

The ACADEMY NEWSLETTER

January 1989



January Members' Meetings



Dr. George H. Balazs with a Hawaiian Sea Turtle

Dr. George H. Balazs

Of the seven species of sea turtles in the world, six occur in waters bordering the United States and its territories, and three species are native to Hawaii. But many turtles have disappeared from areas due to environmental pressures. On Wednesday, January 18 at 2:00 and 7:30 p.m. and Thursday, January 19 at 7:30 p.m., Dr. George H. Balazs will present "20 Years of Adventures and Research with the Endangered Hawaiian Sea Turtle."

A zoologist and leader of the Hawaiian Research Recovery Team, Dr. Balazs has spent a great deal of time studying the Hawaiian sea turtles in the Hawaiian Islands National Wildlife Refuge. Combining his work as a research scientist and skilled photographer, Dr. Balazs' photo essay focuses on his efforts to study and protect Hawaiian sea turtles, including personal accounts of research expeditions to the remote Northwestern Hawaiian Islands.

During the sea turtle breeding season, when female turtles come ashore to lay their eggs, Balazs often stays up all night measuring and tagging the rare and endangered turtles. His study site is 12-acre East Island, where about 300 of the green turtles that range in Hawaii breed each spring. This tiny islet is one of about 100 atolls, shoals and rocky pinnacles that comprise the Northwestern Hawaiian Islands, spanning across 1,110 miles of the Pacific in what is the world's longest and most isolated archipelago.

The Academy Store will be open before and after the January evening meetings. Next month, nature photographer Ron Cronin will present "Oregon Forests" on February 8 and 9.

New Exhibit Focuses on the Endangered Mountain Gorillas of Central Africa



Nick Nichols

A brilliant combination of talents brings the story of the vanishing mountain gorillas of Rwanda to San Francisco in the special exhibit, "Gorilla," opening January 14 at the Academy. Co-sponsored by the California Academy of Sciences and the Aperture Foundation in New York, "Gorilla" features the compelling photographs of Nick Nichols and original soundtrack with on-location recordings by Dr. Bernie Krause, the man responsible for the environmental orchestration of the Academy's African Waterhole.

As visitors to the exhibit trek through a bamboo jungle, the history of humans and gorillas becomes poignantly clear. In 1850, Paul du Chaillu, an American explorer, went to study first-hand the giant ape and its habits. His encounter left one gorilla dead. In 1902 another party, led by Captain Oscar von Beringe, a German officer, "... managed to shoot two." In little more than 50 years the mountain gorilla was almost extinct.

In 1959 Dr. George Schaller began his pioneering research on the mountain gorilla. His study methods, in contrast to the gun-

toting collectors who had gone before him, was to insinuate himself among the gorillas until they accepted him as part of the scenery.

In 1967 Dian Fossey, at the urging of Louis Leakey, established Karisoke as a research station in the Virunga volcanoes. By the late 70's Fossey's scientific work was second to her fight against poaching. Through publications, television and lectures, Fossey rallied support throughout the world for her efforts to protect the mountain gorilla from extinction. The Academy's exhibit is meant to continue her work in educating people to protect a species that cannot protect itself.

After premiering at the Academy, where it will be on display through April 30, "Gorilla" will tour the country in an effort to increase public awareness of the need to preserve one of man's closest living primate relatives.

Major funding for this exhibit was provided by Mr. and Mrs. George Roberts with generous support from Mr. and Mrs. Carroll Soo-Hoo and the Institute of Museum Services.

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January at the Academy

Continuing exhibitions and shows:

"Wild California" permanent
"Sliding Toward Extinction: The Vanishing Wildlife of California" through May 18

- 1 Last day of "The Christmas Star" in Morrison Planetarium
- 6 "Skywatch '89" opens in Morrison Planetarium
- 7 Traditional Arts — Blues harmonica 1:00 p.m.
- 12 Lilienthal Lecture — "The Mountain Gorillas of Rwanda" 7:30 p.m.
- 14 Gorilla opens
- 14 Traditional Arts — Chinese textile arts 1:00 p.m.
- 16 AAAS Science Day
- 18 Members' Meetings — "Hawaiian Sea Turtles" at 2:00 and 7:30 p.m.
- 19 Members' Meeting 7:30 p.m.
- 21 Traditional Arts — Chinese textile arts 1:00 p.m.
- 22 "Coelacanth: A Living Fossil" closes
- 24 Planetarium concert — Latin American guitar and harp 8:00 p.m.
- 26 Lecture — "Gorilla Quest in Nigeria" 7:30 p.m.
- 28 Traditional Arts — Doll making 1:00 p.m.
- 29 Young Audiences — Kulintang music 1:00 p.m.



To further your appreciation of the extraordinary creatures featured in the exhibit, "Gorilla," visitors will want to pick up a copy of the exhibition catalogue, "Gorilla: Struggle for Survival in the Virungas," which is available in the Academy Store at the publication price of only \$29.95. "Koko" and other gorilla items will also be available.

Looking Ahead to February

- 2 "Treasures of Wild California" films 7:30 p.m.
- 8 Members' Meetings "Oregon Forests" 2:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.
- 9 Members' Meeting 7:30 p.m.
- 16 Lecture — "Mt. Kenya Climbing Expedition" 7:30 p.m.