Research in squids offers window into understanding human microbiome

From below, the squid is invisible. From above, it is adorable. “They’re just so beautiful,” says Margaret McFall-Ngai, a zoologist at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. “They’re phenomenal lab animals.”

Few things excite McFall-Ngai more than the partnership between the bobtail squid and *V. fischeri* — and that is after studying it for more than 26 years. Over that time, she has shown that this symbiotic relationship is more intimate than anyone had imagined. She has found that the bacterium out-competes other microbes to establish an entirely faithful relationship with one host. It interacts with the squid’s immune system, guides its body clock and shapes its early development by transforming its body.

“This was completely backwater science,” she says. “Now it’s front-seat science. It’s been fun to watch people realizing that microbes are the centre of the Universe, and to see the field blossom.”

Read full, original story: Microbiology: Here’s looking at you, squid