

**Citation read at the awards presentation ceremony on 1 November 2016**

### **The ZSL Award for Outstanding Contributions to Conservation is awarded to John Robinson**

John is currently Executive Vice President for Conservation and Science, and Joan O. L. Tweedy Chair in Conservation Strategy at the Wildlife Conservation Society.

It is not an exaggeration to say that John is recognised as one of the founders of conservation biology. He received his doctorate in zoology from the University of North Carolina in 1977 and continued with postdoctoral studies at the Smithsonian Institution. In 1980, he joined the University of Florida where he established a graduate training programme for young professionals from Latin America, which became a world-renowned centre for interdisciplinary graduate training in conservation. While at Florida John also carried out research on subsistence and commercial use of wildlife in Latin America, providing some of the earliest work in a field that has since grown to span the globe and has a significant impact on national and global policies.

In 1990 John joined the Wildlife Conservation Society to strengthen their global field programmes. Applying his vision, drive and leadership, John put WCS at the forefront of field-based wildlife conservation, developing conservation projects in over 60 countries. Through much of the 1990s he played a leading role in developing IUCN's work on sustainable use and, with his skill for taking an evidence-based look at the issues, John helped draft the IUCN Policy Statement on the Sustainable Use of Living Natural Resources, which was formally adopted in 2000. The finely balanced wording of this Policy, which the conservation community still considers as the commonly agreed benchmark on these difficult issues, owes much to John's abilities as a negotiator and writer.

John has an exceptionally strong strategic mind and is able to think through the big issues in ways that help to crystallize the thinking of others. He has perceptive insight into the relationship between conservation research and practice, and the application of conservation theory to conservation policy and implementation.

In 2002 John initiated a Memorandum of Understanding between ZSL and WCS, which provided the framework for the establishment of a permanent WCS presence in Europe and a close, on-going relationship between the two organisations. WCS and ZSL have co-organised scientific symposia, worked with The Royal Foundation on the ground-breaking United for Wildlife initiative and collaborated on many issues of common interest. In 2003, John was inducted into the Royal Order of the Golden Ark by Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands, in recognition of lifetime achievement and service to conservation.

John is a Past President of the Society for Conservation Biology, and he has served as Chair on the boards of both The Christensen Fund and Foundations of Success. Since 2012 he has been Councillor for North America and Vice President with the IUCN. In recent years John has emerged as one of the strongest voices expressing the urgency of combatting the illegal wildlife trade. In celebration of his resolve and dedication to environmental sustainability we are delighted to present John with this ZSL Award for Outstanding Contributions to Conservation as a token of our high regard and appreciation.