

Greetings from the DGHT

On the occasion of the retirement of Prof. Dr. Wolfgang Böhme, curator of herpetology, head of the vertebrate department, and deputy director of the Zoologisches Forschungsmuseum Alexander Koenig, we were honoured with an invitation to direct a few words to the readers of this special issue of the Bonn Zoological Bulletin.

We sincerely appreciate this opportunity, as the name Wolfgang Böhme is not only connected to a distinguished career in herpetology, but also to a person who always made an effort to keep a close connection between professional scientific research and amphibian and reptile amateurs all over the world. Wolfgang Böhme's achievements in this particular field of interaction are not less than outstanding. There is probably no other herpetologist whose research benefited as much from data supplied by amateurs, and there are countless thankful amateurs whose pastime has been deeply enriched by the scientific advice and the stimulating attitude of Wolfgang Böhme. Sharing data, knowledge and specimens with people operating outside the scientific community was paramount for many spectacular discoveries and the furtherance of knowledge about the biology and ecology of amphibian and reptile species, many of which are considered to be well-known today. Decades ago, it was mainly these amateur enthusiasts who travelled to remote and previously unexplored exotic areas in search of their "pets" and returned with treasures of data and photographs that gave rise to subsequent research projects. It is Wolfgang Böhme's merit and strength to have fostered and encouraged this tradition of interaction for several decades.

Bringing professionals and amateurs together and promoting their dialog is also one main characteristic of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Herpetologie und Terrarienkunde (DGHT), as is apparent by the society's name. As a consequence, there was, and is, some kind of "natural relationship" between Wolfgang Böhme and the DGHT, and this relationship has been a sustained and fruitful one. Shortly after he took his position at the Museum Koenig, he founded the "DGHT Stadtgruppe Bonn" in 1973. Later, Wolfgang Böhme became president of the society and held this position from 1983 to 1991. He was furthermore a founding member of the DGHT Work Group Literature and History, and a regular member of the Work Groups Chameleons and Lacertids. In 1994, Böhme was made an honorary member of the DGHT, and very recently, the current executive board asked him to join its advisory council. And so it is for many reasons that Böhme's name and personality are closely interlinked with the DGHT.

The DGHT as a society, DGHT members and associates, as well as many students and colleagues owe a lot to Wolfgang Böhme. Despite facing his 'official' retirement as a herpetologist now, we are convinced that few things will change and that his fruitful relationships with the DGHT will continue for many years to come. Dear Wolfgang Böhme, thank you for everything.

The DGHT executive board

(Peter Buchert, Jörn Köhler, Axel Kwet, Stefan Lötters, Wolfgang Schmidt, Holger Vetter)

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