

*The Art of Conservation*  
2008

An International Exhibit of Nature in Art

Annual Exhibit of the Artists for Conservation Foundation

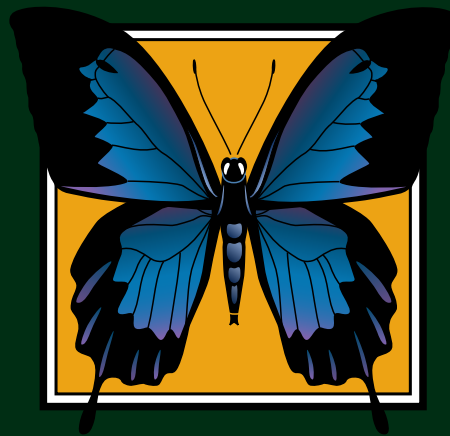


**Artists for  
Conservation**<sup>™</sup>  
Supporting Nature through Art





*The Art of Conservation Series*  
Volume I



*The Art of Conservation*

2008

An International Exhibit of Nature in Art



“The Art of Conservation” is the annual exhibit of the Artists for Conservation Foundation.



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Maria Masciotti

Introduction by:  
Jeffrey Whiting

This book has been published as a companion to The Art of Conservation 2008 Exhibit,  
hosted by the Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum and in support of the Wildlife Conservation Society.

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**THE HIRAM BLAUVELT  
ART MUSEUM**

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*The Art of Conservation*  
— 2008 —

**An International Exhibit of Nature in Art**

*Featuring artwork by members of the Artists for Conservation Foundation  
—the world's leading artist collective supporting the environment—  
The Art of Conservation exhibition celebrates artistic excellence in the depiction  
of nature, raises awareness of important conservation issues and directly supports  
organizations dedicated to addressing them.*



The Art of Conservation 2008: An International Exhibit of Nature in Art  
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Artists for Conservation Foundation, Inc.  
Suite #1519 - 938 Smithe St.  
Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada  
V6Z 3H8  
[www.artistsforconservation.org](http://www.artistsforconservation.org)

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**Artists for  
Conservation™**  
Supporting Nature through Art



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*“The Artists for Conservation Foundation has an important role in working with, and supporting conservation organizations who work in the field. We are in the extraordinary position of being able to bring an unparalleled pool of artistic talent focused on nature, to help these organizations communicate important issues to the public, and to help them raise funds.”*

— Jeffrey Whiting, President & Founder, Artists for Conservation Foundation



# Foreword

by Maria Masciotti

Senior Vice President for Development and Membership,  
Wildlife Conservation Society

The Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) is proud to be the beneficiary of The Art of Conservation exhibit, presented by the Artists for Conservation Foundation (AFC) at the Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum. The striking works of art assembled in this exhibit convey the beauty and fragility of some of the most majestic wild creatures remaining on this, our Earth. This exhibit allows individuals committed to conservation the opportunity to take part in WCS's efforts to temper devastating threats to the Earth's ecosystems and creatures, and participate in the prevention of further destruction.

WCS has maintained a commitment to saving wildlife and wild places for more than a century, and remains steadfast in defending the last remaining pockets of wilderness against human encroachment and environmental degradation. Founded in 1895 as the New York Zoological Society, WCS has been instrumental in the establishment of more than 120 major protected areas on four continents, from historic Kruger National Park in South



Photo by Suzanne Bolduc © WCS

Africa, to Tibet's vast Chang Tang Reserve, to the remote Arctic National Wildlife Refuge of Alaska. WCS continues to play a critical role in the preservation of endangered species such as the American bison, mountain gorilla, elephant, and tiger. We are an international leader in protecting the world's biodiversity through research, wildlife health, education, local capacity building, and partnerships with communities and national and international authorities.

