

In Memoriam Dale W. Rice

1930-2017

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Dale W. Rice was a born naturalist. He was that kid (many of us are) who studied birds and insects from a young age. He was born on January 21, 1930, in Grand Haven, Michigan, and attended public schools in Springfield, Illinois; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; and Indianapolis, Indiana.

He published his first paper at the age of 16 when he was still in high school:

Rice, D. W. (1946). Notes on the birds of Marion County. *Indiana Audubon Society Yearbook*, 24, 40-41.

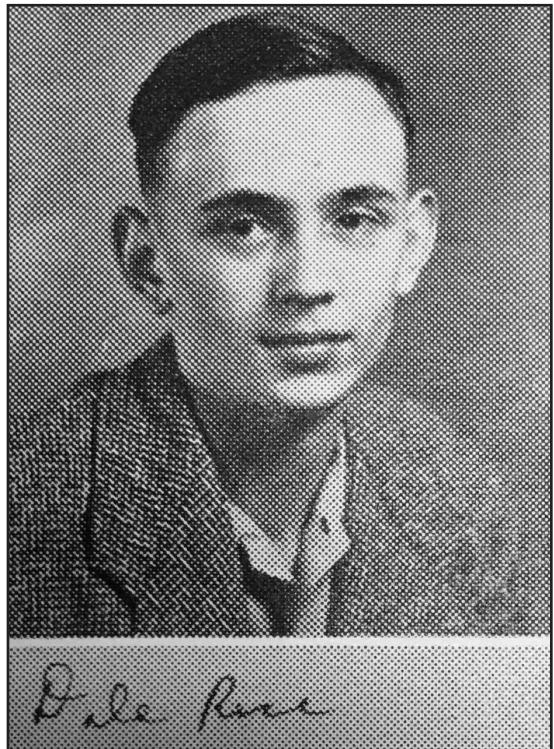
He knew his path from a young age. This is his bio sketch in his high school yearbook:

RICE, DALE WARREN. Biology: Club. Zoology assistant. Indiana Audubon Society. Majors: English, science. Hobby: ornithology. Vocation: zoologist. Indiana University

Dale received his Bachelor of Arts from Indiana University in June 1952 and began graduate studies in Biology at the University of Florida in February 1953.

His Master's thesis from the University of Florida was his first major life history and ecology paper:

Rice, D. W. (1955). *Life history and ecology of Myotis austroriparius* (Master's thesis). University of Florida, Gainesville. 74 pp.



Yearbook photo from Indianapolis Shortridge High School (1948)

After graduation, Dale's first job as a professional research biologist was for the Denver Wildlife Research Laboratory, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. He was assigned to study and mitigate interactions between albatrosses and naval aircraft on Midway Island. Dale worked closely with noted ornithologist Chandler Robbins and was part of the team that banded "Wisdom, The Albatross" in December 1956. Wisdom is the oldest known albatross; she hatched her most recent chick in February 2017.

During his time on Midway, Dale (along with Karl Kenyon) produced three landmark papers on albatross:

Kenyon, K. W., & Rice, D. W. (1958). Homing of Laysan albatrosses. *Condor*, 60, 36.

Rice, D. W., & Kenyon, K. W. (1962). Breeding cycles and behavior of Laysan and black-footed albatrosses. *Auk*, 79, 517-567.

Rice, D. W., & Kenyon, K. W. (1962). Breeding distribution, history and populations of North Pacific albatrosses. *Auk*, 79, 365-386.

In 1958, Karl Kenyon recruited Dale to work at the newly formed marine mammal lab in Seattle. Dale's first assignment was to develop a research program studying the large whales that were caught at the California whaling stations.

Starting in 1960, Dale represented the U.S. at the International Whaling Commission's (IWC) Scientific Committee. Dale was also appointed as the U.S. representative for the IWC's North Pacific Working Group, which was tasked with advising the IWC on the management of whaling. Scientists from the North Pacific whaling nations (i.e., Canada, Japan, the U.S., and the USSR) collaborated on whale marking studies and shared data freely.

Dale conducted extensive whale marking and sightings cruises from 1962 through 1969. The cruises ranged from northern California (where the whaling stations were located) down to the southern tip of Baja California, and, in some years, out west to the Revillagigedo Archipelago. Young researcher Ken Balcomb began working with Dale on these marking cruises in 1965.

