



In Memoriam

François VAILLANT (1920-2021)

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Prof. Dr Francois Vaillant, passed away on 23 July 2021, aged 101. From 1949-2010 he was member of the SEF (sponsors: Alfred Balachowsky and Francis Bernard). He was for decades one of the leading European scientists in systematic and ecology of several groups of aquatic insects, in particular aquatic Diptera and Trichoptera.

During his doctoral thesis, that was carried out during a wartime period in the early 1950ies in France, Corsica and North Africa, he became fascinated in the ecology of trickling sites, springs and streams, and their inhabitants.

Therefore, he had to deal with systematic of many groups, but also with respiration physiology. During his field work he was arrested several times under the suspicion to be a spy. His fascinating thesis and the subsequent publications are pioneer work that still today influences students and scientists to deal with hygropetric habitats and the organisms living there.

He had the eye for the small things, biofilms with algae, fungi, crustaceans and insects living together on surfaces with thin layer of dripping water. It was his interest to determine these organisms and by this his work was as well a renaissance of taxonomical work in several groups of aquatic insects.

Special mention is his effort to rear as many species as possible to link larval and pupal stages with the adults that develop from these. The amount of publications indicates his extensive work (full list of his publications can be accessed [here](#)); his arty training was beneficial for the large number of excellent figures that accompanied his texts.

He reported that because of this, in the early 1950ies, he was elected to join a French expedition to the Libyan Sahara Desert as a scientific painter. His marvelous imagery includes portraits of desert landscapes, villages, portraits of people, animals and plants. Among others I remember a wonderful portrait of a fennec that he told was his pet for a while during his stay in North Africa.

He became Professor on the University of Grenoble. With his family he lived in a suburb just in front of the Alps. A glance from his garden shows a view on a set of great Alpine massifs. It ever was a remarkable adventure to be guided by him to localities where he had collected this or that species e.g. in hygropetric habitats along alpine roads or along pristine streams in every altitude from the Isère valley up to the highest parts of the Alps.

We remember Francois Vaillant as an excellent ecologist and systematist, and specially a great human being.