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 Phytal Ecossistem. 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


**Book chapter**


**Species of amphipod named after Yoko Wakabara**

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

Cristiana Silveira Serejo
Museu Nacional/UFRJ, Departamento de Invertebrados,
Quinta da Boa Vista s/n, Rio de Janeiro, 20940-040, Brazil