



Conservation Biologist Biography
Dr. Gregory Rasmussen
Founder and Executive Director

Dr. Gregory Rasmussen is a wildlife conservation biologist who has dedicated nearly 40 years to the study and protection of the endangered African painted dog, making his research one of the longest-running studies of the species in the world. He is the founder and executive director of Painted Dog Research Trust, based in northwest Zimbabwe.

With nearly 50 scientific publications to his name, Dr. Rasmussen continues to conduct research focused on the survival of painted dogs and the preservation of their habitat. His long-term efforts yielded significant success in 2000 when, after 13 years of working closely with ranchers, persecution of painted dogs in Zimbabwe came to an end. No painted dogs have been shot there since. His groundbreaking work has earned international acclaim, including the Wildlife Society Award (2000), the Whitley WildInvest Continuation Award for Conservation (2001), and a nomination for the Indianapolis Prize in 2023, the world's leading award for animal conservation. In 2024, The Living Desert Zoo and Gardens honored him as a Conservation Hero for his enduring commitment to the conservation of painted dogs.

Although painted dogs are his flagship species, Dr. Rasmussen is a passionate advocate for all wildlife. In 2003, while en route to support a rhino tracking mission with Zimbabwe National Parks, he survived a devastating plane crash that left him with multiple fractures to his legs, pelvis, and ribs. Remarkably, he was found alive 18 hours later, after encounters with a lioness, her cubs, and a hyena. The story gained international attention and was featured on the Discovery Channel's *I Shouldn't Be Alive*. His work has also been highlighted in the documentaries *Hunters in Twilight* and *My Life for Dogs*, and in the book *Wildlife Heroes*.

Dr. Rasmussen holds a research associate position at the University of Zimbabwe and is affiliated with Oxford University's Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, where he earned his Ph.D. His wide-ranging projects include the development and deployment of anti-snare collars, a research arboretum for habitat restoration, composting invasive plant species as a sustainable income project for indigenous women, a water harvesting initiative, and the Kazungula Road Project to reduce wildlife road fatalities.

Each year, Dr. Rasmussen tours the United States to raise awareness and funds for the conservation of painted dogs, speaking at zoos, universities, as well as community and donor events. He is a regular participant in the triennial International African Painted Dog Conference, which convenes biologists, zookeepers, and conservation professionals from around the globe. He also attends the Zoos and Aquariums Committing to Conservation (ZACC) conference, fostering collaboration between field researchers and the global zoo community.

A data-driven scientist with deep empathy for local communities, Dr. Rasmussen is committed to practical, inclusive conservation. He works to find solutions that benefit both wildlife and people, and his dedication to mentoring the next generation of conservationists in Zimbabwe has helped foster a vibrant, homegrown conservation movement. Always open to innovation, he welcomes new ideas, partnerships, and technologies that support the mission of Painted Dog Research and a brighter future for painted dogs.



Host Expectations for the Painted Dog Research 2027 U.S. Speaking Tour

As part of the Painted Dog Research USA 2027 Tour, we invite organizations to host a globally respected conservationist, Dr. Greg Rasmussen, founder and Executive Director of Painted Dog Research Trust in Zimbabwe. We ask that hosts meet the following expectations to ensure a successful and impactful visit.

Scheduling & Accommodations

- **Confirm Dates Early:** All event dates must be scheduled and confirmed prior to Dr. Greg's arrival in the U.S.
- **Provide Lodging & Meals:** Hosts must offer comfortable accommodations and meals for Dr. Greg during his stay.
- **Cover Travel Costs:** Hosts are responsible for at least \$200 of expenses to cover Dr. Greg's transportation to/from their city or region. Travel expenses can be paid directly to PDR at <https://www.painteddogresearch.org/donate> and enter Travel in the message box.

Event Funding & Support

To support PDR's mission and Dr. Greg's work in Zimbabwe, host organizations are expected to participate in **one or more** of the following funding options:

- Provide a speaking honorarium.
- Organize a fundraising event (e.g., benefit dinner, donor reception).
- Request donations from attendees at a public presentation.
- Provide a direct donation from the host organization.
- Allow the sale of "snare wire art" and other PDR merchandise.
- Purchase PDR merchandise in bulk for resale in gift shops.

Program Planning

- **Organize All Local Events:** The host organization is responsible for planning and managing all activities during Dr. Greg's visit in their region.
- Please assign one main point person to manage Dr. Greg's schedule and serve as the primary contact during his visit.
- We invite collaboration with the PDR board for event ideas and operating procedures.

Forms & Deadlines

- **Interest Form:** Prospective hosts must submit a [Host Interest Form](#). A board member will follow up with you to establish a final schedule by 15 December 2026.



PRESS RELEASE TEMPLATE

Contact: [Name]

✉ [Email Address] | ☎ [Phone]

Website: painteddogresearch.org/tour

Holistic Conservation of Endangered Painted Dogs Takes Center Stage of U.S. Tour

[CITY, STATE]—World-renowned conservationist, Dr. Gregory Rasmussen, founder and Executive Director of Painted Dog Research (PDR), is on a three-month U.S. tour to raise awareness for one of Africa's most endangered species, the painted dog. With only around 6,500 remaining in the wild, painted dogs face serious threats from habitat loss, human conflict, and roads.

[VENUE] will host Dr. Rasmussen on [DAY, MONTH DATE at TIME a.m./p.m.], where he will speak about the current status of painted dogs, the urgent challenges to their survival, and the efforts of PDR to protect them in the field.

