

DANIEL GONZÁLEZ-ACUÑA, A CHARISMATIC AND GENEROUS TEACHER, COLLEAGUE, AND FRIEND WHO EXPANDED THE FIELD OF CHILEAN ORNITHOLOGY

Daniel González-Acuña, el profesor, colega y amigo carismático y generoso quien expandió el campo de la ornitología chilena

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Daniel González-Acuña was the first editor-in-chief of the *Revista Chilena de Ornitología*, which began in

2016. Sadly, Daniel passed away on 28 December 2020 in the fullness of his tenure due to an unrelenting illness. His departure was unexpected and deeply saddening. Because of his vitality to live and work, his demise caused us immeasurable grief that will forever linger in those of us who were his colleagues and friends. Through this special edition, we pay tribute to his enormous vocation in everything he did, particularly for his strong commitment as editor of our journal.

In addition to the articles in his memory, this editorial highlights Daniel's great virtues as a person, naturalist, veterinarian, parasitologist, and editor. We have taken much of what we tell from an editorial and two obituaries previously dedicated to Daniel (Figueroa 2020, Pizarro *et al.* 2020, Muñoz-Leal *et al.* 2021).

Daniel, the person

Daniel was more than an editor, more than a veterinarian, more than an academic, more than a scientist, more than a teacher, more than a tutor, and more than an ornithologist; he was an exceptional guy. His charismatic personality, generous spirit, transparent narrative, and abundant humor inspired his students and colleagues and made him comfortable and joyful to work with. Daniel conveyed their love and passion for all he did, always with sympathy and empathy. He was overly collaborative and kind, by which many of his national and international colleagues became close friends.

Daniel received advice and suggestions with incredible humility. His attributes inspired absolute confidence in all who worked with him. Undoubtedly, his adventurous and sporty spirit contributed to his unique personality. Daniel was active runner and mountain climber. These sports activities revealed and strengthened his fighting spirit and persistent effort to achieve his goals. When Daniel learned of his illness, he preferred to forget the burden it meant and chose to live fully. He intensely “embraced” every day of his life.

Daniel, the naturalist

Daniel was born a naturalist. As a child, he loved to explore nature. Due to his connection to the natural world, Daniel became an assiduous traveler and explorer. Wherever he was, Daniel exhibited persistent curiosity and a capacity for wonder. His travels through the world allowed him to capture and absorb the characteristics of diverse places, cultures, and animals. He documented his travels and adventures with amazing photographs. Because of his naturalist spirit, Daniel took advantage of his veterinary activity and parasitological studies to document various aspects of the natural history and basic ecology of Chilean fauna, including birds, mammals, reptiles, and insects. He transmitted his naturalist spirit to his undergraduate students, stimulating them to carry out their theses on the unknown aspects of several Chilean animal species. His naturalist spirit went beyond his academic work. Daniel communicated many of his adventures and findings through newspaper articles, photographic illustrations, and wildlife-based calendars. Daniel, ever generous, gifted lots of calendars to his students, colleagues, and friends.

Daniel, the ornithologist

Daniel was an ornithologist at heart. In 1986, he became a founding member of the Ornithological Association of Chile (AOCH), now Aves Chile (Union of Ornithologists of Chile). Daniel, already a parasitologist, was the first academic at the Faculty of Veterinarian Sciences of the Universidad de Concepción to create the first course on Ornithology. Despite his workload, beyond parasitology he gave himself the time and energy to promote the knowledge and study of native birds. With this, he enriched the formation of several generations of students. Several of his students have now contributed to various publications on Chilean birds. Daniel was a passionate collaborator with his ornithologist friends, able to climb large trees to access the nests of the Chilean Hawk (*Accipiter chilensis*). Through his field and laboratory studies, Daniel contributed notably to deepening the accumulated knowledge of the natural

history of our native birds. His publications in the field of ornithology included the distribution, diet, reproduction, behavior, morphology, and parasites of granivorous birds, freshwater birds, seabirds, and birds of prey from different localities in Chile.



Daniel González-Acuña in the field forming “mixed flocks” of students and colleagues.

Daniel, the veterinarian

As a veterinarian, Daniel always maintained his vocation for the care, protection, and rehabilitation of wild animals. In 2004, he established the Wildlife Rescue and Rehabilitation Center at the Chillán campus of the Universidad de Concepción. This center has functioned due to Daniel’s efforts to get donations and funding through the periodic organization of wildlife management and medicine courses. Since its creation, the staff have treated and rehabilitated hundreds of wild animals. In addition, the Center has served as a training base for veterinary medicine students and has made possible the development of relevant research in

the clinical field of wildlife. Through Daniel's periodic publications of clinical cases of animals treated at the Center, the veterinary sciences have contributed to the conservation of wild species. Due to these achievements, Daniel received recognition from the Municipality of Chillán in 2017 and recognition from the Municipality of Bulnes in 2019.

