



Press release

Wild and Wonderful evening with Sir David Attenborough seeks to raise £1m for conservation heroes

October 2018

The Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN) will celebrate its 25th anniversary with a fundraising gala at the Natural History Museum in London this autumn, made possible by the support of anniversary partner, The Corcoran Foundation.

350 guests including the charity's Trustee Sir David Attenborough will attend the Hope Gala on November 14th.

Hosted by star of Lambing Live and WFN Ambassador Kate Humble, the evening will celebrate the achievements of Whitley Award winning conservationists over the last 25 years. The gala aims to raise an additional £1 million in conservation funding for these winners, with the first pledge towards this target being made by L.A. based Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation.

Guests will enjoy a spectacular show from [Fashion for Conservation](#), which promotes ethical couture, with models showcasing sustainable fashion pieces under the splendor of Hope – the blue whale skeleton - in the Hintze Hall.

The Whitley Fund for Nature is a fundraising and grant-giving nature conservation charity offering recognition, training and grants to support the work of grassroots conservationists across some of the most biodiversity rich, resource poor places in the world.

Inspired by the impact of Whitley Award winners over the past quarter century, WFN have set up a 25th Anniversary Fund. Their target is to raise £1 million to enable the charity to increase vital support to projects where funds are urgently needed to preserve endangered wildlife and wild places.

Whitley Award winners who will attend the gala and are available for interview include:

[Randall Arauz \(Sharks, Costa Rica\)](#), [Farwiza Farhan \(Sumatran orangutans, Indonesia\)](#), [Rodrigo Medellin \(Bats, Latin America\)](#), [Shivani Bhalla \(Lions, Kenya\)](#), [Gladys Kalema-Zikusoka \(Mountain gorillas, Uganda\)](#), [Charudutt Mishra \(Snow Leopards, Indian Himalayas\)](#), [Patricia Majluf \(Fisheries, Peru\)](#), [Aparajita Datta \(Hornbills, India\)](#), [Pedro Vaz Pinto \(Giant Sable, Angola\)](#), [Rachel Graham \(Sharks & rays, Central America & the Caribbean\)](#), and [Pablo Borboroglu \(Penguins, Southern Hemisphere\)](#). Top sponsors for the event include [Steppes Travel](#), [Soneva](#), and [Jupiter](#).

Edward Whitley, Founder of the Whitley Fund for Nature, said: “During the last 25 years, we have helped conservationists from across the globe come together and deliver a lasting impact for future generations. Our Award winners take action and encourage action from others to address the serious challenges facing biodiversity worldwide.

“Our Hope Gala will celebrate the impact our winners have had within local communities, as well as across their countries and globally. We are profoundly grateful to our partners, sponsors and donors who play a crucial role in helping conservation projects succeed.”

The Whitley Awards has given £15 million to support the work of 200 environmental heroes and protects endangered wildlife living alongside communities in more than 80 countries across the Global South.

For more information about the gala, visit www.whitleyaward.org/events/hope-gala. To donate to WFN's 25th Anniversary Fund, visit: <https://whitleyaward.org/2018/08/07/25th-anniversary-fund/>. Follow Whitley Fund for Nature on Facebook and @WhitleyAwards on Twitter and Instagram.

Ends

For more information about WFN, the Gala or conservationists supported please contact:

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To register any interest to interview previous Whitley Award winners please contact Liquid. Interview slots will be available on Thursday 15th November (AM).

Notes to Editors:

- The Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN) is a UK-registered charity that champions outstanding grassroots leaders in nature conservation across the Global South. This year the charity is marking its 25th anniversary.
- The Whitley Awards are prestigious international prizes presented to individuals in recognition of their achievements in nature conservation. Each award winner receives a prize worth £40,000 in project funding over one year. The charity's patron, HRH The Princess Royal, presents the awards annually at a special ceremony in London.
- The Whitley Gold Award is worth £60,000 and recognises an outstanding past recipient of a Whitley Award who has gone on to make a significant contribution to conservation.

Joining the judging panel to assist in selection, the Gold winner also acts as a mentor to Whitley Award winners receiving their awards in the same year.

- Since its beginnings 25 years ago, the Whitley Fund for Nature has given £15 million to conservation and recognised 200 conservation leaders in over 80 countries.
- WFN operates a rigorous application process involving expert panel representation from international NGOs including WWF-UK, Fauna and Flora International (FFI) and the Zoological Society of London (ZSL). This year, WFN received 136 applications which passed through four stages of assessment, reviewed at every step by expert screeners and panellists who kindly offer their expertise voluntarily.
- The Whitley Awards are open to individuals working on wildlife conservation issues in biodiversity-rich, resource poor countries. Further eligibility criteria are available from Liquid.
- During their trip to London for the awards, finalists have the opportunity to meet the judges, WFN's trustees including Sir David Attenborough, and patron HRH The Princess Royal. They participate in professional media and speech training, attend networking receptions with leading conservation organisations, meet WFN donors and are interviewed by the media. The associated publicity of winning a Whitley Award puts a spotlight on their important work, boosting profile both in the UK and winner's home countries.
- Whitley Award winners join an international network of Whitley alumni eligible to apply for Continuation Funding grants. These follow-on grants are awarded competitively to winners seeking to scale up their effective conservation results on the ground over multiple years.

WFN is generously supported by: Arcus Foundation; The Balcombe Trust; The William Brake Charitable Trust in memory of William Brake; The Byford Trust; The Constance Travis Charitable Trust; The Corcoran Foundation; Earlymarket; The Foundation for the Promotion of Wellbeing; The G. D. Charitable Trust; Garfield Weston Foundation; The Leonardo DiCaprio Foundation; The LJC Fund; The Britta & Jeremy Lloyd Family Charitable Trust; Lund Trust - A charitable fund of Peter Baldwin & Lisbet Rausing; The Rabelais Trust; The Rufford Foundation; The Savitri Waney Charitable Trust; The Schroder Foundation; The Shears Foundation in memory of Trevor Shears; The Whitley Animal Protection Trust; WWF-UK; The Friends of the Whitley Fund for Nature; and all our partners and supporters and those donors who have chosen to give anonymously.