



## Indianapolis Zoo

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# Indianapolis Prize Winning Conservationist Fights for Snow Leopards' Survival

INDIANAPOLIS --- As Vice President of Panthera and Senior Conservationist for the Wildlife Conservation Society, George B. Schaller, Ph.D., is relentless in his pursuit to save endangered species across the globe. The winner of the second Indianapolis Prize credits the award with helping him reach some important milestones in his work to save snow leopards in 2009.

Generous with his time and resources, Schaller used a portion of the \$100,000 Indianapolis Prize to visit China's Qinghai Province in May 2009 to help initiate snow leopard programs supported by Panthera, an organization whose mission is to conserve the world's 36 species of wild cats. Most of Schaller's work was conducted in the Sanjiangyuan Reserve ("Source of Three Rivers Reserve"—Yellow, Yangtze, Mekong), which covers nearly 58,000 square miles, primarily at elevations above 11,800 feet. In addition to assessing snow leopard presence and threats, the trip provided Peking University Ph.D. student Li Juan with the training she needs to start a snow leopard study this year. Schaller and Juan traveled more than 2,600 miles to evaluate potential study areas for the student's research project, and Schaller will continue to mentor Juan as she pursues her Ph.D.

While in Asia, Schaller met with representatives from the Snow Leopard Trust and Shan Shui, one of the leading conservation organizations in China, to create a new collaborative snow leopard research and conservation program. These organizations signed a long-term agreement that will bring much needed expertise and funding to efforts to save snow leopards in China, where as much as 50 percent of the remaining wild population exists.

"George Schaller's extensive research, fieldwork and training have been essential to saving snow leopards in regions of China," said Tom McCarthy, Director of Snow Leopard Programs for Panthera. "I can't think of a better use of the Indianapolis Prize funds than teaching future generations the urgency and necessity of wildlife conservation."

"The important aspects of this project for me," added Michael Crowther, president and CEO of the Indianapolis Zoo, "are its collaborative and long-term nature. It's George's innate ability to bring people together and to forge alliances that overcome the short-term problems of political or geographic conflicts in order to serve the greater good that makes him a hero for me, and for the world. It seems he has again worked his magic for the snow leopards."

The nominees for the 2010 Indianapolis Prize will be announced on October 7, 2009. To learn more about Panthera's efforts to save snow leopards and how to become involved, visit [www.panthera.org](http://www.panthera.org). More information about the Indianapolis Prize is available at [www.indianapolisprize.org](http://www.indianapolisprize.org).

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*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 inspire local and global communities and to celebrate, protect and preserve our natural world through conservation, education and research. 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. The Eli Lilly and Company Foundation has provided funding for the Indianapolis Prize since 2006.*

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