



## **'Crocodile Hunter' Dies Monday in the Hands of a Stingray**

While shooting a new series in North Queensland focused on the ocean's deadliest creatures, Steve Irwin, 44-year old media personality, "Crocodile Hunter", environmentalist and director of the Australia Zoo, swam over a stingray during a diving expedition. Possibly feeling threatened, the stingray extended its barb, fatally piercing Irwin's heart. Irwin's manager, John Stainton, said in a press statement that it's possible he died instantly. Stingrays use their barb as a self-defense mechanism, their venom causing a total shut down in the victim's circulation.

Crewmembers of Irwin's boat, Croc One, called emergency services, Irwin was given CPR and sent by rescue helicopter to Cairns, the nearby city. He was pronounced dead shortly thereafter, Stainton said.

"I really do feel that Australia has lost a wonderful and colorful son," stated Australian Prime Minister John Howard. Peter Beattie, Premier of Queensland, said "He put Queensland and Australia on the International map."

Irwin's popular television show, Crocodile Hunter, began in 1992, introduced in Australia and later aired in the United States on the Discovery Channel. On his show, he coined the term "Crikey!" His work involved close handling of wildlife including the capture and relocation of crocodiles. His film 'The Crocodile Hunter: Collision Course' was released in 2002. In addition to

his focused and dedicated work on television, Irvin was an advocate for conservation, wildlife protection and environmentalism.

Irwin's wife, Terri, originally from Eugene, Oregon, was traveling when the incident occurred, but has since returned to Queensland. The two met in 1991 while she was on vacation in Australia visiting the Australia Zoo. They wed six months later.

Local authorities confirmed his death and said his family has been notified. News of his death traveled fast, and locals, government officials and fans worldwide mourned the loss. Many floral tributes have been laid, with many at the entrance of the Australia Zoo.

Discovery Communications founder and chairman John Hendricks paid tribute to the wildlife icon in his statement: "Steve was a larger-than-life force. He brought joy and learning about the natural world to millions and millions of people across the globe." The company will rename their Silver Springs, Maryland garden space the 'Steve Irwin Memorial Sensory Garden' in his honor. They're also discussing the possibility of a Steve Irwin Crocodile Hunter Fund supporting wildlife prevention, conservation and education, Australian Zoo and educational funding for Irwin's two children, Bindi and Bob.

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