

Olena Kudlai

CONTACT INFORMATION

Address Akademijos Str. 2, Vilnius LT-08412, Lithuania
Tel. no.: +370 5 2729595
E-mail: olena.kudlai@gamtc.lt, olena.kudlai@gmail.com
orcid.org/0000-0002-5346-1658
https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Olena_Kudlai
<https://scholar.google.com/citations?user=vIN3OJoAAAAJ&hl=en>

EDUCATION AND ACADEMIC DEGREE

2007 – 2011 Doctor of Science (Ph.D.), specialisation: Parasitology, helminthology.
Thesis: “*Trematode fauna of gastropods from water bodies in Northern Priazovye, Ukraine*”, supervisor – dr. V.V. Korniyushin.
Department of Parasitology, I.I. Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology of the National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine.

2006– 2007 Master of Science (M.Sc.) in Biology
Thesis: “Molluscs of the ecotone systems of Priazovye, Ukraine”
Department of Ecology, Biodiversity and Taxonomy, Melitopol State Pedagogical University, Melitopol, Ukraine.

2005 – 2006 Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) in Biology.
Thesis: “Molluscs of the Molochny estuary and the adjacent part of the Azov Sea”.
Department of Ecology, Biodiversity and Taxonomy, Melitopol State Pedagogical University, Melitopol, Ukraine.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

2023–present **Chief Researcher**
(P. B. Šivickis Laboratory of Parasitology, Nature Research Centre)

2021–2024 **Extraordinary Senior Lecturer**
(Water Research Group, Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management, Potchefstroom Campus, North-West University, South Africa)

2020 – 2023 **Senior Researcher**
(P. B. Šivickis Laboratory of Parasitology, Nature Research Centre)

2016 – 2020 **Researcher**
(P. B. Šivickis Laboratory of Parasitology, Nature Research Centre)

2017 – 2018 **Postdoctoral Fellow**
(Claude Leon Foundation - Postdoctoral fellowships in science, engineering or medical science, North-West University, South Africa)

2016 – 2019 **Postdoctoral Fellow**
(Water Research Group, Unit for Environmental Sciences and Management, Potchefstroom Campus, North-West University, South Africa)

2015 – 2016 **Postdoctoral Fellow**
(Laboratory of Helminthology, Institute of Parasitology, Biology Centre, Czech Academy of Sciences, České Budějovice, Czech Republic)

2013 – 2015 **Postdoctoral Fellow**
(P. B. Šivickis Laboratory of Parasitology, Nature Research Centre)

2012 – 2013 **Junior Researcher**
(Department of Parasitology, I. I. Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology NAS of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine)

2010 – 2012	Laboratory Engineer (Department of Parasitology, I. I. Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology NAS of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine)
2007 – 2010	PhD student (Department of Parasitology, I. I. Schmalhausen Institute of Zoology NAS of Ukraine, Kyiv, Ukraine)

RESEARCH INTERESTS

My research is in the field of molecular and traditional systematics, host specificity, distribution and life cycles of parasites of wild animals. The main research interests are:

1. Systematics, phylogeny, biology and distribution of helminths (primarily trematodes) of wild animals.
2. Elucidation of the roles of marine and freshwater molluscs in trematode transmission.
3. Morphological and molecular approaches in delineation and identification of species of parasites.
4. Interactions between parasites and their hosts and the evolution of complex life cycles.

PUBLICATIONS (LAST 5 YEARS)

Scientific articles published in journals (books), indexed in „Clarivate Analytics Web of Science“ database (with citation index):