Today, WCS continues its pioneering conservation work with groundbreaking projects such as the creation of the first open ocean protected areas in Patagonia, which offer refuge to vulnerable species including the sea lion, penguin, and albatross, as well as the establishment of an international protected park uniting Pakistan, China, Tajikistan, and Afghanistan – habitat of the endangered snow leopard and Marco Polo sheep. WCS focuses on critically threatened species with innovative programs such as our Warm Waters for Cool Bears, which aims to safeguard polar bears by



using satellite imagery technology to predict areas of sea ice likely to remain despite global warming. WCS's Field Veterinary Program leads the field in prevention and management of diseases transmissible between wildlife, humans, and domestic animals, such as SARS and Avian Influenza. With its comprehensive portfolio of programs across the world, WCS is entrenched on all fronts.

At WCS, we understand that humans are caretakers of our Earth. Its organisms and ecosystems thrive – or perish – at the hands of man. Incredibly, humankind has replaced nature as the most influential, potentially devastating factor in the healthy existence of our planet. The struggle to conserve wildlife is increasingly difficult in an era of global climate change, intensive industrial development, and dramatic population growth. Environmental pressure is overwhelming, and the lives of future generations depend upon critical, decisive steps that must be taken – now. We

believe it is not too late to act, and with innovation, expertise, science, and passion, we can overcome each and every challenge.

With the same unwavering optimism, AFC presents in this volume some of the finest depictions of nature by artists who have captured the very essence of some of the Earth's most compelling wildlife. WCS's vision of the future of our natural world, and the work its passionate staff undertake to achieve this vision, is described in the chapter, "The Wildlife Conservation Society: On All Fronts." I hope our mission inspires you to take your own critical steps in the protection of future generations of wildlife, as they struggle – every day – for the right to survive.

We at WCS are grateful to AFC and the artists who have taken part in this stunning exhibition. Together, we strive toward a future in which nature is sustainable, abundant, and diverse. We invite you to join us to make this future a reality.

Maria Masciotti

Senior Vice President for Development and Membership





# *Introduction*

*by Jeffrey Whiting,*

*President and Founder, Artists for Conservation*



Photo by Yasaman Whiting

**W**e live during an extraordinary period in history. Regular citizens of many countries now have the privilege and means to travel across the planet in a day to witness its diversity first-hand. This privilege comes at a time when diversity itself is shrinking and within our own species, we are witnessing this. Modern communications are causing the homogenization of cultures, echoing the planet's shrinking biodiversity. The scientific community views the present era as the sixth great extinction event in our planet's history. This is particularly noteworthy as it is being caused largely by the activities of a single species. Most who read this book may well see over one-third of Earth's species vanish, along with dozens of human cultural lines and languages.

When I think of the shrinking biodiversity on our planet today, I am often brought back to my Earth Science studies and the "reading" of rocks and fossils. The rocks not only speak to us as time capsules of our planet's history, but also can offer prophetic insight. One story that remains with me is about a period in our

past that brought about the emergence of a massive "C"-shaped supercontinent called Pangaea, which cradled a small ocean called the Tethys Sea. It was a gigantic landmass that ultimately gave rise to the continents we know today, when it fragmented. Pangaea sat largely alone in a seemingly unending body of water that spanned the globe, known among paleontologists as the Panthalassic Ocean. Pangaea emerged through the collision of ancient continents, each populated by unique and diverse forms of life in which two-foot dragonflies were the top aerial predators in a world blanketed by swamp. Ironically, huge quantities of carbon from these vast swamps were trapped and stewed for eons, only to resurface as fuel for many of the light bulbs used to read the pages of this book.

The bulk of Pangaea's formation occurred some three hundred million years ago, during the late Paleozoic Era. In a relatively short time frame, it introduced populations of creatures that had never been in prior contact and juxtaposed species that had never been previously forced to compete. Ecosystems assimilated and





an uber-competitive “last-creature-standing” environment ensued. The result was the decimation of the biodiversity of the time to a degree never before seen, until now. The event ultimately provided the window of opportunity for dinosaurs to grab a foothold as governors of the planet. Pangaea began to break apart while early dinosaurs roamed and with that break-up, biodiversity blossomed once again.

Our planes and our ships have created a virtual “New Pangaea” and we are now forced to use our knowledge and resources to stem the destruction that is underway.

