (Kazandzhieva *et al.*, 2025) – Fig. 5.

Prof. Dimitar Bechev has made substantial contributions to the study of animal groups beyond his primary specialization in Diptera. He has contributed significantly to the knowledge of Odonata. Through a series of faunistic studies, he documented the distribution and occurrence of dragonfly species in several Bulgarian regions, including the Vrachanska Planina Mountains, Sarnena Sredna Gora Mountains, and the city of Plovdiv and its surroundings.

Another important area of his research concerns freshwater crustaceans. Prof. Bechev investigated the distribution of freshwater decapods in Bulgaria, producing one of the most comprehensive regional syntheses on the group.



Fig. 2. *Stenophragma borneense* (Bechev & Kazandzhieva, 2020).



Fig. 3. *Dziedzickia longistyla* (Bechev & Kazandzhieva, 2024) - habitus, dorsal view.

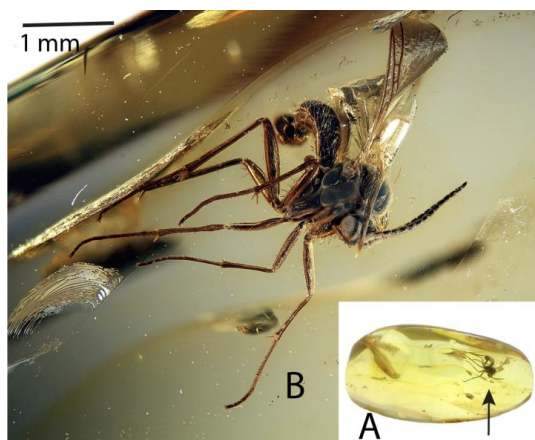


Fig. 4. *Ectrepesthoneura arturi* (Bechev, 2025).
A - piece of amber with the position of the insect; B – total view of holotype.



Fig. 5. *Chalastonepsia vumanhi* (Kazandzhieva et al., 2025).

He has also contributed to the study of Coleoptera through studies of leaf beetles (Chrysomelidae) in the Vrachanska Planina Mountains.

Beyond individual taxonomic groups, Prof. Bechev has played a leading role in large-scale biodiversity inventories and regional faunal assessments. As editor and co-author of several volumes dedicated to the fauna of Vrachanski Balkan Nature Park and Sarnena Sredna Gora Mountains, he helped coordinate and synthesize information on hundreds of animal species. These works represent important reference sources for biodiversity research, conservation planning, and protected area management in Bulgaria.

Prof. Bechev is the founder and was Editor-in-Chief (2009–2014) of the specialized zoological journal for short communications, *ZooNotes*. Furthermore, on his initiative and with the active participation of Assoc. Prof. Ivelin Mollov, Ph.D., Chief Assist. Prof. Ognyan Todorov, Ph.D., and Prof. Dilian Georgiev, DSc, the scientific journal *Bulletin of the Natural History Museum – Plovdiv* was established in 2016 as the official scientific publication of the Regional Natural History Museum of Plovdiv.

Prof. Bechev has considerable experience in the editing and publication of specialized faunistic volumes. Among the most notable are “Faunistic Diversity of Vrachanski Balkan Nature Park” (2016), “Faunistic Diversity of Vrachanski Balkan Nature Park. Part 2” (2019), “Fauna of Sarnena Sredna Gora Mountains. Part 1” (2020), and “Fauna of Sarnena Sredna Gora Mountains. Part 2” (2021), all published as special issues of *ZooNotes*.

Among his widely used textbooks and university teaching materials are “Morphology and Systematics of Insects” (2010), “Basic Principles of Biological Systematics” (2019), and “Identification Guide to Insects” (2020), as well as numerous other educational materials in zoology and biogeography intended for students of biological sciences. A substantial proportion of his teaching materials have been reissued or made available in electronic format. Indeed, Prof. Bechev was among the first lecturers at the Faculty of Biology of University of Plovdiv “Paisii Hilendarski” to actively promote and implement the publication and use of electronic textbooks and teaching aids. This practice has become increasingly widespread in recent years and has subsequently been adopted by many other members of the academic staff.

In 2018, Prof. Bechev was elected an Honorary Member of the student club “ESETRA” at the Department of Ecology and Environmental Conservation, Faculty of Biology, Paisii Hilendarski University of Plovdiv.

Throughout the last decade, Prof. Dimitar N. Bechev, DSc has remained one of the most prominent figures in Bulgarian zoology and entomology. His contributions are particularly significant in three major areas: taxonomic and faunistic studies of Diptera; the university education and training of several generations of biologists and ecologists; and the development of the Bulgarian school of entomology through academic supervision and active participation in scientific evaluation and promotion procedures.

As his students and colleagues, we wish him continued energy and perseverance in all his future endeavors. We also express our sincere gratitude for his constant willingness to help, his collegial support, and his enduring friendship throughout the years.

References

- Bechev, D. 2025. *Ectrepesthoneura arturi* sp. n. from Baltic amber (Diptera: Mycetophilidae). *Historia naturalis bulgarica*, 46(6): 131-136.
<https://doi.org/10.48027/hnb.47.061>
- Bechev, D., Kazandzhieva, S. c2024. cNotes on csome cspecies of Allactoneura De Meijere

- (Diptera: Mycetophilidae: Leiinae). *Historia naturalis bulgarica*, 46(11), 311-317. <https://doi.org/10.48027/hnb.46.114>
- Bechev, D., Kazandzhieva, S. 2020. A new species of *Stenophragma* Skuse from Borneo (Diptera: Mycetophilidae: Sciophilinae). *Zootaxa*, 4819(1): 195-200. doi: 10.11646/zootaxa.4819.1.12.
- Kazandzhieva, S., Bechev, D. 2022. A new species of *Chetoneura* Colless from Borneo (Diptera: Keroplatidae). *Zootaxa*, 5104(4): 593-599. doi: 10.11646/zootaxa.5104.4.9.
- Kazandzhieva, S., Langourov, M., Bechev, D., Nguyen, H.V. 2025. A new species of *Chalastonepsia* Söli, 1996 (Diptera, Mycetophilidae) from Vietnam. *Biodiversity Data Journal*, 13: 1-10. doi: 10.3897/BDJ.13.e153645
- Mollov, I.A., Georgiev, D.G. 2016. Professor Dimitar Bechev at Sixty Years of Age. *Bulletin of the Natural History Museum - Plovdiv*, 1: 39-40. (In Bulgarian).

Received: 12.06.2026

Accepted: 04.08.2026

Published: 07.08.2026