

This article was downloaded by: [99.7.80.12]

On: 26 February 2014, At: 08:10

Publisher: Taylor & Francis

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Studies on Neotropical Fauna and Environment

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:  
<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/nnfe20>

### In memoriam Ernst Josef Fittkau (22.7.1927 - 12.5.2012)

Wolf Engels <sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> University of Tübingen

Published online: 12 Dec 2012.

To cite this article: Wolf Engels (2012) In memoriam Ernst Josef Fittkau (22.7.1927 - 12.5.2012), Studies on Neotropical Fauna and Environment, 47:3, 239-240, DOI: [10.1080/01650521.2012.748483](https://doi.org/10.1080/01650521.2012.748483)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/01650521.2012.748483>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

## OBITUARY

### In memoriam Ernst Josef Fittkau (22.7.1927 – 12.5.2012)



Figure 1. Professor Fittkau in the Zoologische Staatssammlung München, holding the skull of a black caiman, *Melanosuchus niger* (Crocodylia, Alligatoridae), collected by Spix during the Brazilian expedition 1817–1820 (Photograph: Michael Franzen, Munich, September 2010).

Prof. Fittkau was a successful editor of our Journal over decades. He passed away some weeks before his 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary, actively working all the time. Born in Neuhof in East Prussia, now Poland, he died in Munich. After a short military service in the Second World War and subsequent imprisonment, he worked some time as a farm hand and as unpaid trainee in the Zoological Museum of the University of Göttingen, before he could finish high school in Lower Saxony. His biology studies at the Universities of Freiburg and Kiel were followed by a doctoral dissertation on the fauna of the Fulda River

in 1959. The next stations of his zoological career were the Swedish State Museum at Stockholm and the Max Planck Institute for Limnology at Plön, under the directorship of the famous August Thienemann. In 1960 he went to Brazil to study aquatic insects in Amazonia. He became the leader of the Limnology Department at the Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazonia (INPA) in Manaus, Amazonia. At that time he was already a recognized entomologist and specialist for Chironomidae. Being a field ecologist, Prof. Fittkau studied the adaptation of invertebrates to the annual inundations of large areas of the lowland tropical forests. The research group working in the Várzea of the Rio Solimões and the Igapó of the Rio Negro river systems contributed much to our knowledge of life in this changing environment. Many of his Brazilian associates continued working in aquatic field ecology, a discipline shaped by his pioneer studies. His habilitation for zoology and ecology at the University of Kiel was accomplished in 1974. He continued in making numerous journeys to Brazil and travelling throughout the Amazon region. On account of his interest in Ethnology, he collected numerous objects covering the material culture of indigenous peoples living in Amazonia. This valuable collection of over 4,000 objects was acquired by the Bavarian State Museum of Ethnology in 2010. At the University of Munich he was lecturing professor of zoology. As an academic adviser, he supervised more than 100 diploma and doctoral theses. In 1976 he was appointed director of the Bavarian State Collection of Zoology in Munich (“Zoologische Staatssammlung München”). This position allowed him to reorganize, in a new building, the collections dating back to the founder of the Museum, Johann Baptist Spix who became its first director in 1811. The museum comprises thousands of zoological objects collected by Spix and the botanist Carl von Martius during their expedition 1817 – 1820 through Brazil’s tropical rain forests. Fittkau added a large body of chironomid specimens from many Neotropical areas to the treasures of the State Collection. He also founded the scientific journals *Spixiana* (1977– today) and *Amazoniana* (1965–2007). He described about 100 new chironomid species and 30 genera and published about 200 papers. An obituary with a list of his publications will soon be published (Hausmann et al.

2012). In honor of his scientific merits the German Society for General and Applied Entomology awarded him the Meigen Medal in 2001. Ernst Josef Fittkau's nature was strongly influenced by his time in Brazil. He loved to talk about the observations he had made on the many trips in this country. I met him in Manaus, Rio, Plön and several times in Munich. In the museum, after a short lunch break, he used to recover by resting in a hammock always hanging in his office. Retired 1992 and living with his family in the quiet village of Icking near lake Starnberg, he was still in contact with

a great number of colleagues and friends in Brazil, Germany and all over the world. He will be missed greatly.

#### **Reference**

Hausmann A, Spies M, Diller J. 2012. In memoriam Prof. Dr. Ernst Josef Fittkau (22.07.1927 – 12.05.2012). *Spixiana* 35(2).

Wolf Engels  
*University of Tübingen*  
*Email: wolf.engels@uni-tuebingen.de*