

In Memoriam

John Elliot Reynolds III (1952-2017)

On 23 December 2017, the marine mammal community around the world lost one of its most outstanding scientists and conservationists after a long battle with cancer. John is survived by his wife, son, and grandson. John grew up in Maryland (USA) and attended Western Maryland College, now McDaniel College (B.A. 1974) before enrolling in the graduate program at the University of Miami's Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science. John worked under the supervision of D. K. Odell and completed his Master of Science degree in December 1977 (*Aspects of the Social Behavior and Ecology of a Semi-Isolated Colony of Florida Manatees*, *Trichechus manatus*). This work was conducted in a waterway known locally as the "Blue Lagoon," adjacent to the Miami International Airport. During this research, he discovered that manatees were being killed in flood control dams (Odell & Reynolds, "Observations on Manatee Mortality in South Florida," *The Journal of Wildlife Management*, 1979), and this may have been the beginning of his lifelong work in sirenian conservation. John also participated in some of the early aerial surveys for common bottlenose dolphins along the Gulf Coast of Florida and in one memorable set of surveys in Mississippi. He continued his doctoral research on manatee digestive tract anatomy (*Aspects of the Structural and Functional Anatomy of the Gastrointestinal Tract of the West Indian Manatee [Trichechus manatus]*, 1980). This work required extensive participation in the manatee (and often, cetacean) carcass salvage program in South Florida to obtain the freshest possible specimens. Of course, this usually happened on Friday afternoons or on the weekend, and he was often accompanied by one or more of the Odells.

Upon completion of his Ph.D., he joined the faculty of Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, where he served from 1980 to 2001. During his tenure at Eckerd, he mentored students (including one of the Odell children) in marine science. Many of these students went on to graduate work in marine mammal science. At Eckerd, John founded the Dolphin Project in 1993 that continues today, involving undergraduates in marine mammal research (<https://www.eckerd.edu/dolphin-project>). While at Eckerd, he conducted seasonal aerial



surveys for manatees near power plants along the coast of Florida.

John joined the staff at Mote Marine Laboratory in 2001 as a Senior Scientist and served as Director of the Center for Marine Mammal and Sea Turtle Research and of the International Consortium for Marine Conservation. During his years at Eckerd and at Mote, John influenced the careers of many young scientists (<https://mote.org/staff/member/john-reynolds>), and he received numerous awards for his academic activities.

From 1989 to 1991, John served as a member of the Committee of Scientific Advisors of the U.S. Marine Mammal Commission; and then from 1991 to 2010, he served as Chairman of the Commission—a Presidential appointment. John served as Chair of the International Union for Conservation of Nature Sirenian Specialist Group. He was a Charter Full Member and the 13th President of the Society for Marine Mammalogy (President-Elect, 2004 to 2006; President, 2006 to 2008) where he contributed, among other things, to student activities and development (<https://www.marinemammal.science.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/Reynolds1999SAWPresentation.pdf>).

Despite his load of administrative duties and travel, John was an incredibly prolific author with over 300 different publications. Most notable were the several books that he authored, co-authored,

and edited. *Manatees and Dugongs* (Reynolds & Odell, Facts on File, 1991) was the first book in the list, and it served as required reading for a number of marine mammal classes as long as it remained in print. The last book was *Florida Manatees: Biology, Behavior, and Conservation* (Reynolds & Lynch, Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017). In between these years, his publications included *The Bottlenose Dolphin: Biology and Conservation* (Reynolds, Wells, & Eide, University of Florida Press, 2000), *Ecology and Conservation of the Sirenia: Dugongs and Manatees* (Marsh, O'Shea, & Reynolds, Cambridge University Press, 2012), *Biology of Marine Mammals* (Reynolds & Rommel, Eds., Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), and *Mysterious Manatees* (Glaser & Reynolds, University of Florida Press, 2003).

John was heavily involved with the United Nations Environmental Programme's Caribbean-wide Marine Mammal Action Plan. In the first chapter of *Florida Manatees* ("From a Bluff on Guadeloupe"), John hinted at a plan to reintroduce manatees to Guadeloupe.

Over the course of his career, John had a tremendous impact on many individuals and organizations at the local, national, and international level. He was a champion of marine mammal (especially sirenian) conservation.

