

## Michael Soule

While reflecting on Michael Soule's life, I went back and re-read a few articles from the 1980s when I first encountered him. It was a very different world. Conservation Biology did not exist as a scientific discipline, and there was no journal or scientific society. In fact, some commentaries on Soule's early work note with surprise that academic ecologists were becoming involved in conservation, then the domain of wildlife and natural resource managers. Compare this to the situation today and you will have some understanding of his impact. He founded our discipline and led and guided it through its formative years. I am proud to be one of the first members of the SCB, to have served on the Board and as President, and to have seen the Society grow, thrive and ultimately mature into the establishment organisation that I don't think Michael ever quite came to terms with!

His influences are everywhere. Personally I am indebted to him for his science and for his passion. His 1987 book, *Viable Populations for Conservation* was my go-to guide when I was struggling to write species conservation plans in the 1980s and 1990s. It's still a great resource. Soule's first chapter covers a lot of ground, most of which is sound advice even today. As I stumbled through my early efforts in conservation science, Michael Soule was my guide. In 1992 I was lucky to be awarded a Pew Fellowship which involved annual retreats with other fellows and the Advisory Board. To my delight this included Michael Soule. I was in awe of this group of people, but he was always down-to-earth, entertaining, knowledgeable and very kind as well. I learned much from him. He warned us repeatedly not to compromise in this, our crisis discipline. He will be hugely missed but his legacy is enormous.

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