

## *IN MEMORIAM*

### **YOKO WAKABARA (1933-2006)**

Yoko Wakabara was born in the Island of Hokaido, North of Japan, in the 23th of April of 1933. Came to Brazil with 3 years old from the port of Kobe arriving in the port of Santos, São Paulo, on the 28th of December of 1936. From the littoral city of Santos, the family came to the large capital - São Paulo. There, she coursed the high school in the Fernão Dias Paes School, Pinheiros. Before she started her studies on Natural History in the University of São Paulo (USP), she worked as a dressmaker. During her studies in the university, she had great influence of Dra. Tagea Bjonberg, specialist in copepods. Yoko got a researcher position in the Oceanographic Institution at University of São Paulo (IO/USP) in the 14th of July of 1962 and just before that she has been naturalized as a Brazilian citizen. She finished her Master Degree in the second semester of 1969 (Wakabara, 1969) and her Ph.D in 02.01.1972 (Wakabara, 1972); both studies dealed mainly with amphipod taxonomy as well as descriptive ecological aspects of the group. As a researcher of the Oceanographic Institution of the São Paulo University, Yoko was involved in many benthic ecological works in areas as Cananéia, Ubatuba, and São Sebastião Channel together with some collaborators as Airton Tararam, Fosca P. Leite, Maria Teresa Valério-Berardo and Maurea Flynn. The focus on amphipod biodiversity has been always present. Even with a large coast line (around 8500 km) not many researchers have specialized in amphipod taxonomy in Brazil by that time (1970), which made the task of identifying these creatures even harder. After Lejune de Oliveira, from *Instituto Oswaldo Cruz*, who worked between 1940-1950 with



amphipods from the Guanabara Bay, Rio de Janeiro, Yoko was a pioneer in the taxonomy of several amphipod groups as Ampeliscidae, Liljeborgidae, Melitidae, etc. Other topics of interest were taxonomy of Cephalocarida and Leptostraca, feeding type in fishes and marsupial development in amphipods. She was also working in the Brazilian Antarctic Program where two papers on amphipod taxonomy were published (Wakabara *et al.* 1990; 1995).

As a Japanese person, Yoko was very discrete and not an expansive person. On the other hand after she gets to know the person, she was always very kind and attentive. Yoko never got married and had no kids, but she had nephews that were treated as her own kids.

I have the pleasure to know Yoko in 1993, by the time I started my master degree studies on amphipods associated to *Dysidea fragilis*, a common sponge occurring in the area of Arraial do Cabo, Rio de Janeiro. She was very friendly and by that time was the only person, apart from one or two students of her, who could identify amphipods in Brazil. After that, came the Catalog of Crustacea of Brazil, organized by Paulo Young, where we both compiled the information of the gammarideans and caprellideans from Brazil (Wakabara & Serejo, 1998) and started than a promising partnership within this field and a very nice friendship.

After retired from the Oceanographic Institution in 13.08.1996, Yoko was invited to work in the Santa Úrsula University (USU), and integrate the permanent committee of professors in the Master Program of Sciences of the Sea of that University from 1997-2000. In this course she was responsible for the discipline *Phytoplankton Ecosystems*. She taught also in the Biological Sciences undergraduate course, helping in the discipline of *Marine Benthos*. Still in Santa Úrsula University, Yoko developed research projects in the area of Amphipoda taxonomy and ecology of benthos, doing also some reports on marine environment consulting especially in the areas of the Campos, Espírito Santo e Santos Basins. During this time, Yoko guided Claudia Roscio Pascual, Master degree student of the Master Program of Sciences of the Sea and contributed immensely in this course as an inspiration for new students in the area of benthos marine science.

Yoko was a productive researcher for her time, in 37 years of scientific career she published 41 articles and one book chapter. Also, three species of amphipods were named after her (see below).

In the end of 2005, Yoko find out she had a cancer in the pancreas, which is a very hard one to extirpate. She fought against the disease for months and was very brave. She did not give up on life, even knowing she has few time left. In the day of 06.10.2006 Yoko passed away and left the actual Brazilian amphipodologist community orphan.

**Scientific articles published by Yoko Wakabara and collaborators from 1969-2006**

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### Book chapter

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### Species of amphipod named after Yoko Wakabara

- Apohyale wakabarae* (Serejo, 1999)  
*Ampelisca wakabarae* Valério-Berardo, 2008  
*Curidia wakabarae* Souza-Filho & Serejo, 2008

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