



BACKGROUNDER FOR PRESS RELEASE (Nov. 28, 2005)

WNAG Announces Recipient of First Annual Simon Combes Conservation Award

About the Worldwide Nature Artists Group (WNAG)

The Worldwide Nature Artists Group is an exclusive, international, non-profit society of world-class nature artists dedicated to the celebration and preservation of the natural world. With a total membership of nearly 500 members, the WNAG is internationally recognized as one of the largest and most prestigious organizations in the nature art community. The Group's mission is to build a community of world-class artists who share a common interest in nature art and nature conservancy. Invited members derive exclusive opportunities to showcase and sell their artwork to a global audience, while promoting the sustainability and conservation of the natural world through art, education and special initiatives. Founded in 1997 by Jeffrey Whiting—renowned Canadian artist, author and biologist—the Group's membership reads like a "Who's Who" of nature art, and includes Robert Bateman, Gamini Ratnavira and David Shepherd. For more information, please visit www.natureartists.com.

About David Shepherd

David Shepherd is indebted to his mentor Robin Goodwin for his artistic training. Goodwin, a professional painter who specialized in portraits and marine subjects, took Shepherd on as a student and taught him for three years.

In 1969 Collins published a collection of David's wildlife paintings in colour, 'An Artist in Africa', which ran into eight editions and has a foreword by HRH Duke of Edinburgh.

In 1972 the BBC produced David Shepherd's life story 'The Man Who Loves Giants', a 50- minute documentary film, narrated by his friend, the late James Stewart, and which has been shown all over the world. Other documentaries for television have also been made, including 'Last Train to Mulobezi'; this film tells the epic story of the rescue from the Zambezi Sawmills Railway in Zambia of an ancient locomotive and railway coach and their 12,000 mile journey back to Britain. These were presented to David as a gift by His Excellency, Dr. Kenneth Kaunda, the then President of Zambia, after David had raised funds with other artists, (through an auction of seven of his paintings in the USA). This enabled him to buy a helicopter, which he presented to the Government of Zambia for anti-poaching work.

In 1988 David made the series 'In Search of Wildlife' with Thames TV; a series of six half-hour films, featuring endangered mammals throughout the world. These have subsequently been shown in the United States of America on the Public Broadcasting Channel.

Also in 1990 he made the programme in the annual series of 'Naturewatch' with Julian Pettifer; and has been the 'target' for 'This is Your Life'.

In 1976, David Shepherd's autobiography, 'The Man Who Loves Giants', was published and rapidly became a best seller. He revised and updated it in 1989. 'A Brush with Steam' was published in 1984 and in October 1985, 'David Shepherd' The Man and His Paintings' was published, which, for the first time, brought together in a single volume a fully representative selection of his work. In 1992, 'David Shepherd, An Artist in Conservation' was published, which is a stunning collection of the best of David's wildlife art with over 90 colour plates. In October 1995 his two latest books, 'David Shepherd, My Painting Life' and David Shepherd 'Only One World', were published.

David Shepherd was awarded an Honorary Degree on Fine Arts by the Pratt Institute in New York in 1971 and, in 1973, the Order of the Golden Ark by HRH The Prince of The Netherlands for his services to conservation. He was made a Member of Honour of the World Wide Fund for Nature in 1979 and in the same year received the Order of the British Empire for his services to wildlife conservation. In 1986 David was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts and in 1988, President Kenneth Kaunda of Zambia awarded him with the Order of Distinguished Service. He was made a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society in 1989 and he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Science of Hatfield Polytechnic (now the University of Hertfordshire) in 1990. In 1996, David was made an Officer (Brother) of the Order of St. John.

Over £3million has been raised since 1960, through David's own efforts and with supporters of the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation, which he founded in 1984. The money raised has been given away in grants to help save critically endangered mammals in their wild habitat and to benefit the local people that share their environment.

About the Rhino Rescue Trust:

Mission: to protect all endangered species from poaching and to help the surrounding communities affected by wildlife conflicts.

In December 1985 Rhino Rescue, a trust for all endangered wildlife was founded by Count Maurice Coreth with the aim of combating the decimation of rhino population in Kenya. The main focus at present is Lake Nakuru National Park in Kenya where Rhino Rescue, working with the Kenya Wildlife Service, maintains the 80 kilometre electric fence around the perimeter of the Park. Rhino Rescue raised the funds for the building of the fence and other major projects.

Simon Combes was the project director and Kenya representative for the Rhino Rescue Trust and was involved with the project since its inception.

For More Information

Worldwide Nature Artists Group: www.natureartists.com
Artist David Shepherd: www.natureartists.com/david_shepherd.asp
Artist Simon Combes: www.natureartists.com/simon_combes.asp
WNAG Conservation Awards www.natureartists.com/conservation/conservation-award.asp
WNAG Art for Conservation Prog. www.natureartists.com/conservation/

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