The national tour includes stops at over 30 zoos, universities, and community events across the country, bringing together scientists, zookeepers, educators, conservationists, donors, and the interested public. A full schedule is available at painteddogresearch.org/tour.

"With painted dogs as our flagship, we use a holistic approach to conservation including habitat restoration, wildlife vehicle collision reduction, climate mitigation, and conservation education," said Dr. Rasmussen, who has studied painted dogs in their natural habitat for nearly 40 years. "The biodiversity crisis touches every continent—and painted dogs are among the most vulnerable."

Recognizable by their large, round ears, fluffy white-tipped tails, and patchwork multi-colored coats, painted dogs are among Africa's most unique and social carnivores. Dr. Rasmussen founded PDRT in 2014 in northwest Zimbabwe, one of the species' last strongholds.

"There are so many aspects to saving painted dogs. It is not only protecting the dogs themselves, but also restoring the landscape, educating communities, and teaching the next generation of conservationists," said Dr. Rasmussen. "This tour gives me the chance to reconnect with longtime supporters and meet new ones. I'm always excited to share the story of painted dogs while learning from those I meet along the way."

About Painted Dog Research

Painted Dog Research Trust is a non-governmental organization based in Zimbabwe, founded by Dr. Gregory Rasmussen to secure a future for painted dogs through long-term field research, conservation education, and local leadership development.

Painted Dog Research USA is the U.S.-based 501(c)(3) that supports PDRT's field work through fundraising, education, and outreach. PDR USA is operated by a national board of directors.

These two partnered organizations are collectively known as **Painted Dog Research**. Donations to PDR are tax-deductible and directly benefit painted dogs, the restoration of their habitat, and the development of the next generation of conservationists.

Learn more or donate at painteddogresearch.org

Facebook: @painteddogresearchtrust

Instagram: @painteddogresearch

LinkedIn: [Painted Dog Research USA](http://PaintedDogResearchUSA)



Event Planning

Hosting Dr. Greg Rasmussen & supporting conservation efforts of PDR

Presentation Topics

Dr. Greg can tailor his presentation to suit your audience. Here are a few available topics:

- **The Conservation of Painted Dogs**
An overview of painted dogs' biology, social structure, threats, and why their survival matters.
- **Climate Change & African Wildlife**
How climate change is impacting species and ecosystems in Africa - and what's being done.
- **Habitat Restoration**
Learn about ecological restoration efforts including afforestation and water harvesting in Zimbabwe.
- **Scientific Research in the Field**
A behind-the-scenes look at long-term data collection, anti-snare collar development, and technology in conservation.
- **Botany & Biodiversity**
Explore the vital role native plant species play in supporting ecosystem health and conservation.
- **Microbes & the Wild**
The unseen but essential world of microbes in soil, water, and wildlife health.
- **Sustainability in Conservation**
How community-based, sustainable solutions are shaping the future of wildlife protection.

Where to Hold Your Event

(Each offers a unique atmosphere and audience reach)

- **Zoos** – Natural alignment with wildlife messaging; built-in audience of animal lovers
- **Botanic Gardens** – Ideal for conservation and habitat restoration talks
- **Community Centers** – Accessible to a broad public audience
- **Libraries** – Free to use, community-oriented, and often equipped for presentations
- **Nature Centers** – Mission-aligned and typically equipped for education
- **Universities** – Great for academic, research-focused presentations and student outreach
- **Restaurants or Pubs** – Perfect for casual, social gatherings like “Pints for Painted Dogs”
- **Private Homes** – Intimate gatherings for friends, neighbors, or donor groups
- **Conservation Organizations** – Ideal for mission-based collaborations and fundraising
- **Media Spots (Radio/TV)** – High visibility opportunity to spread awareness

 **Reminder:** *As the host, you are responsible for securing your chosen venue.*



Event Formats to Consider

Choose what works best for your space, audience, and community style:

- **Lunch & Learn** – Midday event with a short talk over lunch
- **Paint & Sip** – Art night fundraiser; participants paint painted dogs while enjoying wine or mocktails
- **Trivia Night** – Host at a bar or café; wildlife-themed trivia with prizes
- **Dog Fashion Show** – A fun, pet-friendly community event or fundraiser
- **Formal Presentation** – Traditional lecture or multimedia talk; ideal for universities and zoos
- **Casual Chat** – Fireside-style Q&A or conversation at a home or informal space
- **Dinner with Friends** – Host a meal and invite guests to learn and donate
- **Pints for Painted Dogs** – Partner with a local pub for drinks and a short, inspiring talk while the pub donates a percentage or set amount per drink to PDR.
- **Dine & Share** - Partner with a local restaurant for a table talk, sale of PDR merchandise, and the restaurant donates a percentage or set amount per meal to PDR.

 *Plan one or more events for the time Dr. Greg is in your area!*

 **Contact us** for detailed how-tos and planning support for each event style.

Host Responsibilities

As the event host, you take the lead in making your local event a success. This includes:

- Securing the venue
- Coordinating the event setup and schedule
- Promoting your event to your community
- Welcoming guests and introducing Dr. Greg
- Staying in touch with our team to ensure everything runs smoothly

✦ **You're not alone! The PDR Board is here to support you every step of the way.**

Whether you need help designing a flyer, choosing an event type, or figuring out logistics, we'll provide guidance, resources, and encouragement. Hosting an event is a meaningful way to play a role in the conservation of painted dogs, and we're honored to work with you to make it happen.

Contact Painted Dog Research USA

1-309-909-7600

conservation@painteddogresearch.org

www.painteddogresearch.org