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Fact Sheet

The Indianapolis Prize

The Indianapolis Prize is the world's leading award given to an individual animal conservationist who has made significant achievements in advancing the sustainability of an animal species or group of species. The \$100,000 biennial award brings the world's attention to the cause of animal conservation and the brave, talented and dedicated men and women who spend their lives saving the world's endangered species. It represents the largest individual monetary award for animal conservation in the world and is given as an unrestricted gift to the chosen recipient.

The Indianapolis Prize was initiated in 2004 by the Indianapolis Zoo as a significant component of its mission to inspire local and global communities to celebrate, protect and preserve our natural world through conservation, education and research. Eli Lilly and Company provided funding for the 2006 and 2008 Indianapolis Prize.

Heroes for the Planet

Nominees for the Indianapolis Prize have lived in the wild, been shot at by poachers and spent days and weeks in high altitudes, blazing heat, freezing cold and tropical downpours – enduring the harshest conditions – to save the lives of the world's endangered species. The Indianapolis Prize was created to honor them, tell their stories and inspire others to join them on a lifelong quest to save what can never be replaced.

Prize Recipients

2008

Relentless in his pursuit to save the world's endangered species since 1952, the world's pre-eminent field biologist, George Schaller, Ph.D., Vice President, Science and Exploration, for the Wildlife Conservation Society, New York, has successfully worked in four continents - Africa, Asia, North America and South America. His research encompasses such iconic mammals as mountain gorillas, Serengeti lions, giant pandas, chiru (Tibetan antelope), Nepal's snow leopards, Mongolian gazelles, and Marco Polo sheep in the Himalayas. He has developed 15 wildlife reserves around the world, including the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska and the Chang Tang Wildlife Reserve in Tibet, and is working to develop an international peace park in the four corners of Pakistan, Afghanistan, China and Tajikistan, where war has harmed wildlife conservation efforts. Later this year, Dr. Schaller will have the opportunity to discuss his work in a lecture series that takes him from coast to coast and will be involved in other educational programs.

2006

The first Indianapolis Prize was awarded to George Archibald, Ph.D., Co-Founder of the International Crane Foundation. He is credited with contributing significantly to the preservation of the world's 15 surviving species of cranes, including the Whooping Crane in North America.

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Nominees

Twenty-nine animal conservationists who have dedicated their lives to saving the Earth's endangered species were nominated to receive the 2008 Indianapolis Prize. The nominees' work spans the globe, and they have focused on a wide range of animal species, including – but not limited to -- manatees, raptors, dolphins, whales, dugongs, falcons, rhinos, mountain gorillas, tree kangaroos, elephants, chimpanzees, ibis, drills, ikapi, duiker, bonobos, snow leopards, chinchillas, Puerto Rican Crested Toad, tigers, turtles, cheetahs, marine mammals, wolves, jaguars, leopards, Vietnamese warty pigs, Tibetan red deer, and the Cahow. The field of nominees was narrowed down to six finalists. (See 2008 Indianapolis Prize Nominees List.)

Award Presentation

The Indianapolis Prize Gala, presented by AES Corporation, the parent corporation of Indianapolis Power and Light, highlights not only the finalists and winner, but also the vitality and commitment of the Indianapolis community. This celebration draws international attention to conservation issues. The Prize is not designed to be a quiet, academic, scientist-focused event, but instead an energetic and spectacular celebration of conservation victories. The goal is to inspire the general public to start caring about conservation, and to place heroes, who live in tents in danger of both wild beasts and poachers, on the pedestal usually reserved for sports and entertainment stars. The 2008 gala will be held on September 27, 2008, at the Indianapolis Marriott Downtown.

2010 Indianapolis Prize

Nominations for the 2010 Indianapolis Prize will open on June 1, 2008, and close on November 30, 2008. The six finalists will be announced in August 2009.

To learn more about the Indianapolis Prize, please visit indianapolisprize.org.

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