



Indianapolis Zoo

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Elephant Expert Iain Douglas-Hamilton Receives 2010 Indianapolis Prize

WASHINGTON --- Relentless in his lifelong devotion to the elephants' survival, Save the Elephants founder Iain Douglas-Hamilton, Ph.D., has been named the 2010 recipient of the Indianapolis Prize, the world's leading award for animal conservation. In recognition for his lifetime achievements, Dr. Douglas-Hamilton will receive \$100,000 and the Lilly Medal at a gala ceremony presented by Cummins Inc. on Sept. 25, 2010, at The Westin Hotel in Indianapolis.

The colorful career of Iain Douglas-Hamilton has included being squashed by a rhino, targeted by poachers, and poked by elephants' tusks. He has suffered malaria, hepatitis and other diseases so exotic most people have never even heard of them – not to mention the plane crashes he has survived. He has persevered through severe droughts and a flood so powerful it washed away years of research. So why does he endure all this? One reason – to save elephants.

Four decades ago, Douglas-Hamilton pioneered the first in-depth scientific study of elephant social behavior that has set the standard for every study to follow. He led emergency anti-poaching efforts in Uganda to bring the elephant population there from the very brink of extinction. He has testified before Congress on behalf of his beloved elephants multiple times, leading to the African elephant bill, to date the most successful funding program for the species. His pioneering Global Positioning System (GPS) elephant tracking, widely emulated in Africa and Asia, has become a model survey technique. He recently partnered with Google Earth to show elephant movement in real time via satellite images.

In September 2009, Douglas-Hamilton worked to rescue a rare herd of desert elephants in northern Kenya and Mali, threatened from one of the worst droughts in nearly a dozen years. In the spring of 2010, a devastating flood destroyed the Save the Elephants camp in Kenya including staff tents, computers and years of field research notes. With a team of local researchers, the camp is now being rebuilt.

He has patiently, relentlessly countered efforts to kill the African elephant for ivory, while continuing to educate others through his extensive conservation research. Just recently, at the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), Douglas-Hamilton was successful in campaigning against the Tanzanian and Zambian proposals to downlist the elephants' status on the endangered list and sell their ivory stockpiles.

“The plight of the African elephant is intensely personal to Iain. He has studied, named and nurtured thousands of African elephants for generations, and it is this intimate understanding of and love for these magnificent mammals that drives Iain's forceful efforts to secure a future for endangered African elephants,” said Michael Crowther, President/CEO, Indianapolis Zoo. “Iain truly epitomizes what it means to be a hero.”

“Iain is a one-of-a-kind encyclopedia on elephants. His breadth of knowledge, derived from personal experience, observation, and interactions with managers, politicians, and land owners, is a critical and unique asset to conservation,” said George Wittemyer, assistant professor

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1st add

2010 Indianapolis Prize Winner

in Colorado State University's Department of Fish, Wildlife and Conservation Biology, a protégé who has worked with Douglas-Hamilton since 1997. “His legacy to the conservation community, general public and the African elephant includes alerting the world to the risks of its overexploitation, original and continued research on the behavior and ecology of the species, identification of critical populations/regions facing extreme threats, creation and implementation of novel solutions to the multitude of emerging conservation issues, and educating the public about the wonders and intelligence of the African elephant, its habitats, and the people with which it coexists.”

Born in Dorset, England, Douglas-Hamilton attended Gordonstoun School in Scotland and received his bachelor’s degree and doctorate from the University of Oxford in Oxford, England. He currently works and resides in Nairobi, Kenya.

The 2008 Indianapolis Prize was awarded to legendary field biologist George Schaller, Ph.D. Schaller’s accomplishments span decades and continents, bringing fresh focus to the plight of several endangered species – from tigers in India to gorillas in Rwanda – and inspiring others to join the crusade.

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EDITOR’S NOTE:

**Downloadable jpg images and high quality b-roll are available
on the Indianapolis Prize website:
www.indianapolisprize.org.**

The biennial \$100,000 Indianapolis Prize represents the largest individual monetary award for animal conservation in the world and is given as an unrestricted gift to the chosen honoree. The Indianapolis Prize was initiated by the [Indianapolis Zoo](#) as a significant component of its mission to empower people and communities, both locally and globally, to advance animal conservation. This 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 Earth’s endangered animal species. It was first awarded in 2006 to Dr. George Archibald, the co-founder of the [International Crane Foundation](#) and one of the world’s great field biologists. In 2008, the Indianapolis Prize went to Dr. George Schaller, the world’s preeminent field biologist and vice president of Panthera and senior conservationist for the [Wildlife Conservation Society](#). The Eli Lilly and Company Foundation has provided funding for the Indianapolis Prize since 2006.