6th All-Union Conference on Fish Diseases and Parasites

The conference was held in Leningrad, USSR, April 3—5, 1974, and was co-sponsored by institutions of pure and applied research and by governmental agencies for fish industry and veterinary surveillance. More than 200 participants from all regions of the country, including several invited experts from Czechoslovakia, Poland and the German Democratic Republic, convened on the sumptuous historical premises of the Zoological Institute of the Soviet Academy of Sciences to discuss almost all aspects of freshwater and marine ichthyoparasitology and ichthyopathology. All together, 110 papers were presented; those of general importance were read at the plenary session, others in specialized parallel sections and some were read by title. The organizing committee, headed by Professor O. N. Bauer, has done a good job especially by providing a forum for stimulating interdisciplinary discussions and contacts. It was one of the biggest and most important fish parasitological events.

The great interest in a close cooperation between research institutions in this field and the veterinary service was documented by the great attention, paid to problems of rapid application of research results in the field, to the organization of veterinary services in fish husbandry and to an efficient control of fish diseases. Intensification of freshwater pisciculture raises many problems—they were surveyed in a stimulating way by Prof. Mussolius; here enemy No 1 are viral and bacterial infections, closely followed in the USSR by protozoan invasions. Then come disturbancies caused by deficient nutrition, and of minor importance are other causes of disease, including metazoan parasites. The noninfectious gill disease (especially in carps) is becoming a serious problem; very often, it is caused by unsatisfactory water quality (pollution).

Very interesting papers dealt with the antiparasitic function of the fish immune system, changes of the fish blood characteristics due to invasions by parasites and the mathematical analysis of parasite population dynamics. A series of papers were devoted to pathomorphological changes caused by parasites or to the mode of action of parasitic protozoa on their host (Dr Shulman, Dr Sous, Dr Banina). Dr Junchis successfully achieved experimental infection in myxosporida by means of a brilliant method using non-specific hosts. Several excellent surveys on taxonomy and zoogeography in various groups of fish parasites were presented (e.g. monogeneans — Dr Gussev). However, the formerly so frequent papers on taxonomy, parasite fauna of various water reservoirs and its changes in relation to altered ecological conditions are no more in the prime focus of attention, although the immense and varied territory of the USSR continues to supply inexhaustible material for such studies. Since the last conference held in 1968, the interest shifted gradually towards an experimental approach to the study of fundamental factors acting upon the infection or invasion process in the fish host; in connection with this, new methods (e.g. immunology, tissue culture, electron microscopy) are being introduced on a large scale. Such a trend, becoming increasingly more evident in the Soviet ichthyopathology and fish parasitology, is very promising as far as new more efficient prevention and control are concerned.

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