Climate change, loss of biodiversity, desertification, salinification, overpopulation, deforestation - all are words that paint a picture of an enormous systemic challenge faced by our planet today. Each “ation” on its own stands to adversely affect us all. Together, they represent symptoms of a global pattern of impact by humans on the web of life that supports us. Most alarmingly, we are now starting to hear the word “collapse” by experts, with increasing frequency.

Fortunately, it does appear that the world is collectively realizing that the status quo is not sustainable and that not only our collective quality of life is at stake now, but our survival. In the last few years, we have witnessed the beginnings of what appears to be an awakening in environmental awareness, to a degree not seen since before civilization itself. The question that many now ask is “How can I make a difference?” Artists represent a segment of society that has always asked this question.

The role of artists is to express their passions and perspectives, and by their very nature they are a socially aware lot. Classical artists, many of whom specialized in nature and wildlife, have celebrated the beauty found throughout our natural world for centuries. Many artists today are active participants in an important

movement channeling artistic talent toward addressing the challenge of achieving a sustainable future. At the forefront of this movement is the Artists for Conservation Foundation (AFC) – an extraordinary group of gifted nature artists from around the world, collectively dedicated to preserving biodiversity on our planet and to reaching out to the public by celebrating it in their art. The AFC began as an online community of artists with common interests. The organization was founded as the “Worldwide Nature Artists Group” in 1997, when the Internet revolution was in its infancy and the World Wide Web had existed for only four years.

Today, the Artists for Conservation Foundation is expanding its reach far and wide. Our membership has representatives from 27 countries and we have collectively built a very substantial audience internationally, despite being limited to a single language to-date. While this book was being written, well over 1 million web pages on the AFC website were being viewed in a given month, by several hundred thousand visitors. In true 21st century form, the AFC had its roots in the electronic ether and only recently began branching from this virtual foundation into the “live” space. This inaugural “Art of Conservation” exhibit represents an enormous milestone for the AFC and a banner for things to come.

Of course, also behind the exhibit, as a strong partner with the AFC, is the Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum. The Museum has provided guidance, encouragement and support, and most importantly shares our vision of supporting nature through art. While we had hoped to establish an annual event for several years, the pieces began falling together during a mini-event at the Museum in 2006, in which the AFC presented its first award – the Simon Combes Conservation Award – to renowned UK wildlife artist David Shepherd, during a special retrospective exhibition of Simon’s work. We have dedicated a chapter in this book to the award.





The vision behind the exhibit underlines the philosophy of our organization. Our niche, if you will, in supporting conservation, is to use art to enhance fundraising for those organizations that actually DO the conservation work. Our role is double-barreled. We seek to further the nature/wildlife art genre and expand the body of art collectors in this field, while at the same time, fostering increased public appreciation for the natural world. With an international membership, our goal is to support those organizations which are leaders in preserving the wild habitats and animals we are so passionate about rendering.

An integral part of the concept behind “The Art of Conservation” exhibit is raising funds for conservation and supporting our annual beneficiary—a leading internationally-oriented conservation organization. In many ways, this concept is an extension of the AFC’s “Art for Conservation” program which provides an online venue for the sale of artwork with portion of proceeds voluntarily earmarked by the artist for conservation after the artwork is sold.

I could not think of a more appropriate beneficiary than the Wildlife Conservation Society as our very first beneficiary. WCS truly leads the way in proactive conservation—placing top scientists into the last frontiers of Earth’s wildernesses, to study the wildlife that remains and to develop real-world strategies that will ensure

their survival. They are “Doers” and they have an unmatched outreach program that engages and educates the public through their network of urban wildlife parks in the metropolitan New York area. I am extremely proud to support the WCS in this endeavor.

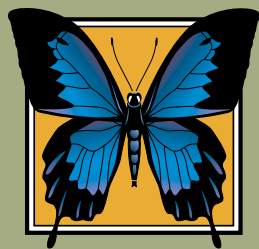
The Art of Conservation exhibit is not the AFC’s first venture away from the computer screen. In 2005, we established the AFC Flag Expeditions Program, in which artists vie for Fellowships supporting expeditions to remote locations to observe and artistically render rare and endangered species and habitats. Fellows of this program receive funding and are provided special opportunities to share their stories, and the plight of their subjects, to a broad audience. By the time this book is printed, we will have announced our eighth Flag Expedition. Through this and other programs, the AFC actively supports artistic field study around the world and helps its members to share important stories, giving us a context and better understanding of the interconnectedness of our world, its beauty, fragility and vulnerability.