1. **Kudlai O.**, Binkienė R., Rakauskas V., Baker N.J. 2026. Comparison of historic and novel data reveals higher contemporary diversity of trematode metacercariae in freshwater fish. *Parasite*, 33: art. no. 1.
2. Yong R.Q.Y., **Kudlai O.**, Vermaak A., Smit N.J. 2025. Fish blood flukes (Digenea: Aporocotylidae) from marine fishes of South Africa, including proposal of a new genus. *International Journal for Parasitology-Parasites and Wildlife*, 28: art. no. 101166.
3. Rakauskas V., Kaupinis A., Binkienė R., Baker N.J., Virbickas T., **Kudlai O.** 2025. First records of the black bullhead *Ameiurus melas* (Rafinesque, 1820) and its parasites in Lithuania. *Bioinvasions Records*, 14 (4): 929–943.
4. Uhrovíč D., Pantoja C., **Kudlai O.**, Scholz, T. 2025. Revision of *Isoglaridacris* (Cestoda: Caryophyllidae), parasites of suckers (Catostomidae) in North America: molecular phylogeny and description of four new species. *Scientific Reports*, 15 (1): art. no. 20551.
5. Faltýnková A., **Kudlai O.**, Jouet D., O'Dwyer K., Pantoja C., Skirnisson K. 2025. Freshwater trematodes in Iceland and the surrounding north – current advances and questions. *Journal of Helminthology*, 99: art. no. e33.
6. Greben O., **Kudlai O.**, Kuzmin Yu., Korol E., Syrota Ya. 2025. Helminth diversity in brine shrimps (*Artemia*) from Ukraine. *Journal of Helminthology*, 98: art. no. e90, 1–10.
7. **Kudlai O.**, Rakauskas, V., Baker, N.J., Pantoja, C., Lisitsyna, O., Binkienė, R. 2024. Helminth parasites of invasive freshwater fish in Lithuania. *Animals*, 14 (22): art. no. 3293.
8. Faltýnková A., O'Dwyer K., Pantoja C., Jouet D., Skirnisson K., **Kudlai O.** 2024. Trematode species diversity in the faucet snail, *Bithynia tentaculata* at the western edge of its native distribution, in Ireland. *Journal of Helminthology*, 98: art. no. 52.
9. Faltýnková A., **Kudlai O.**, Pantoja C., Jouet D., Skirnisson K. 2023. Prey-mimetism in cercariae of *Apatemon* (Digenea, Strigeidae) in freshwater in northern latitudes. *Parasitology Research*. 122: 815–831.
10. Vermaak A., Smit N.J., **Kudlai O.** 2023. Molecular characterisation of three species of *Coitocaecum* (Digenea: Opecoelidae) infecting *Clinus superciliosus* (Clinidae) in South Africa, with description of *Coitocaecum brayi* sp. n. *Folia Parasitologica*. 70: art. no. 015.
11. de Chambrier A., **Kudlai O.**, McAllister C.T., Scholz T. 2023. Discovering high species diversity of *Ophiotaenia* tapeworms (Cestoda: Proteocephalidae) of watersnakes

