

Press release, November 4th, 2014



## Wallace J. Nichols, Dee Boersma, Gerardo Ceballos, Barbara Block, Randall Wells, George Durner...What do these super-star scientists have in common?

*Their work focuses on turtles, penguins, jaguars, tuna, dolphins and polar bears, but these researchers all have one thing in common: The technology that allows them to make exciting new discoveries about the animals they study and contribute to global conservation policy-making is a French-American satellite system called Argos. These top-notch biologists and many others will present their work during the International Argos User Conference on Wildlife Applications at the Baltimore Aquarium from November 18th-20th, 2014.*

Argos was created in 1978 as a collaborative French-American project between the French space agency (CNES), the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

Argos is the only global satellite-based system for location and data collection designed specifically to study and protect our planet's environment. It is a space-based tool for investigating the Earth and its wildlife in order to better protect them. The Argos system is able to locate and track an 'object' (fixed or mobile) in remote or inaccessible areas (oceans, deserts or even Polar regions) and collect scientific data.

Since the 1970s, Argos has enabled the wildlife community to continuously rewrite their textbooks on the migration patterns and habits of an increasingly wide variety of land, marine and avian animal species thus providing the essential science-based data needed to guide global conservation policy-making through informed management, economic and political decisions.

The spirit of Argos is captured in the innovative and breathtaking scientific efforts of the global wildlife community, a large portion of which is showcased from November 18th-20th, at the International User Conference on Argos Wildlife Applications at the National Aquarium in Baltimore, MD.

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**Dr. Wallace «J.» Nichols** is a scientist, wild water advocate, movement-maker, New York Times bestselling author, and dad. He takes a slow, collaborative approach with leaders in businesses, government, non-profits, and academia to inspire a deeper connection with nature and inventive solutions to pressing issues. His research and expeditions have taken him to coasts and waterways across North, Central and South America, to Asia, Africa, Australia, and Europe where he continually finds that the emotional connection to waters of all kinds—rather than force of financial gain—is what keeps his colleagues and collaborators working hard to understand and restore our blue planet.



**Dr. Dee Boersma** has been dubbed the “Jane Goodall of penguins” by the New York Times. Seabirds are her passion. She has shown that even a small oil spill over a hundred kilometers from their nest can cause fork-tailed storm-petrels to feed contaminated food to their offspring, and that climate variation can cause Galapagos penguins to desert their eggs and chicks. Dr. Boersma considers penguins «marine sentinels,» sounding the alarm on environmental threats to ocean ecosystems. Dr. Boersma and her students follow the lives of individual penguins, monitor the colony, and develop the data needed to plan effective conservation efforts at Punta Tombo, Argentina.



**Dr. Gerardo Ceballos** is a major figure in global conservation science, carrying out strenuous field work testing ideas in countryside biogeography and doing important theoretical/practical work on the global distributions of mammals and their significance for mammal conservation as well as on global rates of extinction as humanity triggers the sixth great extinction event. Ceballos also has been responsible for enormous direct contributions to the preservation of the biodiversity of Mexico -- a global «hotspot.»

Dr. Ceballos' work was recognized this year with the prestigious Indianapolis Prize, a biennial award given to individuals for «extraordinary contributions to conservation efforts» affecting one or more animal species by the Indianapolis Zoo. It is considered to be the world's leading award for animal conservation by members of the professional wildlife conservation community.

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Dr. Block's research is focused on the physiology of tunas, sharks and billfishes and studies how large pelagic fishes utilize the open ocean environment. Dr. Block is Co-director of the Tuna Research and Conservation Center, the only facility in North America holding bluefin tuna for captive research. Her team has worked with engineers to develop and deploy electronic tags on ocean fish and sharks. The combination of lab and field work has led to a rapid increase in the understanding of movement patterns, population structure, physiology and behaviors of pelagic fish. Dr. Block leads a bluefin tuna tagging program called TAG-A-Giant that has placed almost 2000 electronic tags on northern bluefin in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans to better understand their ecology, physiology and conservation.



**Dr. Randall Wells** has been using Argos to track dolphins and small whales since 1997. His involvement includes the tagging and/or tracking of more than 100 small cetaceans of 8 species, ranging in size from franciscanas up to pilot whales. His current research program uses a collaborative approach to examine the behavior, social structure, life history, ecology, health, and population biology of bottlenose dolphins along the central west coast of Florida, with studies focusing on five concurrent generations of a locally resident 160-member dolphin community. Recent research topics include the effects of human activities on coastal dolphins, such as boat traffic, fishing activities, human feeding of wild dolphins, and environmental contaminants. Dr. Wells' work was nominated for the prestigious Indianapolis Prize, a biennial award given to individuals for «extraordinary contributions to conservation efforts» affecting one or more animal species by the Indianapolis Zoo. It is considered to be the world's leading award for animal conservation by members of the professional wildlife conservation community.



**Dr. George Durner** is a research zoologist with the US Geological Survey, Alaska Science Center polar bear research program. He entered this position in 1991 and currently works with a team of USGS scientists to identify and describe the mechanisms that drive the response of polar bears to a changing Arctic ecosystem. His research focus is on polar bear habitat relationships, particularly on how polar bears have and will respond to declines in sea ice. Hence, his research has been reliant on a 29 year history of polar bear location data gained through the Argos Data Collection and Location System. Much of his research results were used to inform the United States Secretary of the Interior's decision in 2008 to list polar bears as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act.

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