



## Obituary

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### Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands

On 11 December 2004 His Royal Highness Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands passed away at the age of 93.

In 1937 he married Princess Juliana, who just after World War II became Queen of the Netherlands. He later became the father of the current Queen of the Netherlands, Beatrix. His origins were in German nobility but following his marriage he became a leading member of Dutch society. He was very active and successful economically, militarily (especially during World War II) and played a central role in international nature conservation.

In 1961 he became co-founder of World Wildlife Fund International and WWF-Netherlands. During the following years he visited countries across the world to discuss with the local governments measures to protect endangered animals (e.g. tigers in India, elephants in Africa). Thanks to his dedication, his charming personality and his sense of diplomacy his efforts met with much success. He also created, with the approval of the Dutch government, the knighthood of the Golden Ark, a means of honouring people that have spent much time and energy devoted to nature conservation. Besides a special fascination for elephants, seals also interested him. He privately invested money in the Seal Rescue and Rehabilitation Centre in the Netherlands.



The Mediterranean monk seals also captured his interest. His charitable trust, the Prince Bernhard Fund for Nature, supported two projects of [SAD-AFAG](#) in Turkey. The first of these was the *Çavus Island Clean-up '97 Project* to safeguard monk seal habitats from an oil spill at Gümüslük, in southwestern Turkey [see [Oil Spill at Çavus Island](#), TMG 1(1): May 1998]. The second SAD-AFAG initiative to enjoy Prince Bernhard's patronage was the fourth phase of its *Seal Watch Project*, whose main aim is to monitor in-cave behaviour of the monk seal – the most hidden part of the species' life cycle [see [Seal Watch commences on Karaburun](#), TMG 5(2): November 2002 and [Seal Watch 4 update](#), TMG 6(1): June 2003].

Prince Bernhard of the Netherlands had a rich life but his death is a serious loss for nature conservation all over the world.

– P.J.H. van Bree, Amsterdam, 17 March 2005.