



Harold Jefferson Coolidge Medal: Significance of the Engravings on the Reverse

The lifetime conservation concerns and accomplishments of Dr. Harold Jefferson Coolidge, “The Father of International Conservation,” were characterized by truly worldwide activities, an ecosystem approach to conservation of endangered species and habitats, and an international perspective. The engravings on the reverse side of the medal represent significant parts of the wide range of Dr. Coolidge’s worldwide interests, activities and accomplishments, along with his role as a distinguished scientist and conservationist.

The Engravings, Clockwise from the Top:

The **Mountain Gorilla** represents Dr. Coolidge’s interest in primates and primate conservation, and his lifelong conservation activities in Africa. A zoologist, taxonomist and primatologist, he first encountered mountain gorillas on the 1926-1927 Harvard Medical Expedition across Africa, and one of his principal early published works was a monograph revising the taxonomy of gorillas.

The **Jaguar** represents his extensive activities in Latin American conservation and his commitment to an ecosystem approach in which carnivores often played a key role. In the same period that Aldo Leopold was initiating habitat-based wildlife management in the United States, Harold Coolidge was pursuing an ecosystem-based approach to conservation internationally.

The mini-panorama of an **American Loon** Flying Over Forest, Mountains and Lake represents Dr. Coolidge’s lifelong North American activities, his concerns with bird conservation, and particularly his holistic approach to conservation of environments as well as species. National parks and protected areas were a major focus of Dr. Coolidge’s activities throughout his life. The panorama also signifies Squam Lake, New Hampshire, U.S.A. where he spent summers throughout most of his life, finding inspiration from its peaceful, natural setting.

The **Kouprey** represents his commitment to conservation throughout Asia, and probably more than any other single species it is emblematic of his lifelong concern with endangered species worldwide. After his first study of the kouprey in 1939 he published a major work recognizing it as a new genus, and in later years he sponsored a series of attempts to secure its survival.