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The life (semi-)aquatic: harbor seal Sprouts and milestones in marine bioacoustics

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Harbor seal Sprouts (*Phoca vitulina*) spent 31 years contributing to a wide variety of scientific studies, supporting educational opportunities for students of all ages, and training generations of future scientists, veterinarians, animal care specialists, and teachers. He participated in research projects on associative learning, sensory biology, communication, and physiology, but was perhaps best known for his contributions to marine mammal acoustics. His good-natured cooperation advanced knowledge of sound production and ontogeny, revealed the true amphibious hearing capabilities of seals, and improved our ability to predict the harmful effects of human-generated noise. Sprouts contributed to 34 empirical publications (thus far), many reviews of marine mammal cognition, communication, and sensory biology, and national policy guidelines for marine mammals. Sprouts taught us many things, but perhaps the most important lesson is about the value of individual subjects. While science and conservation often happen at the level of populations, species, and ecosystems, Sprouts showed us that one individual matters and can have a significant impact. He reminds us to find delight and discovery in this complicated, extraordinary life in science.