



Renny Kurnia Hadiaty (1960–2019)

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Renny Kurnia Hadiaty (1960–2019)

Lynne R. Parenti¹ and Daisy Wowor²

RENNY KURNIA HADIATY was a leading international expert on the systematics of the freshwater fishes of Southeast Asia, especially those from her home country of Indonesia. For over three decades, she conducted research as a systematic ichthyologist at the Indonesian Institute of Sciences (LIPI) Research Center for Biology, which since the mid-1990s has been based in Cibinong, Java. As Head of the Ichthyology Laboratory and the Curator of the Fish Collection of the Museum Zoologicum Bogoriense (MZB), she oversaw the collection of freshwater fishes that had once been housed in the historic Bogor Botanical Garden in Bogor, Java.

Renny was born in Malang, East Java, on August 21, 1960. She received her undergraduate degree in biology in 1985 from The University of General Soedirman, Purwokerto, Central Java. In 1986, she joined the MZB. From that position she began her scientific studies of fish biodiversity throughout Indonesia.

DW recounts development of her close association with Renny:

“I met Renny when she just joined the Research Center for Biology, Indonesian Institute of Sciences, in 1986. At that time, as a freshly graduated Biology major, she didn’t know how to identify fishes. However, she was an eager and fast learner, so it was not difficult for me to teach her how to identify fishes using the volumes of Weber & de Beaufort, although English text was not easy for her at the beginning.

She learned fish taxonomy from Darrel J. Siebert (Natural History Museum of London, UK) when he visited Bogor in 1998. This intensive short course resulted in the publication of her first taxonomic paper (Hadiaty and Siebert, 1998) describing two new fish species from north-western Sumatra. After that, Renny broadened her horizons by developing good, strong scientific collaborations with national and international ichthyologists.

Renny was hard-working and had a pleasant personality. She was easy to work with. Renny and I were involved in many fieldtrips together, about 30 excursions between 2006 until August 2018. About a month after our last fieldtrip, she took a long sick leave. Renny was one of my best colleagues and friends. I miss her.”

Renny was a collections-based field biologist. She was fearless in the field, leading or joining expeditions that took her throughout the Indonesian archipelago, from Sumatra to New Guinea. She was kind and had a delightful sense of humor. She was practical and facilitated field research with a

natural ease: on a field trip in 2010 to Sulawesi, she obtained formalin and ethanol from a colleague at a local university. She was a skilled photographer and set up photo tanks in her hotel room in the evening following a day of collecting. Live fishes were placed in small tanks with some native vegetation and rocks to show each species in its best light in a modest recreation of natural habitat.

Renny was principal founder of the Masyarakat Ikhtologi Indonesia (Indonesian Ichthyological Society), a professional ichthyological organization. She served as its Vice Chair of Central Management. The Society organizes regular national seminars and convenes a national congress on fishes. The Society also publishes the *Jurnal Ikhtologi Indonesia*. Proceedings of the sixth national seminar and third congress were published in an edited volume (Siman-



Fig. 1. Renny Hadiaty showing her new cabinet dedicated to type specimens at the MZB, 2010. Photo by L. R. Parenti.

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Fig. 2. Daniel Lumbantobing, Sopian Sauri, and Renny Hadiaty, on field trip to Sulawesi Tenggara, 2010. Photo by L. R. Parenti.

juntak et al., 2011). Most of the papers were in Bahasa Indonesia, with just one in English. Renny was proud of the high-quality scholarship of the proceedings yet acknowledged that publications in English would reach a wider audience. She planned a new English-language journal, *Tropical Ichthyology Journal*, and had started to assemble an editorial board. She published in Bahasa Indonesia as well as English and French; we list her principal English and French publications, below. She was especially proud of descriptions of new fish species that highlighted the extraordinary natural biodiversity of Indonesia. One of her aims was to influence the sustainable use of fishes in Indonesia and thereby minimize the risk of their extinction.

Renny was a curious, engaged, and productive scientist who maintained a strong network of international collaborators (see Allen, 2019). She traveled to major museums in the U.S. and Europe, examining type specimens and broader collections. She persuaded her many colleagues to deposit type specimens in the MZB. Colleagues named three new species of fishes from Indonesia in her honor: *Oryzias hadiatyae* Herder and Chapuis, 2010, a freshwater ricefish from Sulawesi; *Paracheilinus rennyae* Allen, Erdmann, and Yusmalinda, 2013, a marine wrasse from Flores; and *Platygobiopsis hadiatyae* Larson, Jaafar, Tan, and Peristiwady, 2020, a deep-sea gobiid from southern Java. There was no limit to her enthusiasm, dedication, and curiosity. On an extended visit to the National Museum of Natural History, Washington, D.C., in 2006, she was intrigued by the comparative osteology of nemacheilin loaches she could observe by dissecting cleared and stained specimens. In 2014, she was awarded her D.Sc. from The University of the Ryukyus, Japan.

Renny died of cancer on January 30, 2019, at age 59. She cherished her family—husband Elistyo Sritaman, sons Arief Aditya Hutama and Muhammad Baiquni Bramantyo, and daughter Rani Puri Permata—all of whom survive her.

We mourn her loss and remain inspired by her optimism.

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