

IN MEMORIAM



Robert A. Blaylock III **9/15/47 - 12/31/96**

“Ben” Blaylock, lead editor of the 1995 U.S. Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Marine Mammal Stock Assessments, and a research biologist in the marine mammal program at the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) Miami Laboratory died on December 31, 1996, after being diagnosed with esophageal cancer a year prior.

Ben was born in Waco, Texas. He was enlisted in the U.S. Navy, serving four years and rose to the rank of Ensign. He received his discharge in Norfolk, Virginia, and spent most of his adult life in that area. He attended and graduated from Christopher Newport College at Newport News, Virginia, received his masters degree from William and Mary College in Williamsburg and was accepted into the graduate program at the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS). Ben spent several years at VIMS working on his Ph.D.

After receiving his Ph.D. from VIMS in 1989, he went to work for the NMFS in Miami, Florida. He participated in marine mammal census operations, the stranding network, served as NMFS regional coordinator for the Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico Scientific Review Group, wrote several technical manuals, and was editor of the newsletter *Strandings*. Ben had a strong interest in both writing and marine mammals, as evidenced in the several documents and publications he authored and co-authored.

Ben was blessed with many good friends in the scientific community. During his stay in the hospital in the last few weeks of his life, he received hundreds of E-mail messages which his mother would read to him. These messages bolstered his spirit as they mostly contained stories of how Ben had somehow helped them. We are proud of his courage to try to overcome his illness despite overpowering odds against his survival. The marine mammal community has lost a valued colleague and friend.