I would now like to thank you for your interest in Artists for Conservation and invite you to take your time to learn more about the AFC, WCS, the Blauvelt Museum and to enjoy the 113 masterful creations that represent this very special exhibition of art.

Sincerely,

Jeffrey Whiting, H.B.Sc., SAA, AFC  
President & Founder  
Artists for Conservation Foundation





# Artists for Conservation<sup>TM</sup>

Supporting Nature through Art

*[www.natureartists.com](http://www.natureartists.com)*



*For more information about the AFC, its programs and members, please visit the AFC website at [www.natureartists.com](http://www.natureartists.com).*

# *Artists for Conservation:*

## *Supporting Nature Through Art*

**T**he Artists for Conservation Foundation (AFC) is a non-profit group comprising many of today's most recognized nature artists. Based in Canada, it is the world's leading artist collective supporting the environment. The AFC's mission is to support wildlife and habitat conservation, biodiversity, sustainability and environmental education through art that celebrates our natural heritage.

Founded in 1997 as the "Worldwide Nature Artists Group" by Jeffrey Whiting - a prominent Canadian artist, author, biologist and professional software engineer - the Group was renamed in 2007. The Foundation's strength lies in its membership and represents a who's-who of nature artists worldwide. New members are admitted by invitation, or by jury, and only as placements allow. The Foundation dedicates its resources to nurturing its world-class community of nature artists and leveraging this pool of talent to support its mission through a variety of programs and initiatives, including:

- Facilitating art sales to raise funds for conservation
- Supporting artistic field research expeditions to study endangered species and threatened habitats.
- Maintaining the world's largest virtual gallery of nature art.
- Recognizing individuals for their work in support of the conservation cause.
- Producing an annual art exhibition in support of conservation, and an accompanying book and touring exhibit.
- Planning and spearheading large-scale international environmentally-themed art projects.

Today, the AFC is arguably the most progressive and prestigious organization in the world of nature art. For the first ten years of its operation, benefiting in part from a donated state-





of-the-art technological infrastructure, the Foundation was sustained entirely on membership dues and volunteer labor, although it now seeks patrons, donors, sponsors and partners to enable the continued expansion of its activities.

## *Exhibitions*

Launched on the AFC's tenth anniversary year and the subject of this book, this annual international touring juried exhibition is the primary "live" convening event for AFC members and a landmark annual event in the nature and wildlife art community.

### *Touring Exhibit*

Immediately following the annual exhibition, a selection of the show's artworks are selected for inclusion in a touring exhibit for approximately one year.

## *Publications*

You are reading our first. This high-quality coffee-table-style series will be published annually reproducing in color all the works selected for the exhibition. A portion of the book highlights the show's conservation beneficiary partner as well as AFC Flag Expeditions.

In addition to the annual show companion book, the AFC intends to coordinate and publish additional titles, with an aim to highlight important environmental issues and artwork that speaks to those issues.

## *AFC Flag Expeditions Program*

Launched in March, 2005, this ground-breaking program was created to make possible the field study and artistic rendering of endangered species or habitats deserving of greater public attention. AFC Signature Members can apply for fellowship grants and the privilege of carrying the AFC flag on their journeys to remote and ecologically important areas of the planet. For more information, visit [www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/](http://www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/).

## *Awards*

### *The AFC Monthly Conservation Artist Award*

Each month, an AFC member is honored who is making extraordinary contributions to the conservation cause.

### *Simon Combes Award*

In honour of Simon, a valued member of the AFC until his tragic death in 2004, this annual award is presented in recognition of an individual artist (AFC Member) for outstanding artistic excellence and extraordinary support of conservation. A chapter has been dedicated to describing this award in this book.

### *AFC Medal of Excellence*

A small number of these awards are given annually to a small number of artists participating in the AFC's annual exhibit in recognition of extraordinary artwork within the show. Award selections are made by the show jury.

