

DAVID ERNEST RUITER

February 2, 1948 - February 4, 2021



Dave Ruiter passed away Thursday, February 4, 2021 at his home in Grants Pass, Oregon following an extended illness. He was born February 2, 1948 in Muskegon, Michigan to Ernest and Rhea Ruiter. He graduated from Grand Haven High School in 1966 and Michigan State University in 1970 with a degree in Fisheries Biology. Dave married Terry Eaton in 1970 in Flint, Michigan. They spent the next 50 years enjoying their life together.

Dave was an excellent woodworker and fly fisherman with a love of local beers and restaurants. His family thought him a lovable curmudgeon with a sharp wit and an eye for bug butts. He is survived by his wife Terry; his brother Kenneth (Pam) of Holland, Michigan; his sister Sandra Borden (Gregory) of Maplewood, Minnesota; and nieces Sara and Anna Ruiter. He was preceded in death by his parents.

Dave's college graduation in 1970 coincided with the passage of the National Environmental Policy Act which stipulated that environmental impacts should be considered when designing and implementing projects. His employment career was spent in the assessment of impacts on water and water resources. After 10 years working in environmental consulting he joined Region 8 of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 1985. There he spent another 23 years assessing impacts of proposed development projects in the region.

While working on the impacts on aquatic invertebrates, Dave became particularly fascinated by caddisflies and subsequently developed an enthusiastic interest that continued the rest of his life. Dave realized early on that his caddisfly passion required a practical plan. He was not interested in pursuing an academic career path. Instead, his environmental employment provided the funds, time and resources to support his substantial caddisfly research.

Everywhere Dave and Terry lived included space for caddisflies. Dave's basement laboratory, library and collection expanded greatly over the years. Their home hosted visiting scientists from around the world, and was the starting point of many collecting trips through western North America. Dave also collaborated frequently with fellow aquatic entomologists and freshwater ecologists at Colorado State University in Fort Collins.

Dave's somewhat unconventional career plan to work in order to support his intellectual passions succeeded. Having clear separation between work and caddisfly studies fostered a healthy and humorous perspective on his after-hours caddisfly activities. Dave would say, "Hey, most of my spare time I'm looking at bug butts." Dave took early retirement at age 60 specifically to devote even more time to the study of his favorite bugs.

Dave Ruiter Business Card: His humor was also evident in his post-retirement business card shown here.

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Gentleman Trichopterologist

After Terry's retirement in 2013, the couple moved to Grants Pass, Oregon. This provided the opportunity for year-round gardening for Terry, and the proximity to caddisfly biodiversity hotspots of the Klamath and Siskiyou mountains of southern Oregon and northern California for Dave. The basement laboratory in Colorado moved to the Grants Pass "shed," a building renovated by Dave on their home property overlooking the Rogue River. Beer, black-lighting, and "talking bollocks" on the deck with visitors was a recurring activity.

Dave engaged wholeheartedly with his local community, conservation organizations, and fellow trichopterologists. He was very generous, donating time and financial support in order for students and colleagues to attend the International Trichoptera Symposia and Society for Freshwater Science meetings. Dave was a regular presence at these meetings and through his enthusiasm and sense of humor could make everyone feel welcome and comfortable. He particularly enjoyed being the caddisfly expert at the "stump the chump" taxonomy fairs at the Society for Freshwater Science meetings. He hosted lofty discussions with colleagues in the evenings, fueled by various beverages, beer being his favorite.

Generosity with his time and expertise is another one of Dave's hallmarks. We know this personally because we often tested the limits of that generosity and found no endpoint. Acknowledgement sections of many theses, journal publications, and reports on freshwater ecology published over the past four decades express gratitude for the time he spent identifying caddisflies or reviewing manuscripts.

Dave's decades of research on caddisflies are eclectic. They encompass biology, taxonomy, systematics, distribution and biogeography, environmental tolerance, DNA barcoding, and caddisfly community structure. Early on, his 1995, 200 page treatise on the adult taxonomy and systematics of *Limnephilus* of the New World brought needed clarity to this huge genus. As well as describing a host of new North American species, he had the privilege to describe new genera such as *Crenophylax* and *Montiphylax*. Dave developed a special collaborative relationship with fellow caddisfly taxonomists in Japan, and jointly described new species and genera from both Japan and western North America. Dave and Russian colleagues spent much time working toward a clearer understanding of limnephilid systematics. Obscure and underserved caddisfly genera such as *Allomyia*, a glacial relic, received his special collecting and taxonomic attention more recently. All told, Dave authored or co-authored over 50 publications on caddisflies. Several papers remain to be published posthumously.

Dave collaborated with colleagues to produce many regional and special project caddisfly lists in both eastern and western North America. Dave's database of species collection records contains over 60,000 entries. This valuable resource will be reformatted and posted on the *Trichoptera Nearctica* website in the coming months.

Over 20 years ago Dave embarked on a quest to associate females of all western North American caddisfly species. He felt strongly that examining female genital morphology was essential to systematic studies and for taxonomic clarification of species. To document and record female genitalia, Dave perfected digital imaging techniques. His digital imaging efforts also included male genitalia of many species and some on larval morphology. A catalogue of his images is being prepared for posting on *Trichoptera Nearctica* for all researchers to use freely with acknowledgement.



Allomyia cascadis female genitalia, ventral view. An example of Dave Ruiters' photograph technique.