- (Colubridae) in North America. *International Journal for Parasitology: Parasites and Wildlife*, 22: 255–275.
12. Vermaak A., **Kudlai O.**, Yong R., Smit N. 2023. Novel insights into the genetics, morphology, distribution and hosts of the global fish parasitic digenean *Proctoeces maculatus* (Looss, 1901) (Digenea: Fellodistomidae). *Parasitology*, 150: 1242–1253.
 13. Scholz T., de Chambrier A., **Kudlai O.**, Tkach V.V., Chris T. McAllister. 2023. A global survey of tapeworms (Cestoda: Proteocephalidae) of ‘true’ frogs (Amphibia: Ranidae), including a tabulated list of all proteocephalids parasitising amphibians. *Folia Parasitologica*, 70: art. no. 009.
 14. Pantoja C., **Kudlai O.** 2022. Hemiurid trematodes (Digenea: Hemiuridae) from marine fishes off the coast of Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, with novel molecular data. *Animals*, 12: art. no. 3355.
 15. Pantoja C., Telles B., Pascoal F., Luque J.L., **Kudlai O.** 2022. Digenean trematodes infecting the frigate tuna *Auxis thazard* (Scombriformes: Scombridae) off the Rio de Janeiro coast, Brazil, including molecular data. *Parasite*, 29: art. no. 44.
 16. Achatz T.J., Martens J.R., **Kudlai O.**, Junker K., Boe N.W., Tkach V.V. 2022. Discovery of a new genus of diplostomids (Digenea: Diplostomoidea) from Nile crocodiles (*Crocodylus niloticus*) in South Africa and an updated key to diplostomid genera. *Journal of Parasitology*, 108: 453–466.
 17. Faltýnková A., **Kudlai O.**, Salganskij O.O., Korol E.M., Kuzmina T.A. 2022. Trematodes from Antarctic teleost fishes off Argentine Islands, West Antarctica: molecular and morphological examination data. *Systematic Parasitology*, 99: 491–523.
 18. Uhrovič D., Oros M., Kuchta R., **Kudlai O.**, Scholz T. 2022. *Archigetes* Leuckart, 1878 (Cestoda: Caryophyllidea): diversity of enigmatic fish tapeworms with monoxenic life cycles. *Parasite*, 29, art. no. 6.
 19. Faltýnková A., **Kudlai O.**, Pantoja C., Yakovleva G., Lebedeva D. 2022. Another plea for ‘best practice’ in molecular approaches to trematode systematics: *Diplostomum* sp. clade Q identified as *Diplostomum baeri* Dubois, 1937 in Europe. *Parasitology*, 149: 503–518.
 20. Uhrovič D., Oros M., Reyda F., **Kudlai O.**, Scholz T. 2021. Redescription of *Biacetabulum giganteum* Hunter, 1929 (Cestoda: Caryophyllidea), description of two new, closely related species from suckers (Catostomidae) in North America, and a critical review of host specificity of species of *Biacetabulum* Hunter, 1927. *Systematics and Biodiversity*, 19: 1062–1079.
 21. Pantoja C., Faltýnková A., O’Dwyer K., Jouet D., Skirnisson K., **Kudlai O.** 2021. Diversity of echinostomes (Digenea: Echinostomatidae) in their snail hosts in high latitudes. *Parasite*, 28: art. no. 59.
 22. Uhrovič, D., Oros, M., **Kudlai, O.**, Choudhury, A., & Scholz, T. (2021). Molecular evidence of three closely related species of *Biacetabulum* Hunter, 1927 (Cestoda: Caryophyllidea): a case of recent speciation in different fish hosts (Catostomidae)? *Parasitology*, 148: 1040–1056.
 23. Uhrovič D., Scholz T., **Kudlai O.**, Oros M. 2021. Disentangling taxonomy of *Biacetabulum* (Cestoda, Caryophyllidea), parasites of catostomid fishes in North America: proposal of *Megancestus* gen. n. to accommodate *B. carpiodi*. *Parasitology Research*, 120: 1993–2001.
 24. **Kudlai O.**, Pantoja C., O’Dwyer K., Jouet D., Skirnisson K., Faltýnková A. 2021. Diversity of *Plagiorchis* (Trematoda: Digenea) in high latitudes: Species composition and snail host spectrum revealed by integrative taxonomy. *Journal of Zoological Systematics and Evolutionary Research*, 59: 937–962.
 25. Vermaak A., Smit N. J., **Kudlai O.** 2021. Molecular and morphological characterisation of the metacercariae of two species of *Cardiocephaloides* (Digenea: Strigeidae) infecting endemic South African klipfish (Perciformes: Clinidae). *Folia Parasitologica*, 007.

Other reviewed scientific publications (books, books' chapters, collections of articles, articles, textbooks and etc.):

1. **Kudlai O.**, Scholz T., Smit N. 2018. Trematoda. In (Eds) Scholz T., Vanhove M.P.M., Smit N., Jayasundera Z. & Gelnar M. A. Guide to the Parasites of African Freshwater Fishes, ABC Taxa, Volume 18, pp. 245–268.

PARTICIPATION IN INTERNATIONAL AND NATIONAL SCIENTIFIC PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

2024 – 2026	Project leader Postdoctoral fellow: dr. James Omondi Outa Title: „Towards a better understanding of the diversity, phylogeny and life cycles of blood flukes in freshwater fish”. Research Council of Lithuania, Project S-PD-24-132.
2023	Project leader Student: Agnė Simonaitytė Title: „Pathogenic parasites in freshwater fish in Lithuania: current diversity and data on infection“ Research Council of Lithuania, Project P-SV-23-48.
2022 – 2025	Project leader Title: “Reviving fish parasitology in Lithuania: assessing the current helminth diversity in fish and the impact of non-native fish in Lithuanian freshwaters” Research Council of Lithuania, Project S-MIP-22-53.
2020 – 2022	Project leader Postdoctoral fellow: dr. Camila Pantoja de Oliveira Title: „Biodiversity assessment of the Brazilian Atlantic Forest coastal waters: Species richness and genetic variation of marine parasites and their fish hosts“ Research Council of Lithuania, 09.3.3-LMT-K-712-19-0182. https://gamtostyrimai.lt/en/users/viewUser/id.350/view.projects
2020 – 2022	Project implementer Title: “Virulence of avian malaria: untangling genetic players for infection severity” Research Council of Lithuania, Project 09.3.3-LMT-K-712. (PI: Vaidas Palinauskas) https://gamtostyrimai.lt/en/users/viewGroup/id.56/view.projects
2019 – 2022	Project implementer Title: “Unravelling diversity of parasites of cypriniform fishes in North America: a key to understand evolutionary processes” Ministry of Education, Youth and Sport of the Czech Republic (program Inter-Excellence; LTAUSA 18010). (PI: Tomáš Scholz).
2019–2020:	Project implementer Title: “Trematodes in sub-Arctic lake food webs: development of quantitative diversity baselines and a framework for community ecology research in the Arctic” The Czech Grant Agency, Project No. 18-18597S. (PI: Anna Faltýnková).
2017 – 2018	Project leader Title: “Molecules to aid taxonomy and elucidation of life histories of trematode pathogens of wildlife in Ndumo Game Reserve, northern KwaZulu Natal, South Africa” The Claude Leon Foundation, South Africa.