## *AFC Web Site*

The AFC began as an online community and its website remains its primary communications channel with the world and launch pad for all AFC initiatives. Today, the AFC Web site is by far the largest, most sophisticated and most visited site of its kind today and the primary information hub for the nature and wildlife art genre internationally. It features several thousand original and limited edition artworks with a collective value in the hundreds of millions of dollars. At the time of writing, over one million web pages were viewed by nearly half-a-million visitors each month.

In addition to contributing an ever growing and evolving body of artwork online, AFC members each post events to the "News" sections of their own AFC sites. These postings automatically feed our global news section serving as a nature art "newswire". Similarly, AFC artists each post events to the "Events" sections of their own sites, which in turn, automatically feed our global events calendar. Listings are supplemented by submissions from site visitors.







## *Art for Conservation Program*

Unique in concept, this program provides a venue for the sale of artwork with portion of proceeds voluntarily earmarked by the artist for conservation after the artwork is sold. Artists choose the amount of their commitment and a recognized conservation charity as beneficiary. A “ticker” estimating the total potential pledge amount is posted on the AFC Web site - currently in the millions of dollars.

## *AFC Principals*

### *Jeffrey Whiting, President & Founder*

Born in 1972, Jeff's life has many facets. Educated with a degree in biology and geology, he is a sculptor of natural subjects, a software engineer and an author and illustrator of several published art and nature books.

In 1997, Jeff combined his passions for nature and art with his management skills and his technology knowledge and resources to found the Artists for Conservation Foundation. Today, Jeff remains the key driving force and visionary behind the organization.

Jeff is also co-founder and partner in a leading Internet technology consulting firm, ISCAPE Internet Consulting, based in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada.

Jeff's work has lead him throughout North America to the cloud forests of Costa Rica, the lowlands of Central America and the Patagonian region in southern Chile, to remote parts of northern Vietnam and of Borneo and to the World Heritage ecosystem of the Loire Valley in France.

As an artist, Jeff's sculptures and books aim to educate and inspire others to learn more about our natural heritage. He is a member of the Society of Animal Artists, and has exhibited his work in the Leigh Yawkey “Birds in Art” exhibition. At 16 years old, one of his sculptures was presented by the Prime Minister of Canada to Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh. He has received numerous awards for his sculptures.

Jeff resides in North Vancouver, British Columbia with his wife Yasaman, and two children—Amanda and Anthony.



AFC's President and Founder, Jeff Whiting (left) with father and AFC's Managing Director, Bill Whiting (right).

### *Bill Whiting, Managing Director*

William Gordon Whiting, born in 1944, has 30 years of industrial and trade policy experience with the Canadian Federal Government. A Professional Engineer with a Masters degree in Business Administration (MBA), he was a senior executive for a number of years with the Industry Department, where he managed a staff of senior professionals before his retirement. He has traveled internationally in his work and has been involved with the AFC from its inception as a volunteer administrator and strategist.

As Director of the Automotive Branch of Industry Canada, Bill was exposed to many of the latest alternative fuel initiatives. This afforded him opportunities to become familiar with fuel cell technologies and to lead a group of industry experts on a technology mission to Japan. He has also worked closely with project management consulting firms pursuing major projects in Canada.

Bill has had a life filled with creativity—from woodworking, architecture and wood sculpture to landscape design. He is an avid outdoorsman and amateur naturalist and operator of a small organic Christmas tree plantation. He currently works for the AFC from his rural 1830s log home on one hundred acres of boreal forest, just one hour's drive from Canada's capital.

When not corresponding with AFC members, digging holes with his tractor, or tending to his gardens, Bill is working on a long-term strategy to retire from his retirement.





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**THE HIRAM BLAUVELT  
ART MUSEUM**

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*[www.blauveltmuseum.com](http://www.blauveltmuseum.com)*





# *The Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum*

## *Exhibition Host: Oradell, New Jersey*

**T**he Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum was established in 1957 by the Blauvelt-De-marest Foundation, a legacy of the late Hiram Blauvelt, philanthropist, conservationist and collector. Through the contribution of his private wildlife art and big game collections, he hoped to promote the cultural value of wildlife art and the need for conservation of its subjects and their habitats.

