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And the 2013 Worst of the Worst Award Goes to...



Kieran Suckling
Executive Director,
Center for Biological Diversity

These days you don't have to look too far to find environmental villains. We live in a world rampant with polluters, profiteers, wildlife-killers and habitat destroyers.

But the Koch Brothers take the cake.

Ultra-rich and super-secret, Charles G. and David H. Koch help pull the levers behind the scenes on behalf of those who wreck our climate, destroy wild places and attempt to kill our last remaining wildlife.

These billionaires -- profligate spenders on their pet causes -- shamefully funnel money to fight pollution controls, prop up the climate-denial movement and ease the path of big corporations to spew more toxins, fatten their bank accounts and put the planet's future at risk.

Their terrible global legacy could take hundreds of years to undo.

That's why the Koch Brothers are the winners of the Center for Biological Diversity's 2013 Rubber Dodo Award, given each year to those who have done the most to wreck the environment and drive endangered species extinct.

They're in rarefied company: Previous winners include infamous climate-denier Sen. James Inhofe, former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and the former head of BP.

This year we had more than 14,000 votes for the Rubber Dodo. Other official nominees included Rep. Doc Hastings,

who has pushed to erode the Endangered Species Act; Russ Girling, CEO of TransCanada, the company pushing the Keystone XL pipeline; and the NRA's Wayne LaPierre, for endlessly opposing common-sense efforts to stop the poisoning of wildlife from toxic lead ammunition.

The Koch Brothers won in a landslide, and it's no wonder: After operating largely out of public view for years, they've been dragged into the spotlight recently, and Americans have gotten wise to the heavy lifting they do on behalf of the polluting class -- often through a series of expenditures to other groups that do their bidding.

The Koch Brothers are, without doubt, poster children for the corrosive influence that profit and corporate power have on the wildlife and wild places we love -- and that our ultimate survival will depend on.

It's hard to think of anyone more deserving of this year's Rubber Dodo.