Dale's monograph, *The Life History and Ecology of the Gray Whale*, was his first *magnum opus*. Gray whale biology was mostly unknown until Dale proposed his innovative and large-scale gray whale research program. Dale's monograph provided baseline information about gray whale seasonal migrations, morphology, food habits, and reproduction:

Rice, D. W., & Wolman, A. A. (1971). *The life history and ecology of the gray whale (Eschrichtius robustus)* (American Society of Mammalogists Special Publication No. 3). Stillwater, OK: American Society of Mammalogists. 142 pp. (Illus. maps)



International Whaling Commission meeting. Dale is on the right, leaning on the wall, smoking his pipe. (Photo courtesy of Ray Gambell, former Secretary of the IWC)

The papers below are just a few other significant studies that Dale produced while leading research and field studies at the U.S. whaling stations:

- Rice, D. W. (1968). Stomach contents and feeding behavior of killer whales in the eastern North Pacific. *Norsk Hvalfangst-Tidende*, 57(2), 35-38.
- Rice, D. W. (1974). Whales and whale research in the eastern North Pacific. In W. E. Schevill (Ed.), *The whale problem: A status report* (pp. 170-195). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rice, D. W. (1983). Gestation period and fetal growth of the gray whale. *Reports of the International Whaling Commission*, 33, 539-544.

After the whaling stations closed, Dale continued to do whale surveys in many oceans. His whale surveys in Mexico, Hawaii, and Alaska helped initiate photo-identification studies on humpback whales:

- Rice, D. W. (1977). Sperm whales in the equatorial Eastern Pacific: Population size and social organization. *Reports of the International Whaling Commission*, 27, 333-336.
- Rice, D. W. (1977). Synopsis of biological data on the sei whale and Bryde's whale in the eastern North Pacific. *Reports of the International Whaling Commission* (Special Issue 1), 92-97.
- Rice, D. W. (1979). Bryde's whales in the equatorial Eastern Pacific. *Reports of the International Whaling Commission*, 29, 321-324.
- Rice, D. W., & Wolman, A. A. (1982). Whale census in the Gulf of Alaska, June to August 1980. *Reports of the International Whaling Commission*, 32, 491-497.

In 1975, Dale recruited and funded Ken Balcomb to conduct killer whale surveys in Washington State. Ken began working closely with Canadian researcher Mike Bigg, which helped launch killer whale photo-identification studies over a broad region in the Pacific Northwest.

In his later years, Dale wrote a series of scholarly works, including a number of chapters in the *Encyclopedia of Marine Mammals*, edited by W. F. Perrin, B. Würsig, and J. G. M. Thewissen.

Dale was one of the foremost experts on sperm whales. His chapter on sperm whales in the *Handbook of Marine Mammals* is one of the leading works on sperm whales:

- Rice, D. W. (1989). Sperm whale *Physeter macrocephalus* Linnaeus, 1758. In S. H. Ridgway & R. Harrison (Eds.), *Handbook of marine mammals. Vol. 4: River dolphins and the larger toothed whales* (pp. 177-233). London: Academic Press.

Dale's final *magnum opus* was his special publication on marine mammal systematics and distribution:

- Rice, D. W. (1998). *Marine mammals of the world: Systematics and distribution* (Society for Marine Mammalogy Special Publication Number 4). Stillwater, OK: Society for Marine Mammalogy. 231 pp.

He served on the Society for Marine Mammalogy's Taxonomy Committee until his death.

Over the course of his long career, Dale authored or co-authored 164 publications. In recent years, Dale and I have been writing comprehensive and complex papers on distribution and movements of large whales in the North Pacific. Our papers on fin and sperm whales have been published, and I am still revising our paper on North Pacific sei whales. We also have a draft in progress on distribution and movements of North Pacific humpback whales.



Dale relaxing on a whale marking cruise in 1966 (Photo courtesy of Ken Balcomb)

Dale was a very shy person, but, one on one, he was a witty, entertaining conversationalist and was so well-read he could converse on just about any subject. I've been friends with Dale since the early 1980s (we first published together in 1984), and I feel extremely lucky to have learned from him during my whole career and to have spent these final months enjoying his company.

Dale was diagnosed with congestive heart failure and advanced prostate cancer in January 2017. He had always planned to live at least 100 years, so he (and we) were surprised and disappointed that his life was cut short at age 87. He remained his youthful, vital self until the end and enjoyed a lovely spring and summer in his house on Lake Washington. He passed away peacefully in his own home on September 13, 2017.

Sonja Kromann (Marine Mammal Librarian at the Alaska Fisheries Science Center) and I will be managing Dale's amazing marine mammal library once the dust settles.



Dale on a whale tagging cruise in southeast Alaska, 1976 (Photos courtesy of Dale Rice)