During the early part of the 20th century, wildlife was believed to be abundant. Many dedicated conservationists, notably Theodore Roosevelt, gathered animals from their natural

habitats for museums. The beauty of the animals could then be viewed by many.

Like Roosevelt, Hiram Blauvelt realized the value of his collection and wanted to share it with the public. It was his interest and desire to share his far-ranging adventures, his stories of explorations and his collection of these animals. Hiram hoped to educate the coming generations to the diversity and beauty of the wildlife kingdom. He especially wanted to enlighten the public to the challenges we face in preserving the marvels of wildlife and their natural environments.





Founded in 1957 as a natural history museum, it introduced students, scouts and youth groups to the need to support wildlife and habitats conservation. Visiting artists created drawings and paintings from close observation of the specimens.

Twenty-five years later, the Board of Directors of the Blauvelt-Demarest Foundation decided that the original objectives would be best achieved by redesigning the museum to feature the works of contemporary wildlife artists, built on the artistic foundation of the Blauvelt's early collection of works by Charles Livingston Bull (notably a resident of Oradell at one time), Carl Rungius and a complete Audubon Folio of extinct birds.

The Blauvelt Museum, located in an 1893 cedar shingle and turret carriage house, under-

went extensive renovations to accommodate its new and expanded mission. The original carriage house was re-designed to include a large reception area, four mini galleries, and museum offices, all with original materials from the historic building, thus preserving its aura.

Four new galleries were added, providing wall space for mounting museum quality flatwork, and generous room for pedestals to hold creative sculpture. Substantial artificial lighting is augmented by natural light from the north.

High on a hill overlooking the Hackensack River, the Oradell Reservoir and parklands to the east, the museum is entered through a curving stone and slate terrace, framed by large oak trees and other indigenous foliage, which serve as a natural sculpture garden.



Left: Front entrance of the Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum.





Above and right: Views of the interior of the Museum.

Many of its visitors today, accompanied by their children, are re-visiting the museum that they first visited with their parents in past decades. The Blauvelt treasures their compliments on the enhanced collection and facilities, and the preservation of the ambience of their memories.

The Blauvelt established an Artist-in-Residence program in 1985. Artists were selected on the basis of their artistic ability and promise, and on their commitment to the museum's mission for the need for conservation to protect wildlife and their habitats. The museum provides a furnished home for the artist on the museum property, including a studio, painting supplies, etc. Artists-in-Residence have given lectures, led round table discussions, visited schools, and demonstrated painting and drawing techniques.

Guy Combes, son of the late Simon Combes, artist and conservationist, has been named Blauvelt Artist-in-Residence for 2007-2008. Previous Artists-in-Residence include Dwayne Harty, Jordie Millar and Terry Miller.

One of only five museums in the United States to exclusively display wildlife art, the Blauvelt is recognized internationally. The Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum is pleased to partner with the Artists for Conservation and its member artists in their campaign to protect endangered species and their habitats.

To celebrate AFC's 10th Anniversary, the museum is proud to host their 1st Annual Juried Exhibition, *'The Art of Conservation – An International Exhibit of Nature in Art'*.

Marijane Singer  
Director, Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum



*“WCS’s goal is the conservation of wildlife and wild places for future generations, essential in its own right and a reaffirmation of the best of the human spirit.”*

— Steven E. Sanderson, WCS President and Chief Executive Officer



## *The Wildlife Conservation Society: On All Fronts*

**T**he Wildlife Conservation Society (WCS) saves wildlife and wild places worldwide. We do so through science, global conservation, education and the management of the world's largest system of urban wildlife parks, led by the flagship Bronx Zoo in New York. Together these activities change attitudes towards nature and help people imagine wildlife and humans living in harmony. WCS is committed to this mission because it is essential to the integrity of life on Earth.

For more than 100 years, WCS has effectively met the shifting challenges of conservation with innovation,

science, and passion. This fight is increasingly difficult today, in an era of global climate change and dramatic population growth. The pressure on the environment is immense, and the lives of future generations depend on the actions we take today. At WCS we believe it is not too late to act—there are as many solutions as there are challenges facing the world's ecosystems.

