

Watch your Danube



Core Team Profiles

Lachezar Pehlivanov

Mr. Lachezar Pehlivanov (56 yrs) is a hydrobiologist at the Institute of Biodiversity and Ecosystem Research Bulgarian Academy of Sciences



What did you study, when, where and most importantly: why?

I studied ichthyology and fisheries in the Kaliningrad Institute of fisheries and fish industry (Russia) in 1970^{ies}. After that my PhD studies in Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow was focused on the feeding of fishes, foraging behaviour and trophic interrelations in fish communities. I have always enjoyed being outdoor in the water, I like fishing and I'm always interested what and why happens within the aquatic ecosystems. During my studies I knew the close relationship between the species richness of fish communities, the aquatic ecosystems' health, the sustainable use of natural resources and the human well being.

What will your role be on board of the JDS3 ships?

Formally in the fish core team I am an expert on the ichthyofauna of the Lower Danube but actually I will participate in fish sampling and processing all along the JRS 3. For this we will use electro-fishing along the river side and deep-water trawling to cover the main fish habitats in the river. We need to obtain data about qualitative and quantitative parameters of fish community and also to collect material for different analyses, e.g. content of heavy metals and other substances in fish tissues.

Why is this important? What can we learn?

By determining the species diversity and abundance of fish we get an indication about the ecological quality of the Danube river according to the EU Water Framework Directive, which asks not only for chemical quality but first at all for biological quality elements. But we can also learn more about the current situation with fish resources, about the trends in development of the river ecosystem and about the ecosystem services that the river provides. The content of heavy metals and other substances in fish tissues is important for assessment of water pollution and to prevent potential risk for the human health.

What is an important gain from JDS3 specifically for your country of origin?

This is one opportunity to obtain data about the current situation of the fish fauna in the Bulgarian Danube section and compare it with those in the other countries along the Danube using unified research methodology. The obtained information will be useful for development common activities for the conservation of biodiversity and for maintaining of the biological resources and ecosystem services.



Watch your Danube



What are you looking forward to regarding the JDS3?

I'm looking forward to meet the colleagues who also care to study and to protect the aquatic biodiversity in the Danube river. I'm also looking forward to develop common methods for fish sampling and processing with a view to improve the methodology for ecological assessment and biological monitoring of the Danube river.