- 2015 – 2017 **Project implementer**
 ECIP – European Centre of Ichthyoparasitology.
 Centre of Excellence, Czech Science Foundation (PI: Milan Gelnar; Co-PI: Tomáš Scholz)
<http://ecip.cz/about-ecip>
- 2013 – 2015 **Postdoc researcher**
 Title: “Molecular and morphological approach to revealing diversity, taxonomy and life-cycles of larval flukes parasitising in water molluscs”
 Research Council of Lithuania, Project VP1-3.1-ŠMM-01-V-02-004.
<https://gamtostyrimai.lt/lt/olena-kudlai>

INTERNSHIP AND TRAINING

- 2017 Course on Ectothermic Vertebrates Handling and Ethics.
- 2015, 1 month School of Biological Sciences, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia. Host: Dr. Thomas H. Cribb.
- 2014, 2 months Laboratory of Helminthology, Institute of Parasitology, České Budějovice, Czech Republic. Host: Dr. Aneta Kostadinova and Dr. Anna Faltýnková.
- 2014, 1 month Department of Biology, University of North Dakota, Grand Forks, North Dakota, USA. Host: Dr. Vasyl V. Tkach.
- 2014 EMBO Practical Course "Computational Molecular Evolution". Heraklion, Greece. Organizers: Nick Goldman, Alexandros Stamatakis, Antonis Magoulas, Ziheng Yang, Aidan Budd.
<http://abacus.gene.ucl.ac.uk/CoME/>

PARTICIPATION IN SCIENTIFIC CONFERENCES (LAST 5 YEARS)

International scientific conferences:

1. **Kudlai, O.**, Baker, N. J., Binkienė, R., Rakauskas, V., Outa, J. O. Blood flukes in Lithuanian freshwater fish: new findings and taxonomic insights. In: *11th Conference of the Scandinavian-Baltic Society for Parasitology*, Reykjavík, Iceland, 14–15 August, 2025.
2. Outa, J. O., Yong, R. Q-Y., Smit, N. J., **Kudlai, O.** Shedding light on the taxonomy, phylogeny and life cycle of freshwater fish blood flukes from Africa and Europe. In: *11th Conference of the Scandinavian-Baltic Society for Parasitology*, Reykjavík, Iceland, 14–15 August, 2025.
3. Vermaak, A., **Kudlai, O.**, Yong, R. Q-Y., Smit, N. J. Characterising three new species of *Macvicaria* (Digenea, Opecoelidae) from *Diplodus capensis* in southern Africa. In: *XI International Symposium on Fish Parasites*, Mérida, Yucatán, México, 20–24 January, 2025.
4. Vermaak, A., **Kudlai, O.**, Yong, R. Q-Y., Bouguerche, C., Acosta, A. A., Hadfield, K. A., Smit, N. J. Diving into the parasite diversity of *Diplodus capensis* (Smith) (Teleostei, Sparidae) from southern Africa. In: *41st Conference of the Zoological Society of Southern Africa*, Rawsonville, South Africa, 27–31 July, 2025.
5. **Kudlai, O.**, Binkienė, R., Dmytrieva, I., Pantoja, C., Rakauskas, V. Reviving fish parasitology in Lithuania: Assessment of current diversity of helminth parasites of fishes in freshwater ecosystems. In: *10th Conference of the Scandinavian-Baltic Society for Parasitology*, Tartu Estonia, 5–7 June 2024.

