



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY

Kosovar Biologist Names Newly Discovered Insect after Coronavirus

April 22, 2021

Kosovar biologist Halil Ibrahimimi believes the restrictions related to the coronavirus were not all bad. As a result of the measures, he was able to finish a research project and raise public awareness about the pollution of rivers in Kosovo. And, since his research was completed during the pandemic, Ibrahimimi decided to name a newly discovered insect after the coronavirus.

Ibrahimimi spent years working on a research report on an insect **species** found in Kosovo's Bjeshket e Nemuna national park. That species now has the name *Potamophylax coronavirus*.

Ibrahimimi is a professor of the Natural Sciences Faculty at Pristina University. When he collected the insects in the national park, he found that the creatures were quite different from other species in the Balkans. For example, the insects are much smaller and live in areas about 2,000 meters above sea level.

Ibrahimimi announced the new name for the species in a scientific publication this month. "Coronavirus was the most vivid thing during the time when the species was discovered," he said.

Vivid is a term that means producing a clear, strong, or sharp feeling.

During his research, Ibrahimimi also discovered that conditions along the Lumbardhi i Deçanit River, where the new species was found, had worsened in recent years. The river damage is likely linked to the building of a **hydropower** plant.

Kosovo, and the Balkan countries in general, have a long history of environmental pollution of all kinds.

Ibrahimi compared the effects of pollution on the insects to the coronavirus crisis.

“It has the same effect on the species living in the rivers as the coronavirus is causing to humankind these days,” he said.

The overall environmental situation in Kosovo has worsened over the years. This is likely a result of increased building, traffic and industrial pollution, as well as government efforts to push the use of small hydropower plants.

A 2020 [report](#) by Kosovo’s Ministry of Economy and Environment noted that “uncontrolled use of water resources and damage to river beds still remains one of the forms of degradation of our water resources.”

Degradation is a term that means the process of damaging or ruining something.

Ibrahimi suggested that people should “rethink their **attitude** toward the environment” because these insects are “the first barrier before the pollution comes to the humans.”

He added that insects are the first sign “that something is going wrong in the environment.”

Now that the coronavirus and the insect are forever linked by name, Ibrahimi suggests that government agencies should take measures to stop further damage to the environment. “And,” he added, “people must start considering these insect species as part of their own life.”

I’m John Russell.

Florent Bajrami and Llazar Semini reported on this story for the Associated Press John Russell adapted it for Learning English. Bryan Lynn was the editor.

Words in This Story

species – *n. biology* : a group of animals or plants that are similar and can produce young animals or plants : a group of related animals or plants that is smaller than a genus

hydropower – *n.* electricity produced from machines that are run by moving water

attitude – *n.* the way you think and feel about someone or something
