



Research to protect, treat and cure animals.

Wildlife Research Improves Our World

By Heather Grimshaw

Wildlife health affects our world in a myriad of ways. From the waters we swim and the land we till to the forests we roam and the air we breathe, wildlife health affects our own health and well-being.

“Increasingly, as we crowd this earth, we will be affected more and more by wildlife diseases,” says Dr. Barbara Wolfe, former chair of the Morris Animal Foundation (MAF) Wildlife Scientific Advisory Board.

While headlines tout prevention of disease transmission from wildlife to people—such as rabies and avian influenza virus—and many organizations focus on conservation, MAF is one of a select few organizations to fund studies into the health of wildlife around the world. Our initiative is unique, say wildlife health experts who see a growing need for data and a dwindling number of resources.

“Wildlife medical research is extremely difficult to fund,” Wolfe says. “Morris Animal Foundation has established itself as a major wildlife health grant-making organization, so we get the top-notch grant applications—all of the important public issues are coming to MAF.”

Since 1967, the Foundation has funded hundreds of wildlife health studies that have helped species on every continent. From noninvasive contraceptive devices that help manage overabundant populations to safer anesthetics and artificial insemination techniques that help endangered species, MAF-funded scientists lead the way in improving wildlife health. Animals in more than 100 countries have been touched by MAF-funded wildlife research.

In Africa, Dr. Sam Wasser and his colleagues note the plight of female elephants who roam alone because their kin were killed by poachers, and Dr. Tony Goldberg started an innovative program to train scientists to study disease in primates. In Puerto Rico, teams of Smithsonian Institution scientists dive to reseed sparse coral beds with frozen sperm.



Funding wildlife research requires patience. We know that results from groundbreaking studies can take 5 to 10 years to materialize, so we revel in progress reports like those included in the special wildlife section of [AnimalNews 8.4](#).

With your help, MAF will continue to tackle the big issues and provide support to the world's wildlife researchers—passionate people who provide insight and understanding into a variety of species that we strive to assist.

Learn More:

[D03ZO-112: Consequences of Social Disturbance Associated with Poaching of the African Elephant](#)

[D07ZO-024: Eco-Epidemiology of Infectious Disease Transmission in Wild African Primates II](#)

[D07ZO-053: Coral Cryopreservation for Gene Banks: A Tool to Fight Infectious Disease](#)