



Indianapolis Zoo

1200 West Washington Street P.O. Box 22309, Indianapolis, Indiana 46222-0309 317.630.2711 ph 317.630.5153 fx

Iain Douglas-Hamilton, Ph.D. – Biography

Iain Douglas-Hamilton, Ph.D. (born 1942) is recognized by many as the one of world's foremost authorities on elephant conservation, focused on understanding elephant choices by studying their movements and integrating findings into conservation and management strategies. He is the founder and CEO of Save the Elephants, a UK Trust whose mission is to secure a future for elephants in Africa.

Early Life

Born in Dorset, United Kingdom, Douglas-Hamilton grew up in Constantia, Cape Town, but moved to Scotland as a teen. He attended the Gordonstoun School in Scotland from 1955 to 1960 and later earned his Bachelor of Science degree (1965) and Doctorate of Philosophy in Zoology (1972) from Oxford University.

Elephant Research

During the 1960s, Douglas-Hamilton carried out the first in-depth scientific study of wild elephant social behavior in Tanzania, which paved the way for much of elephant research and conservation today. He introduced behavioral ecology to elephant conservation through detailed monitoring and recording of births, deaths and migrations. During the 1970s, he investigated the status of elephants throughout Africa and was the first to alert the world to the ivory poaching holocaust. In 1979, Douglas-Hamilton led a comprehensive ivory trade study for USFWS that provided a foundation for subsequent ivory trade monitoring. He chronicled how Africa's elephant population was halved between 1979 and 1989, and he was the first to alert the world to the poaching crisis and was instrumental in bringing about the world ivory trade ban.

From 1980 to 1982 he developed and led a successful emergency anti-poaching program in Uganda's national parks, where elephants were on the brink of extinction. His work has led directly to the halt in the species' precipitous decline and to the subsequent stabilization of many elephant populations.

Douglas-Hamilton was elected regional advisor for the International Union for Conservation of Nature (East Africa Region) and served this role until 1988. Through the mid-1990s, he coordinated a number of elephant studies and projects including the Tsavo Elephant Count on behalf of Government of Kenya and the East African Wildlife Society, European Economic Community/World Wildlife Fund African Elephant Programme, EC African Elephant Survey and Conservation Project, Lake Manyara National Park Aerial Survey and the United Nations Environment Programme/World Wildlife Fund African Elephant Database Project.

Save the Elephants

In 1993, Douglas-Hamilton founded Save the Elephants (STE) in Northern Kenya, in order to create an effective and flexible nonprofit dedicated specifically to elephants. The organization works to sustain elephant populations and preserve the habitats in which elephants are found, while at the same time fostering a heightened appreciation and visibility for elephants and their often fragile existence.

Save the Elephants has been instrumental in helping to revitalize African elephant populations, while at the same time, increasing in awareness in the many issues that threaten to erode elephant populations and the habitats in which they live. The organization carries out rigorous studies of elephants, including elephant collaring and more recently, sophisticated elephant tracking techniques.

Media Contacts

Judith L. Gagen
Indianapolis Zoo
(317) 630-2010
jgagen@indyzoo.com

Linda Jackson
Borshoff
(317) 631-6400
linda.jackson@borshoff.biz

Chair

Myrta J. Pulliam

Honorary Co-Chairs

Christel DeHaan
Harrison Ford
Carl Hiaasen
Richard G. Lugar
Roger Sant
Bren Simon

Executive Committee

Mayor Greg Ballard
Angela F. Braly
Mary Clare Broadbent
France A. Cordova, Ph.D.
Lori Efrogmson-Aguilera
Suzanne M. Fehsenfeld
Bobby Fong, Ph.D.
Anton H. George
Jo Ann Gora, Ph.D.
Scott A. Jones
Michael S. Maurer
Michael A. McRobbie, Ph.D.
Samuel L. Odle
Jeffrey H. Smulyan
John T. Thompson

Nominating Committee

Beth E. Cate
Devra G. Kleiman, Ph.D.*
Robert C. Lacy, Ph.D.
Georgina M. Mace, Ph.D.
James Murtaugh
Myrta Pulliam
George B. Rabb, Ph.D.
Jan Ramer, DVM
George B. Douglas-Hamilton,
Ph.D.
Denise L. Solso

Jury

William W. Chin, M.D.
Christel DeHaan
David Ehrenfeld, M.D., Ph.D.
John Flicker, Ph.D.
Paul Grayson
David W. Macdonald, D.Sc.
Myrta J. Pulliam
Carter S. Roberts
John W. Terborgh, Ph.D.
Jeff Trandahl

*Deceased

As a fundamental part of his work at STE, Douglas-Hamilton pioneered GPS tracking of elephants in Africa, which has been widely emulated and has become a standard survey technique.

Douglas-Hamilton's current research uses the latest communications technology to plot the movements of individual elephants as they negotiate the complex maze of safe and risky areas. His team has identified the crucial corridors that need to be protected so that elephants can reach their feeding grounds safely.

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.

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.

Publications and presentations

Douglas-Hamilton and his wife, Oria, have co-authored two award-winning books, "Among the Elephants" (1975) and "Battle for the Elephants" (1992) and have made numerous television films. Douglas-Hamilton has written a number of articles for scientific publications over the decades that have helped shape elephant protection efforts around the world.

In recent years, Iain has spoken at numerous conferences including the Wildlife Conservation Network, the 7th World Wilderness Congress, the International Elephant and Rhino Research Symposium in Vienna, the CIWF Animal Sentience Conference 2005 and was the keynote speaker at the International Elephant Foundation conference on "human-elephant relationships and conflict" in Sri Lanka. Additionally, Iain has spoken at universities, zoological societies and private fundraising functions throughout Europe and America. He also conducts regular lecture tours and works with the media to promote STE's mission and awareness of elephants in general.

Awards

The Indianapolis Prize is not Douglas-Hamilton's first professional recognition. His conservation honors include the Disney Wildlife Conservation Fund Award (2006), Dawkins Prize for Conservation and Animal Welfare (2001), Crystal Claw of the Wildlife Documentary Film Festival of France (2001) and the Royal Geographic Society – Mrs. Patrick Ness Award (1974). Douglas-Hamilton has also been awarded the Order of the British Empire (1992) and the Order of the Golden Ark (1988). Douglas-Hamilton's literary honors include the Sir Peter Kent Conservation Book Prize (1992), Yorkshire Post Best Book Award (1975) and U.S. National Wildlife Federation Conservation Book Prize (1975).

In recognition for his lifetime achievements, Dr. Douglas-Hamilton will receive the Indianapolis Prize – \$100,000 and the Lilly Medal – at a gala ceremony presented by Cummins Inc., September 25, 2010, at The Westin Hotel in downtown Indianapolis.

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 local and global, to advance animal conservation. This 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 Earth's endangered animal species.

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

###