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One of my main interests is (and always has been) the diversity of life and its conservation. To help conserve some of the 'lesser known' species (99.9% of all species surely fit into that category) I have co-founded the NGO Zoologische Gesellschaft für Arten- u. Populationsschutz e. V. (ZGAP) in 1982 and have been its President from 1986 – 2012, by which time I decided to hand over responsibility to younger people. Over the years ZGAP has raised several million Euros and invested into projects for some of the more obscure and little know vertebrates (and recently also invertebrates).

To assist conservation of some poorly know mammals I also was Chairman of the IUCN/SSC Small Carnivore Specialist Group from 1986 – 2000.

I am also a member of the EAZA (the European Zoo Association) Conservation Committee, the Advisory Board of the Loro Parque Fundacion (that invests close to one million Euros into conservation projects for mainly parrots) and assist various other conservation NGOs in one way or another,