



Yasunobu Matsuura: a remembrance 1942 – 2003

Five months have passed since our colleague, friend and professor, Yasunobu Matsuura, left us after a seven month battle against cancer. In spite of illness he continued to work hard during the last days and did not surrender, fighting with bravery until the end. We remember him with admiration and respect for his honesty, loyalty, and friendship with all the people around him, and also for his devotion to marine science and to the Instituto Oceanográfico da USP (IOUSP), the Institution which he loved so much.

Y. Matsuura, or “Nobu”, as he was called by his relatives and American friends, was born in Yokohama, Japan, February 20, 1942. He went to the Tokyo University of Fisheries, where graduated as Bachelor in Biological Fisheries Sciences in 1964. After 3 years as fishery biologist he was invited to work at the Instituto Oceanográfico da USP. As oceanographer, starting a successful academic career which included the Ph.D. degree in 1976, the Associate Professor in 1986 and Full Professor in 1988.

Matsuura contributed with intellectual leadership to many research projects, as PI Ubatuba – Rational Utilization of Tropical Marine Ecosystems: State of São Paulo; EPM sardinha - Egg Production Method applied to Brazilian sardine; PADCT – Project Continental Margin for Living and Non-Living Resources; DEPROAS – Dynamics of the Shelf Ecosystem of South Atlantic Western Region. During the last two years, he worked hard to build a marine science agreement between IOUSP and JAMSTEC – Japan Marine Science and Technology Center. The first product of this agreement is the joint research project “BEAGLE 2003” for oceanographic studies in the South Atlantic.

He also had contributed substantially to the Institution’s education activity, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels, teaching and supervising thesis. Since 1978, 16 students received M.Sc. and Ph.D. degrees under his guidance. The high scientific standards he taught his students has enabled them to pursue successful careers both in universities or research centers throughout Brazil and internationally. His ultimate accomplishment concerning education was the effort to create and organize the IOUSP’s undergraduate course in oceanography that began in 2002.

Matsuura also engaged in some activities as expert consultant or as member of national and international boards and commissions, for instance: member of working group in the International Commission for Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (ICCAT) from 1979 to 1983, and permanent member of Sardine Study Group and Tuna Study Group of Brazilian government. In 1980, he was invited by FAO/PNUD to give expert technical assistance to the Instituto Nacional de Pesca (INAPE), Uruguay, in a program to introduce the ichthyoplankton techniques in this country. More recently Matsuura was participating in the Global Ecosystem Dynamics Project (GLOBEC) of the International Geosphere-Biosphere Program.

Matsuura did serve as chief of the Biological Oceanography Department, and as vice-director of the Institute. In addition, he played a lead role on the editorial board of the Brazilian Journal of Oceanography of which he was the Editor-in-Chief until his death. He worked hard to give an international character to the Journal, mainly by improving the peer review system and outstanding contributions from scientists outside Brazil.

The Matsuura’s scientific output, mainly dedicated to ichthyoplankton and fishery biology, comprises approximately 100 publications, including journal articles, chapter of books, proceedings, technical reports and newsletters.

Many of us have had the privilege to share our life with him and he will be missed. Matsuura’s accomplishments and everything he left us denote an invaluable legacy for the Brazilian Oceanography.

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