Dave leaves behind an extensive and carefully curated collection of caddisflies. These are mostly adults, though there are some larvae. The collection is comprised of mostly western North American material, although some eastern North American species are well represented. His collection will be donated to a western U.S.A. university collection, where it will be made accessible to caddisfly researchers.



A portion of the Ruiter collection in the building Dave called “The Shed”. The collection contains approximately 18,000 vials.

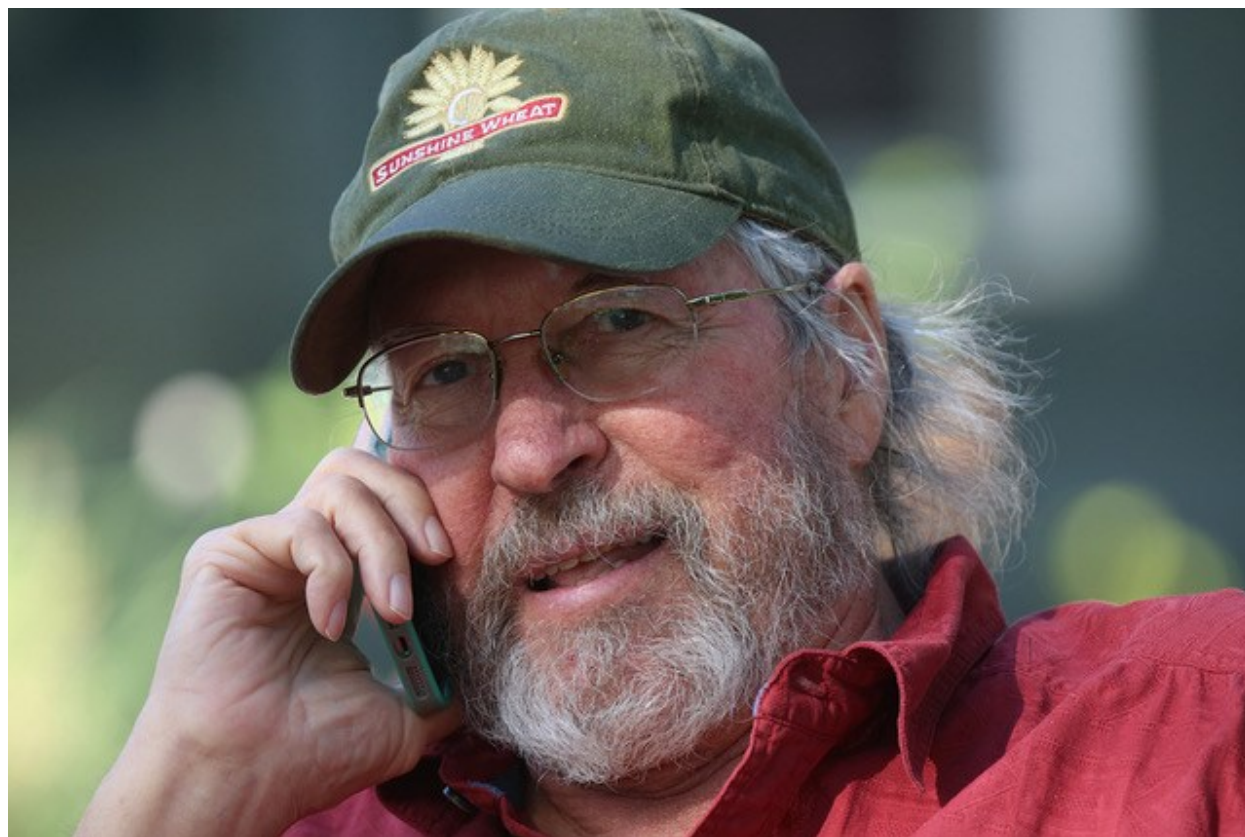
Dave’s untimely demise left various projects of his in limbo. Several projects will be carried to completion by colleagues, including descriptions of *Allomyia renoa* males, females and larvae, and a revision of the western North American *Rhyacophila betteni* group.

Dave’s collection includes undescribed species of western caddisflies or revisionary comments with varying amounts of notes and digital images, for caddisflies such as *Farula*, *Goeracea*, *Homoplectra*, *Ochrotrichia*, Limnephilidae new genus, *Rhyacophila ecosa* group, and *Sisko*. Anyone wishing to see Dave’s digital files associated with these taxa should contact Bob Wisseman.

A special taxonomic project of Dave’s in his latter years centered around the *Hydropsyche tana* subgroup, new sister species of *Hydropsyche oslari*, and discussion of the taxonomy of *Hydropsyche cockerelli*. He amassed a considerable collection of these taxa. Specimens, notes, descriptions, images and even early stages of manuscripts are available to caddisfly taxonomists interested in carrying this work forward. Contact Bob Wisseman if you are interested in any of this work. Current plans are to incorporate this material into Dave’s donated collection.

An endowed memorial fund in Dave's name is being pursued through the Society for Freshwater Science. It will support student travel to meetings and student presentation awards. Contributions to this fund when it becomes available later this year will be much appreciated.

In lieu of a memorial service, a celebration of Dave's life is tentatively planned at his home in Grants Pass in August 2021. Those interested in attending please contact Terry Ruiter.



Ruiter you will be missed.

Sincerely,

The Bug Guys and Gals

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