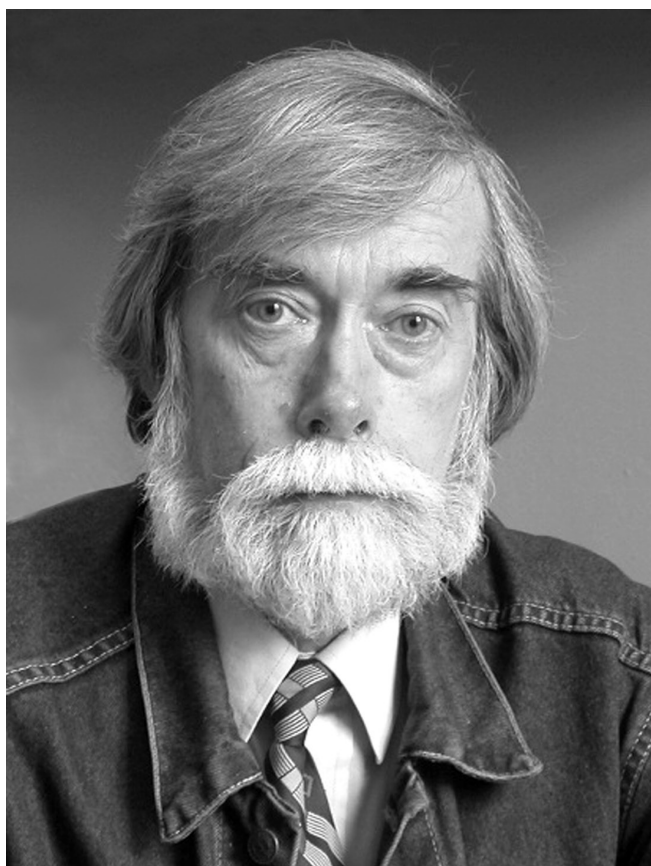




**In Memoriam: Nikolay Borisovich Nikitsky
(1947 – 2026)**

On the 4th of September, 2026 Nikolay Borisovich Nikitsky, outstanding Russian entomologist, coleopterist, talented and tireless scientist, passed away. He was, and he will remain with us, always deeply immersed in science, and until his last years usually in the field for all of the warm season and at the microscope — all year round. It would be difficult to find a person so devoted to science and beetles that deeply and absolutely set him apart from the petty vanity of life. He saw the world clearly and perceived it critically, was not an easy person himself, but was above any dirt, and none of it has ever touched him.

Nikolay Borisovich began his study of the bark and ambrosia beetles (Coleoptera, Scolytidae) during his first field students' training while at the Biological and Soil Faculty, Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU) in the mid-1960s. He already knew them well enough to conduct classes of the Large Workshop at the Department of Entomology. This coleopterous group and species associated with scolytids became not only the subject of his diploma thesis and the subsequent PhD thesis, but also a core of his research interests, which step by step expanded during his life.

After graduation from the university in 1969, Nikolay Borisovich got a position at the A.N. Severtsov Institute of Evolutional Morphology and Ecology, USSR Academy of Sciences, (now A.N. Severtsov Institute of Ecology and Evolution of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow), where he worked in the Laboratory of Soil Zoology. In 1977 he moved to the Zoology Department at the All-Union Agrarian Correspondence Institute (recently Russian State Agrarian Correspondence University, Moscow Prov., Balashikha City) and worked there until he got a position of the Curator of the Coleoptera at the Zoological Museum at MSU in 1982, continuing his former work part-time for many years. As early as in his student years at the MSU, Nikolay Borisovich established close cooperation with the Department of Ecology and Forest Protection of the Moscow State Forest University (now the Mytishchi Branch of the Bauman Moscow State Technical University, Moscow Prov., Mytishchi City), which lasted in various forms for years. Even after retirement in 2020 Nikolay Borisovich continued his study of beetles and produced new papers.

The scope of his scientific interest very soon included problems of systematics of the highest coleopterous taxa, their morphology, ontogeny, zoogeography, palaeontology and ecology. Nikolay Borisovich thoroughly investigated and clarified features to discriminate closely allied

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species of beetles, investigated in great detail preimaginal stages of many species, and studied diverse relationships between organisms in nature. These investigations required complete dedication, and the very high productivity is explained by Nikolay Borisovich's long-time intense work, in fact without vacations and often without rest at weekends. He also spent much time on teaching. Nikolay Borisovich had many students whom he taught not only the matter of his lectures but also identifying beetles. He always tried to do his best helping colleagues, especially younger ones (we also were there), and the majority of requests referred to identification of a wide range of beetles. All highest taxa of beetles of the worldwide recent fauna and extinct taxa were in Nikolay Borisovich's scope; he was an expert in many groups and had published numerous monographs and papers that brought him recognition and spread his fame in the World.

What he liked most of all was field research. Nikolay Borisovich spent a lot of time and effort on collecting insects and observation on the beetles' behavior and interactions with other organisms. In expeditions he gave all of himself to contacts with nature in Central Russia (mostly in Moscow Province), Western Ukraine, various parts of the Caucasus and Transcaucasia (from Krasnodar Territory to southern Azerbaijan). He was particularly interested in the Coleoptera fauna of the Far East (Primorsky Territory, Sakhalin and Kunashir islands). Nikolay Borisovich brought from these expeditions large numbers of living larvae, each in a separate container, housed in large wooden pack boxes, convenient for transportation as baggage. He then regularly checked the containers with the larvae in his flat in the centre of Moscow monitoring the larval development and placing some larvae, pupae, and emerged adults in fixative. Bringing larvae of some species to adults takes several years and requires large amounts of the substrate. For example, the larva of the

largest Far Eastern cerambycid *Callipogon relictus* hosted by Nikolay Borisovich completes its development in three to five years. He assembled this way a voluminous alcohol collection of the formerly uninvestigated developmental stages of beetles from many families.

Nikolay Borisovich published over 450 papers, book chapters, and books individually or in co-authorship, these including chapters with identification keys on some families in collective keys and catalogues, chapters for the Red Data books and parts of other types of books. Many of his publications have become classical in the studies on various groups and are often used by colleagues from different countries. The first monograph by Nikolay Borisovich in 1980, based on his PhD thesis "Insect Predators of Scolytids and Their Ecology" remains an important source of information on this subject. This book includes keys to the Coleoptera larvae widely used until present. In the series "Coleoptera, or Beetles" of the 3rd volume of the "Keys to the Insects of the Far East of the USSR" Nikolay Borisovich published keys to species of nineteen families out of the sixty-seven covered by this volume. His two-volume monograph "Coleopterous Insects (Insecta, Coleoptera) of Moscow Province" (2016, 2019) is outstanding with respect to the width of the scope and is a unique example of a comprehensive faunistic reference book. The input made by Nikolay Borisovich in the development of coleopterology is much more than this set of valuable publications.

The death of Nikolay Borisovich is a big loss for coleopterology and our entomological community. We are sure that living and future colleagues will appreciate his scientific heredity and enrich it with new discoveries.

*Alexander G. Kirejtshuk, Boris A. Korotyaev and
Kirill V. Makarov*