



EDITORIAL

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Welcome to Vol. 9, No. 1 of *LAJAM*. We are proud to dedicate this issue to the memory of Dr. Robert Clarke (1919-2011). His death closes one of the earliest and most influential chapters of aquatic mammal science in Latin America. Robert arrived in Chile in 1958 and devoted the rest of his life to the study of the sperm whale from specimen data collected at the height of the whaling operations in the Southeast Pacific. His results have been published in a series of monographs that describe in great detail the various aspects of sperm whale biology. Although sperm whales are no longer hunted and much has changed in the way we do research thanks to the advent of non-lethal techniques, his work will remain a hallmark of this particular era.

The first piece in this issue is an In Memoriam, a last tribute to Robert written by his wife Obla Paliza and his children Aravec, Suyana, and George Clarke. Since several other in memoriam articles have appeared elsewhere, we wanted to do something a little different – more personal. In this piece, his family shares with us brief but interesting glimpses of the work situation that Robert encountered upon arrival in South America, of his outlook on life, and of his many adventures. In addition, several of his close friends and colleagues share with us personal anecdotes and photographs of the times they spent with Robert.

The centerpiece of this issue is the seventh and final part in the series *Sperm whales of the Southeast Pacific*, which focuses on the reproduction and growth in the female. We received the initial submission in February 2009 and knew immediately that we had something truly special in our hands. Eduardo Secchi took it on as the Associate Editor

in charge of shepherding it through the initial peer-review process (here we thank the two anonymous reviewers for their excellent observations and suggestions on behalf of the journal). Later, I asked Alexandre Zerbini to continue assisting me in the evaluation of the manuscript. Progress on the revision was slow due to Robert's advanced age and a number of personal setbacks but, fortunately, Koen Van Waerebeek, another marine mammal scientist residing in Perú, came to the rescue when the reviews required that additional statistical treatment be conducted on the extensive data set being presented. Robert died in February 2011 and although our wish is that we had published his article before his death, we were fortunate that his wife and co-author Obla Paliza, together with Koen, were able to complete the revision.

In closing, while the publication of this final part in the series on Southeast Pacific sperm whales is a fitting tribute to Robert, we must not forget the great woman behind the man. Indeed, this issue is dedicated to Obla as much as it is to Robert!

Daniel M. Palacios¹

Editor -in- Chief
Pacific Grove, California, USA
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¹ I wish to thank my employer, the NOAA Southwest Fisheries Science Center, for allowing me to undertake this editorial work as part of my duties.