



České Budějovice, 16 April 2021

Purpose:

PhD defense of Vojtěch Kolář

Faculty of Science

University of South Bohemia

České Budějovice

Czech Republic

Dissertation supervisor's report

Looking back, it almost feels like Vojta must have been born with his wading boots on and a kitchen sieve in his hand. He already was a budding entomologist the first we met, which was during his high school years. He first enrolled at the Faculty of Agriculture, where he completed his Bachelor and Master theses on water beetles under my supervision. As his interest in science grew, he also decided to enroll in a Master's programme at the Faculty of Science. His thesis, supervised by Arnaud Sentis, was based on lab experiments looking at the effects of habitat complexity and predation risk on trophic interactions in odonate larvae.

I was very happy when Vojta decided to prolong his student days and started to work on the PhD thesis that he defends today. At that time, he was already a highly reliable, independent and productive field guy who did not shy away from experimental work either. During his PhD studies, he further expanded his toolbox and mastered various statistical techniques, which allowed him to analyse the many datasets he helped to generate or collected himself. He also broadened his interest from fishponds to post-industrial habitats and from beetles to odonates and amphibians. All this helped him achieve a remarkably varied and broad PhD thesis that covers multiple aspects of the biodiversity in various standing water habitats.

Apart from working on the thesis (and papers on other topics that are not included in the thesis), Vojta has been heavily involved in nature conservation. He was able to independently secure and deliver local aquatic insect inventories across the country. He also quickly realized that scientific papers must be accompanied by public engagement to improve the poor state of standing waters in the Czech Republic, which are threatened by many human activities. He was the main driving force behind a number of popular science articles that we have published in Czech outlets such as *Živa*, journal of the *Fórum ochrany přírody* (Nature Conservation Forum) or *Ekolist.cz*. They attracted considerable attention, and Vojta's paper on diving beetles was selected as the best article in the *Živa* for an author under 25 years in 2015. Last but not least, Vojta actively participated in teaching at and beyond the University. He led several practicals, supervised a couple of high-school student reports, one Erasmus student report and one Bachelor thesis, and co-supervised one Master thesis at the Faculty of Science.



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In summary, Vojta has grown into a highly productive and independent researcher over the past 10 years and established himself as a key member of the lab. I am proud to have been his supervisor and am looking forward to our future collaborations. His thesis consists of five first-authored papers, two of which have already been published in very good journals. I rate this work very high and recommend Vojta to be awarded the PhD title based on the thesis.

Assoc. Prof. David Boukal, Ph.D.

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