Daniel, the parasitologist

Daniel showed a broad and genuine interest in wildlife parasites. Returning to Chile after earning his doctorate in Germany, Daniel took his research on wildlife parasites into his own hands. In his early years as a researcher, he even worked with his students in a cramped, freezing "cubbyhole" of a gymnasium on the Chillán campus of the Universidad de Concepción. Like many vocational researchers, Daniel took money out of his own pocket to fund his research and student collaborators. Within a few years, he published dozens of articles of global relevance in collaboration with his students and colleagues from several countries. Only then did the university authorities recognize his work was a relevant research niche.

Daniel's publications covered the taxonomy, distribution, diversity, and basic ecology of a broad spectrum of parasite groups. Together with students and colleagues, he studied mites, fleas, lice, ticks, helminths, and blood sporezoans of Chilean birds, mammals, and reptiles. His documented findings include the description of 30 new species of mites, 11 new species of fleas, five new species of ticks, and four new species of lice. The experience and information gained in parasitology enabled him to research the biology of vectors of transmissible zoonotic diseases. Through his research in parasitology, Daniel expanded the field of Chilean ornithology.

Daniel's scientific productivity was astonishing. He produced over 300 articles, 23 book chapters, and two books. In addition, he made 338 presentations at national and international conferences. Due to his experience, creativity, and persistence, Daniel obtained funding from the Chilean National Science and Technology Fund (FONDECYT), the Chilean Antarctic Institute (INACH), and the Scientific and Technological Equipment Fund (FONDEQUIP).

Unquestionably, Daniel was one of the most influential contemporary parasitologists in Latin America. He collaborated on several other interdisciplinary projects beyond his specific field of research. Due to his high scientific productivity, the authorities of the Universidad de Concepción awarded him the Dr. Álvaro Blanco B. 2013 Award. This recognition goes to those investigators achieving the highest productivity during

the last 20 years of academic life. Daniel's outstanding work marked a prolific period in Neotropical parasites research. His scientific achievements constitute a reference for emerging parasitologists.

Daniel, the editor

Editorial work is entirely voluntary and requires an enormous burden of altruism. The labor of an editor involves time and commitment that often leads us to extend our working day or subtract hours from our family life. When Daniel took over the editorship of our journal, he knew he had a tremendous challenge ahead of him. He had to face all the problems that the editor-in-chief of a Latin American ornithological journal faces today (e.g., lack of reviewers, delay of reviews, shortage of full-length articles). However, Daniel put unbounded energy and enthusiasm into leading our journal and coping with the challenges inherent in the editorial task.

At the beginning of his labor as editor-in-chief, Daniel coordinated the transformation of our former *Boletín Chileno de Ornitología* into a scientific journal with regular periodicity in its publications and with a rigorous process of manuscript review. At the same time, Daniel established a friendly and fluid communication channel with authors and reviewers. As many of us longed for, we turned the *Revista Chilena de Ornitología* into the "promised space" for national ornithology. Step by step, our journal achieved greater visibility and a prominent place among other Latin American ornithological journals.

Daniel's greatest desire was to achieve the indexing of our journal. That is, to comply with the international quality standards that govern scientific journals. A relevant aspect (perhaps the only relevant one) of indexing systems is that they allow us to value a scientific journal by the maturity of the scientific community that supports it and by the link journals establish between science and society. That idea was in Daniel's spirit and mind.

After a year of launching the *Revista Chilena de Ornitología*, Daniel decided to submit it to an evaluation for incorporating it into the Scielo-Chile indexing system (Scientific Electronic Library Online), which administers the National Agency for Research and Development (ANID). Because we did not comply with a dozen requirements, we did not achieve indexing (González-Acuña 2017). Daniel explicitly warned us that the route to indexing is steep. ANID's demands are "draconian." Nevertheless, we will pursue excellence independent of any elitist indexing system. To the extent that our editorial team succeeds in getting authors to produce articles of high quality scientific and communicational, our journal will legitimately achieve greater prestige. In our opinion, this is fundamental to attracting more authors and reach-

ing a wider audience. A legitimately obtained prestige is superior to any label or metric of apparent quality.

Daniel wanted *Revista Chilena de Ornitología* to be on the mind of every ornithologist. Of course, that is also our wish. Following Daniel's legacy, we call on all Chilean ornithologists to make the *Revista Chilena de Ornitología* a journal with the highest editorial maturity, with wide recognition by the scientific and naturalist community, and to consolidate it as an instrument of scientific communication and dissemination. We are confident that this issue is a step forward on that path.

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