

## Natalia Pogodina, in memoriam



Natalia Valentinovna Pogodina (1971–2024), 2011.

Earlier this year, Natalia Pogodina, the mammalian palaeontologist who studied Late Cenozoic small mammals of the Southern Trans-Urals region in the Ural Federal University, in the Yekaterinburg, Russia, died on 27<sup>th</sup> of April, 2024 after several years long battle with cancer, which she fought with tenacity and dignity.

Natalia Valentinovna Pogodina (born Ivakina) was born on 24<sup>th</sup> of March, 1971 in Novouralsk, an industrial city in the Sverdlovsk Region. Her father was Valentin Aleksandrovich Ivakin, an engineering physicist, Doctor of Technical Sciences (1993). Valentin Ivakin greatly contributed to the development and improvement of isotope separation technology. Her mother, Galina Petrovna Ivakina, was an economist. Natalia's parents did not survive the covid pandemic in 2020. Natalia gave birth to two sons, Svyatoslav Nikolaevich Pogodin (born 1998) and Vsevolod Nikolaevich Pogodin (born 2006).

After secondary school Natalia (Natasha) entered the Biological Faculty of the Ural State University named after A.M.Gorky (currently, the Ural Federal University named after the first President of Russia B.N. Yeltsin). Her first steps in science Natalia made under the guidance of the first professional palaeotheriologist in Sverdlovsk, Anna Georgievna Maleeva. The main topic of her studies became fossil small

mammals, including morphology and evolutionary features of rodent dentitions. Natalia refined her skills in a series of scientific trainings in Paleontological Institute in Moscow (A.K. Agadjanian), Zoological Institute in Saint-Petersburg (I.M. Gromov), and Institute of Geology in Ufa. She also took part in a series of domestic and international scientific conferences. One of the first was the conference in honour of Professor Kazimierz Kowalski, held in Krakow, Poland, on 17–21 May 1994, that brought together many of the eminent European mammalian palaeontologists and served as a good school of professional science. Natalia was a regular participant at the annual meetings of the all-Russia Paleontological Society in Saint-Petersburg, all-Russia Quaternary meetings, Uralian ecological conferences held in the Institute of Plant and Animal Ecology. In 2015, she took part in the field workshop “Taphocoenoses of the Quaternary fauna and geological events” in Ukraine. This event was in the frame of the INQUA based ground squirrel project 1501 headed by L.V.Popova.

Natalia Pogodina's life was entirely connected with the University. After graduation, she enrolled in full-time postgraduate studies and then became a lecturer and an associate professor (docent) at the Biological



Natalia Pogodina in the field at Zverinogolovskoe, July 2009.

Faculty (now the Department of Biology and Fundamental Medicine), replacing her teacher Anna Maleeva in this position. In 1998 Natalia defended her PhD thesis entitled "Voles (Rodentia, Arvicolinae) in the faunas of small mammals of the Upper Pliocene and Eopleistocene of the Southern Urals and Trans-Urals".

Among the most important achievements of N. Pogodina is the study of Plio-Pleistocene small mammals of southern Trans-Urals collected at the Zverinogolovskoye locality. Her decades-long work at this important site started in the field after the third year at the university under the guidance of the well-known Uralian geologist Vitaly Vladimirovich Stefanovskii in 1991. The fossil material from this locality characterises the stages of formation and regional features of the latest Pliocene (Piazenzian) and the Early Pleistocene (Gelasian) Villanyian faunas of small mammals of the southern Trans-Urals. Multiple field trips to the site organised and headed by Natalia in 1994, 1995, 2009, 2013, 2016 and in 2017 brought a large dental and osteological material on small mammals. The arvicoline faunas were described by Natalia Pogodina and her co-authors in a series of papers.



Natalia Pogodina gives a lecture at the Ural Federal University, showing the blood system of lancelets, February 2016.

Studies of dental morphology of archaic rootless voles enabled her a description of a new species and subspecies in the genus *Allophaiomys* from the Early Pleistocene multilayered Baturino locality in South Urals region (both co-authored with Alexander Vasilievich Borodin). One of these forms, *Allophaiomys laguroides baturiensis*, may be a valid candidate for an archaic Early Pleistocene chronospecies of narrow-skull voles *Stenocranium*.

In recent years, in collaboration with her younger colleague Maxim Valerievich Sinita, Natalia Pogodina conducted studies in craniodental morphology and systematics of fossil ground squirrels. A new species of ground squirrels, *Spermophilus praecox* Sinita et Pogodina, 2019 from the Early Pleistocene of the northern peri-Black Sea region, is the geologically earliest



Natalia Pogodina at the Quaternary conference in Moscow, September 2017

and morphologically basal form of this genus known to date.

For many years Natalia lectured in biological subjects for students at the Department of Zoology (since 2017, Department of Biodiversity and Bioecology). She always cared about her department and sought ways of its improvement. As a bright teacher, she inspired many students, e.g. Daria Chemagina (1993–2020) and Albina Yakimova, to specialise in small mammal palaeontology during their bachelor's and master's programs. Some of her pupils continued as professional scientists.

Natalia Valentinovna was a good friend, talented lecturer and researcher, teacher always ready to support, and devoted paleozoologist with a diverse range of scientific interests. One of her characters was an intense curiosity. She never lost an acute interest in fossil small mammals and was an open and sincere person and colleague. Natasha was a perceptive and persistent person. She saw very well the weak points in herself, in

people, in ideas. But at the same time, she believed in a strong and wonderful result that could be achieved if these weak points were overcome. Natalia was not an idealist, but deep down she was a romantic. The awareness of a very short time has motivated her to go for priority goals sacrificing secondary tasks. A serious illness prevented the implementation of her further scientific plans. But she managed the main thing: ensure the continuation of palaeozoological research at the Ural University. Her colleagues, friends, and relatives will always remember Natalia as a high-spirited, cheerful, beautiful, and kind person. A star flying across the sky burns out quickly but leaves a bright trail.

*T.V. Strukova, A.S. Tesakov, M.V. Sinitsa, E.A. Markova, N.V. Serdyuk*

### Taxa described by N.V. Pogodina

Arvicolinae, Cricetidae, Rodentia:

*Allophaiomys laguroides baturiensis* ssp. nov. Borodin et Ivakina, 2000: in Borodin A.V., Ivakina N.V. 2000, p. 1470, fig. 3, 6–7.

*Allophaiomys rhipaeus* sp. nov. Borodin et Ivakina, 2000: in Borodin A.V., Ivakina N.V. 2000, p. 1472, fig. 3, 8–11.

Xerinae, Sciuridae, Rodentia:

*Spermophilus praecox* sp. nov. Sinitsa et Pogodina, 2019: in Sinitsa M.V., Pogodina N.V. 2019, p. 654–660, figs. 5–7.

### List of publications of Natalia Pogodina

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- Ivakina N.V., Maleeva A.G. & Yelkin Yu.A. 1996. Fossil voles (Rodentia, Microtinae) from South Transural // Acta zoologica Cracoviensia. Vol.39. No.1. P.223–228.
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