

Remembering Alvisè Vittori

(Riva del Garda 1932 - Trento 2018)

Dr. Alvisè Vittori was a well-known Italian ichthyologist, limnologist and all-round ecologist. He started his professional career as a consultant for commercial fisheries and in 1967 he was hired as an aquatic biologist for the Trentino South Tyrol Region and transferred to the Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station at San Michele all'Adige, Trento in 1972. After many years of service, he was appointed Director of the Experiment Station, where he oversaw its transition to the now Fondazione Edmund Mach.

While trained in Forestry Science (University of Florence), Alvisè's heart was aquatic, a state of mind that he attributed to growing up on the shores of Lake Garda. His professional interests ranged from all aspects of fisheries to lake and stream monitoring to habitat restoration. In our small province of Trento (Italy), home to over 350 lakes, >5000 km of running waters and >60 commercial fish farms, he was a well-known figure, quite active in community affairs. Alvisè Vittori was nothing if not pragmatic and his expert advice on water-related issues was often sought out by local administrators and fishermen. We remember most his broad geographical and historical knowledge of the Trentino, his 'hands on' approach to limnology, his directness, his dry humor and his intolerance of bureaucracy (and bureaucrats). Alvisè was definitely someone who cannot be forgotten.

This was a man with a Vision! All who had the opportunity to know Alvisè Vittori can attest to his foresight and intuition. Several of his projects, very innovative at the time, are common practices in Italy today. A few examples: he was instrumental in starting lake monitoring in Trentino (1973) and in the 1980s he founded the San Nicolò Laboratory on the shores of Lake Garda where the monitoring program is still continuing. Alvisè was the force behind several Trentino lake restoration projects, most notably Lake Caldonazzo. As an ecologist, Alvisè understood the importance of biological monitoring not only of lakes but also of streams and rivers. He initiated the ecological mapping of Trentino's waterways using macroinvertebrates in the early 1980s. He was also instrumental in organizing courses in the use of macroinvertebrates as monitoring tools and promoted the publication of taxonomic guides for Alpine and Italian macroinvertebrates. Here, he worked hand in hand with CISBA (*Centro Italiano Studi di Biologia Ambientale*) to promote the use of biological indicators as monitoring tools at the national level.

Alvisè's special rapport with fish and fishermen culminated in the first Fisheries Management Plan (*Carta*



Ittica -1983) in Italy. This pioneering *Carta Ittica* was soon copied by other provinces in Italy. He was acutely aware of the importance of healthy fish stock both for commercial fish farms and for restocking programs in rivers and streams. With this in mind he founded the Experimental Fish Farm at the Fondazione Edmund Mach. His great contribution to inland fisheries management was acknowledged by being named Honorary Member of the Italian Freshwater Ichthyologist Society (AIAD - *Associazione Italiana Ittiologi Acque Dolci*).

Alvisè's legacy lives on, and in many ways, he helped define applied limnology in Italy. Many of his initiatives are still ongoing, either here, at the Fondazione E. Mach, or at the Trento Environmental Protection Agency (APPA). Alvisè Vittori was a mentor not only to us, but to dozens of Trentino students and fledgling limnologists. More than a scientist, he saw himself as a public servant and was always guided by the need to explain his science and the spending of public monies to ordinary citizens. He shunned formal scientific journals, with most of his scientific production published in *Esperienze e Ricerche*, the yearly publication of the former Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station (now Fondazione Edmund Mach), but was a keen and down to earth communicator to the general public. In fact, almost all of Alvisè's writings were published in local journals and trade magazines.

Alvisè retired from public service in 1997 and dedicated his retirement to teaching ecology to senior citizens, gardening and truffle hunting. He is survived by his wife Elvira, his two children and his beloved grandchildren.

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Giovanna Flaim, Francesca Ciutti
Fondazione Edmund Mach
San Michele all'Adige (TN), Italy

Corresponding author: giovanna.flaim@fmach.it

Received: 15 May 2018.

Accepted: 23 May 2019.

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Advances in Oceanography and Limnology, 2019; 10:8286

DOI: 10.4081/aiol.2019.8286

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