



UNSUNG HEROES

The Diane Skinner Awards recognise those who work tirelessly in communities and remote reserves to help conserve nature and empower residents. We meet three honorees

URBAIN NGOBOBO DIANE SKINNER AWARD FOR THE UNSUNG HERO IN CONSERVATION 2024

Urbain has worked in conservation in DR Congo for 23 years, the last 15 spent with the Dian Fossey Gorilla Fund. In a region of extreme poverty and conflict, Urbain helped create the Nkuba Conservation Area, a community-managed forest that spans 2400sq km, protecting hundreds of critically endangered Grauer's gorillas. Focusing on inclusivity, he works in partnership with communities, helping more than 500 students annually in educational programmes, benefiting 10,000 people in livelihood initiatives, and developing a General Land Management plan for sustainable agriculture, hunting and fishing.



ELVIS KISIMIR

DIANE SKINNER AWARD FOR THE UNSUNG HERO IN CONSERVATION 2025

Elvis Kisimir is a Maasai *moran* (warrior) whose passion is the protection of lions through community initiatives to secure livestock and livelihoods. As African People and Wildlife's Human-Wildlife Conflict Programme Officer in Tanzania for 16 years, his achievements include the Wildlife for Warriors project, in which 200 community officers and scouts act as rapid response teams when lions approach livestock, helping to reduce tensions and retaliatory killings. Working closely with villagers, he has expanded his Living Walls project, facilitating over 2100 environmentally-friendly bomas that keep livestock safe at night.



RUTH KABWE

DIANE SKINNER CONSERVATION MBA SCHOLARSHIP FOR AN AFRICAN WOMAN

Having studied Conservation and Ecology at university, Ruth is now an Executive MBA candidate at the African Leadership University and leads projects for the Painted Wolf Foundation. Sharing her aspirations, she commented: "During my degree, I was drawn to the idea of protecting nature and giving back to something larger than ourselves. Conservation can feel like a foreign concept to locals, disconnected from their daily realities. I want it to become something that they feel ownership over rather than distanced from, that it is seen as a shared responsibility. I want to help conservation become more inclusive."

About the AWARDS

The conservationist Diane Skinner believed that "the hope for Africa's wildlife lies in empowering brilliant indigenous Africans, especially women, as conservation leaders of tomorrow." When Diane died of cancer in 2022, she left a legacy of impressive contributions to the conservation of chimpanzees, elephants, rhinos, pangolins and painted wolves, among other species. Set up in her honour, the Diane Skinner Awards and the Diane Skinner Conservation MBA Scholarship for an African Woman, celebrate those who make an impact on wildlife and habitat protection but rarely seek the limelight. Sponsored by the Painted Wolf Foundation (PWF) and the African Leadership University's School of Wildlife Conservation, they are presented by Nicholas Dyer, Diane's husband and co-founder with her of PWF.

