



Giant Pandas: Ultimate Survivors

International Viewpoints:
Society and Conservation in the 21st Century

Thursday, September 9, 2010

3:30 P.M. - 4:30 P.M.

Johnson Theater, Johnson Hall, Colorado State University

Giant pandas are many things to many people: a universal symbol of love, a living toy, an evolutionary marvel, a political pawn, an icon of Earth's decline, and much more. Above all, giant pandas represent the ongoing battle to save worldwide species diversity and their supporting habitats. They also are emblematic of the many environmental controversies that rage across the globe.

Despite nearly five decades of research and conservation efforts, giant pandas still flirt with extinction – because the primary threats to their survival have not been addressed. In this session we will discuss the history of giant panda conservation, current efforts to conserve them, and plans for their future. We will also discuss the many barriers to the current health and survival of wildlife in China. Paradoxically, wild giant pandas are one of the most elusive and mysterious of animals, yet universally they are one of the most recognized species on Earth. We will also discuss how their survival status signifies a report card on human behavior and how we chose to interact with the natural world.

As we learn more about these noble, wild animals, their behavior, and their struggle for survival in the modern world, we will look beyond what is considered cute and examine our own responsibilities towards promoting the co-existence of all species on Earth.



Dr. Sarah Bexell is the Director of Conservation Education at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding, Sichuan Province, China. She is also a research scholar in the Institute for Human-Animal Connection at the University of Denver. She has been working in endangered species conservation and research for 15 years.



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