6. Faltýnková A., **Kudlai O.**, Pantoja C., O'Dwyer K., Jouet D., Skírnisson K. Caenogastropod snails possibly hosting a unique species spectrum of larval trematodes (Trematoda, Digenea). In: *10th Conference of the Scandinavian-Baltic Society for Parasitology*, Tartu Estonia, 5–7 June 2024.
7. Vermaak A, Smit N., **Kudlai O.** Digenean diversity of the marine fish host *Diplodus capensis* (Sparidae) from South Africa. In: *The 15th International Congress of Parasitology* (ICOPA 2022), Copenhagen, Denmark, 21–26 August 2022.
8. Vermaak A., Kudlai O., Acosta A.A, Hadfield K.A., Smit N.J. Amazing parasite diversity of *Diplodus capensis* (Smit, 1844) in South Africa. In: *Southern African Society of Aquatic Scientists Congress 2022*, Amanzi, Brandfort, South Africa, 26–30 June 2022.
9. Vermaak A, Smit N., **Kudlai O.** A can of worms: High diversity of Opecoelidae (Trematoda: Digenea) from the South African intertidal super klipfish, *Clinus superciliosus*. In: *49th Conference of the Parasitological Society of Southern Africa*, online, 14–16 September 2021.
10. Vermaak A, Smit N., **Kudlai O.** *Cardiocephaloides* spp. (Digenea) from the eyes and brain of endemic South African klipfish. In: *British Society for Parasitology Conference*, 21–25 June 2021.
11. Vermaak A, Smit N., **Kudlai O.** Super klipfish, the super host: astonishing digenean diversity of *Clinus superciliosus* from the coast of South Africa. In: *9th Conference of the Scandinavian-Baltic Society for Parasitology* (CSBSP9), Vilnius, Lithuania, 21–23 April 2021.
12. Faltýnková A., **Kudlai O.**, Pantoja C., Skírnisson K. Trematodes in snails in sub-Arctic freshwater lakes in Iceland. In: *9th Conference of the Scandinavian-Baltic Society for Parasitology* (CSBSP9), Vilnius, Lithuania, 21–23 April 2021
13. Pantoja C., **Kudlai O.** Digenean trematodes of marine fishes from Brazil: A synoptic review and prospects. In: *9th Conference of the Scandinavian-Baltic Society for Parasitology* (CSBSP9), Vilnius, Lithuania, 21–23 April 2021

PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY PROCESS

Supervision of PhD students (consultant):

Bianca Jade Boshoff	Thesis: „The development of reliable and cost-effective DNA and microbial bioassessment methods for monitoring Lithuania's freshwater ecosystems“	2025 – 2027
---------------------	---	-------------

Supervision of bachelor and master students:

Agnė Simonaitytė	Thesis: “Diversity of trematodes from the genus <i>Phyllodistomum</i> (Digenea: Gorgoderidae) in freshwater fish in Lithuania” (Vilnius University, Life Sciences Center)	2022 – 2024
Anja Vermaak	Thesis: “ <i>Diversity of digenean trematodes of Clinus superciliosus</i> (Linnaeus, 1758) from the coast of South Africa” (North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, Potchefstroom, South Africa)	2020 – 2022
Anja Vermaak	Thesis: “Diversity of digenean trematodes of <i>Clinus superciliosus</i> (L., 1758) in the Tsitsikamma National Park, South Africa” (North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, Potchefstroom, South Africa)	2018
Coret	Thesis: “Study of <i>Diplostomum</i> (Digenea: Diplostomoidea) in	2018 – 2019

- Hoogendoorn South Africa: Diversity and effect of metacercariae on fish behaviour” (North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, Potchefstroom, South Africa)
- Coret Thesis: “Diversity of the Diplostomidae (Digenea: 2017
- Hoogendoorn Diplostomoidea) from *Tilapia sparrmanii* in the North-West Province, South Africa” (North-West University, Potchefstroom Campus, Potchefstroom, South Africa)

OTHERS

- Member of Scientific Committee and Organising Committee of the 9th Conference of the Scandinavian-Baltic Society for Parasitology (21–23 April 2021, Vilnius, Lithuania).
- Member of Scientific Committee and Organising Committee of the the International conference “Trematodes 2024” (8–13 September 2024, Brisbane, Australia).
- Secretary of the Scandinavian-Baltic Society for Parasitology and Local Representative of Lithuania (2023 – present).
- Membership in scientific societies:
 Ukrainian Scientific Society of Parasitologists;
 Parasitological Society of Southern Africa (PARSA);
 Scandinavian-Baltic Society for Parasitology (SBSP)