



SELECTED ABSTRACTS & PAPERS
OF THE FIRST BALTIC INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

ON

FIELD ENTOMOLOGY AND FAUNISTICS

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LITHUANIAN ENTOMOLOGICAL SOCIETY: ACTIVITIES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

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The Lithuanian Entomological Society was established on November 3rd 1965 and initially had 38 members. Only people with a scientific degree, equal to that of a PhD, were accepted for membership. For thirty years after its establishment the Society was chaired by Dr. P. Zajančkauskas (1965–1995), followed by several terms by prof. A. Skirkevičius (1995–2001), Dr. D. Dapkus (2001–2011) and has been chaired by Dr. A. Petrašiūnas since 2011.

Currently the Society consists of 78 members with 15 of them being honorary members (older than 70). Forty seven members have a PhD or higher degree and 31 are amateurs enthusiasts.

The biggest group of people, based on object of their research, is the group of those interested in Lepidoptera (16 members) followed by the group of those who work in different areas of applied entomology – agricultural, forest or medical entomology (13 members) and people interested in beetles (11 members). The biggest of the smaller teams are those working on Diptera (4 members) and Hymenoptera (4 members) while all other members are specialists of Hemiptera, Odonata, Trichoptera and other insect orders with two members working on Mollusca, two on spiders and several more being photographers.

The Lithuanian Entomological Society has bi-annual meetings. One in June being a two-day expedition to a regional, national park or other interesting place and the other one in November or December indoors somewhere, such as a museum or university.

The Society, together with the Institute of Zoology and Parasitology (Later – Institute of Ecology, Nature Research Center), published 14 volumes of ‘New and Rare for Lithuania Insect Species. Records and Descriptions’ in 1982–1995. The journal was renewed in 2003 continuing with volume 15. It is since published yearly and is referred to by the Zoological Record database. The Lithuanian Entomological Society also published 12 volumes of ‘Acta Entomologica Lituanica’ during the period of 1970 to 1994 until it was incorporated into ‘Acta Zoologica Lituanica’ in 1994, which became ‘Zoology and Ecology’ in 2012.

Other activities of the Society are diverted towards education of the public about different aspects of entomology. One of the traditional activities is the ‘Insect of the Year campaign’ that was started in 2002. General society is asked to observe their closest surroundings and look for particular insects or arthropods. The first object of interest in 2002 was the old world swallowtail (*Papilio machaon*). Later other rare or

otherwise notable arthropods followed: stag beetle *Lucanus cervus* (2003), wasp spider *Argiope bruennichi* (2005), band winged grasshoppers *Oedipoda* (2008), blister beetles *Meloe* (2009), green shield bug *Palomena prasina* (2010), paper wasps *Polistes* (2011), robber flies *Laphria* (2012), chaffer beetle *Oxythyrea funesta* (2013) and Arran brown *Erebia ligea* (2014).

Other educational activities include a 'Grant for young researchers' that is awarded to students doing research in the area of entomology and 'School of young entomologists' that was organized in 2008–2010 for young people interested in entomology.

The Society is a member of the Coalition of NGO's for Nature Protection and takes part in discussions on new laws or other questions of nature protection.

The main challenges that the Lithuanian Entomological Society face these years are interrelated with the situation in secondary education where the number of lessons on biodiversity is diminishing and so younger generations often lack the basic knowledge of their surroundings. Hence the general interest in entomology is also lower. However, as modern mobile technologies allow the documenting of almost everything that is observed around, entomologists are now more often asked for help in identifying those crawling mysterious creatures. This it is an opportunity for spreading the knowledge of the members of the Society. New specialists of understudied insect groups might appear from such an amateur interest that comes from a genuine curiosity in this wonderful micro-world, if properly guided. All said, the prospects of the Lithuanian Entomological Society are rather good, if emphasis is made on citizen science.

