

“Crocodile Hunter” Killed

Steve Irwin struck by stingray barb during undersea documentary production.

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Steve Irwin, the animal welfare activist and environmentalist known as the “Crocodile Hunter” was killed Monday, Sept. 4, after being stung by a venomous stingray while swimming through Australian waters.

Irwin, 44, was making a documentary on undersea life at the time of the attack. Video footage shows Irwin being stung and pulling the barb out of his chest before collapsing, according to John Stainton, Irwin’s friend, director and producer, who was on Irwin’s boat in the Great Barrier Reef when the attack happened

Although primarily known for his exploits with alligators, Irwin was also an animal welfare activist. In a 1999 interview with Reptiles magazine, Irwin revealed that when he married his American wife, Terri, in 1992, he began focusing more on mammals and their preservation.

“We eat, sleep and live for education for conservation. And with our wildlife documentaries, all we want to do is get the cameras right fair smack in where it’s happening,” he told Reptiles.

Discovery Communications, which owns Animal Planet, the cable network that broadcasts Irwin’s programs, says it will create the Steve Irwin Crocodile Hunter Fund. The fund will “honor Steve’s passion and exuberance for conservation” by helping the Australia Zoo, Discovery Networks President Billy Campbell said.

Irwin is survived by his wife and two young children. To read Reptiles magazine’s interview with Steve “Crocodile Hunter” Irwin, visit the Reptiles website: <http://www.animalnetwork.com/reptiles/detail.aspx?aid=2306&cid=3691&search>.