

the problem remains unresolved because only 12.9% of residents participated (the result can only be binding if at least 30% of eligible voters participate). The decision regarding Górkí Czechowskie now lies with the city authorities, and this urban population of the hamster thus remains at risk.

The referendum demonstrates that democratic procedures are not necessarily a guarantee of nature conservation, and raises the question of whether a referendum is an appropriate democratic tool for resolving conflicts between urban development and nature conservation. Rather, it may be more appropriate that central government should participate in resolving such issues. This would fulfil the obligation of national responsibility (*sensu* Schmeller et al., 2018, *Conservation Biology*, 22, 593–601) for the protection of the hamster.

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The Whitley Awards 2019

The 2019 Whitley Awards Ceremony was held on 1 May 2019 at the Royal Geographical Society in London. The flagship event of UK-based charity, the Whitley Fund for Nature (WFN), was hosted by wildlife presenter and WFN ambassador Kate Humble. The evening saw six conservation leaders, from six countries, receive Whitley Awards of GBP 40,000 each in support of their conservation work. In addition the prestigious Whitley Gold Award of GBP 60,000 was presented to 2003 Whitley Award winner

Jon Paul Rodríguez of Provita, Venezuela, for his work to conserve yellow-shouldered parrots throughout their range.

Over 500 people attended the event, where the charity's patron, HRH The Princess Royal, presented the Awards. The 2019 Whitley Award Winners are: Caleb Ofori Boateng, Ghana (Critical refuge for the Togo slippery frog); Nikolai Petkov, Bulgaria (Wetlands on the brink: conserving the red-breasted goose); Vatosoa Rakotondrazafy, Madagascar (MIHARI: a civil society movement to safeguard marine resources); José Hernán Sarasola, Argentina (The Chaco eagle: a flagship for semi-arid wildlife conservation); Wendi Tamariska, Indonesia (Protecting orangutans and rainforests through sustainable livelihoods); Ilena Zanella, Costa Rica (Strengthened sanctuary for the scalloped hammerhead shark).

Over its 26 years the charity has given over GBP 16 million in conservation funding to more than 200 conservation leaders in over 80 countries. An early pioneer in the sector, the Whitley Award was one of the first awards given in recognition of effective conservation leadership in the Global South. Twenty-six years on, the need for recognition of grassroots leadership has never been stronger. The Whitley Fund for Nature supports emergent conservation leaders who are nationals of the countries where they work, making them best placed to lead change and articulate solutions. Through them WFN supports work rooted in communities that is pragmatic, science-based, and has lasting impact.

For more information on the Whitley Fund for Nature, the Whitley Awards and to view short films about each of the winning projects, see whitleyaward.org. See p. 592 for the call for applications for the 2020 Whitley Awards.

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