

Professor Lev Fishelson



Lev was born in Chelmno (Poland). When the Germans invaded Poland in 1939 he escaped with his family to the USSR, where he survived the war and graduated university. After the war, like many Jewish survivors, he sought to reach Palestine, was arrested by the British and deported to a transit camp in Cyprus, where he met his wife, Luba.

In 1949 Lev finally settled in the young State of Israel. In 1950 he joined the Biological Institute in Tel Aviv (later to become Tel-Aviv University) as an assistant. He completed his M.Sc. studies in 1959 (Acridoidea of Israel, taxonomy and biogeography) and his Doctorate in 1966 (Comparative embryology and development of fishes of the genus *Tilapia* [Cichlidae]).

Lev Fishelson soon gained an international reputation as a brilliant and enthusiastic marine scientist, with a vast knowledge and original ideas, and a readiness to co-operate and share ideas with both leading scientists and young students.

He was among the pioneers who studied and described the reef communities in the Red Sea; he discovered and described a mega-bacterium and its symbiotic relations in the surgeon fish gut; he developed the method of tilapia hybridization, an important upgrade for the aquaculture in Israel and many other countries; and he discovered sex reversal in some coral fishes.

His scientific contribution has been acknowledged worldwide. Lev was awarded a Plaque of Distinction by the Israel Ministry of the Environment; an Honorary Doctorate by RAU-Johannesburg, S. Africa; a Silver Medal, by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation, Germany. He was an Honorary Fellow of the Interuniversity Institute in Eilat; of the Israel Ecological Society; and of the Israel Zoological Society; and a Member of the Academy of Science, Erfurt, Germany, as well as receiving other distinctions.

In addition to his scientific work, which has been published in more than 200 articles and book chapters, Lev contributed to the dissemination of scientific knowledge to both students and the public. He published textbooks and popular articles in Hebrew, and volunteered to lecture whenever asked to do so. He was a member of various professional committees that work to improve nature conservation and the establishment of marine nature reserves.

Professor Lev Fishelson passed away on November 20th, 2013 at the age of 90.

Professor Lev Fishelson will always be remembered and appreciated as an outstanding scientist, teacher and – above all – as a *Mensch*.