

## Ippen Award Winner 2016

I still feel a bit taken aback and humbled by winning the Rudolf Ippen Young Scientist Award. It is such an honour and I am truly grateful for it. Even though I have to admit that I don't remember much of what happened in the moments after I heard my name announced at the awards ceremony of the conference banquet, but I do remember that I was surrounded by beluga whales, whale sharks, manta rays, and of course many dear colleagues and friends. Thinking back it almost seems surreal.

Unfortunately, I did not know Rudolf Ippen personally. I know he was a dedicated veterinarian, researcher, brilliant mind and pioneer in the field of wildlife health in Germany and beyond and that our profession owes a lot to him and his work. Indeed, winning an award comes with lots of positive attention, congratulations and of course it looks good on a CV. However, one of the most unexpected but greatest gifts that came with the award that night, were the personal stories and accounts of people who came to tell me about Rudolf Ippen. It was very touching and I feel even more honoured to have received an award in his name.



Most of the work that I have done in recent years, and that I received the award for, was on the health of habituated wild great apes. What motivated me most to pursue a PhD in biomedical sciences was the potential of applicability of the research to conservation. I hope to be able to contribute, even a tiny fraction, with my work to the protection and survival of great apes and other wildlife. So it seems only logical that I will donate half of the award money to a great ape conservation project.

I hope to finish my PhD within the next months and look forward to move on to a postdoc position at the IZW, where I hope to continue my work on great ape health and conservation.

I encourage other early career researchers to apply for the Rudolf Ippen Young Scientist Award, which will be awarded next in May 2017 in Berlin.

Kim Gruetzmacher  
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