In the following pages, you will find an overview of WCS's activities and the grave issues its team of passionate conservationists confronts around the world. The stakes are high: saving the world's wildlife and wild places is nothing less than saving humanity.

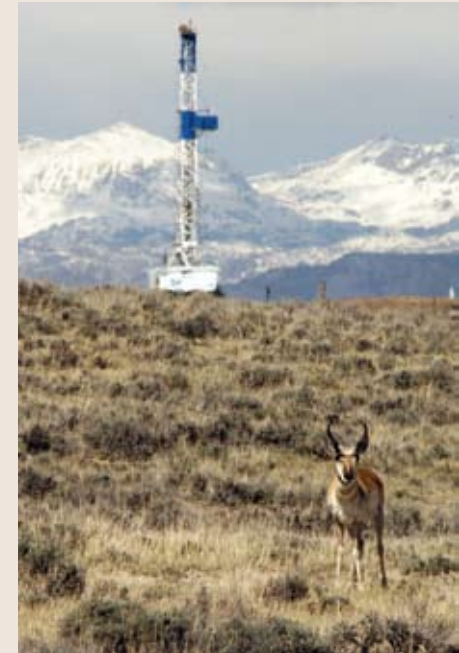
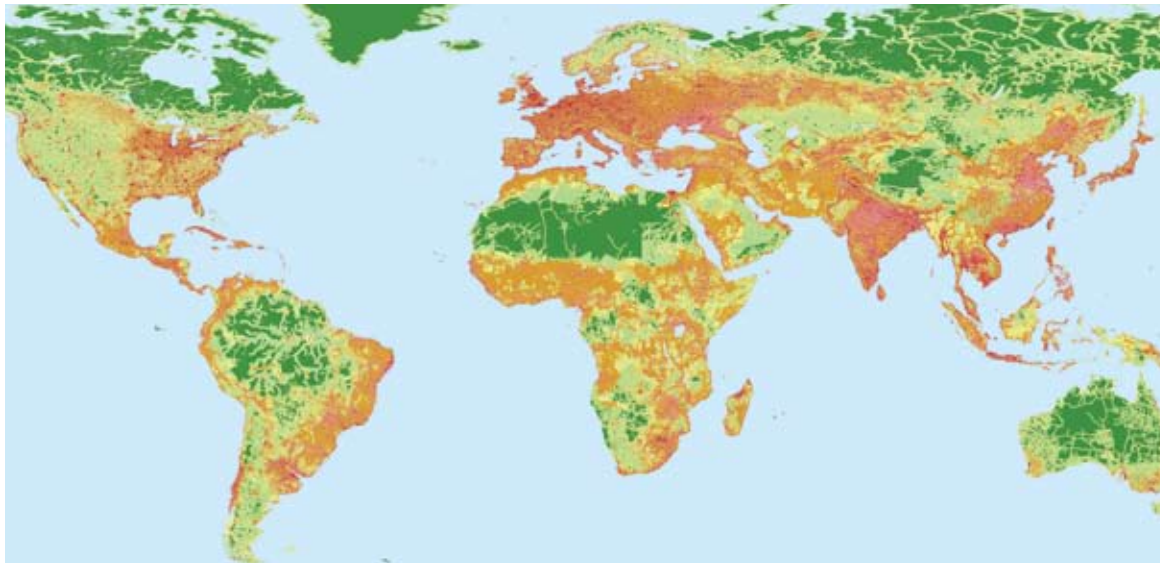


## *The Human Footprint*

Imagine a map illustrating man's impact on each square kilometer of the Earth. That's the essence of The Human Footprint, which shows the cumulative effect of six billion people on the planet. This global snapshot is designed to encourage humans to anticipate the consequences of their choices and to walk more carefully toward the future.

Scientists from WCS and Columbia University's Earth Institute used satellite imagery, census data, and computer mapping technology to create this unique portrait of man's impact on the planet, from least (green) to greatest (red). As 83 percent of Earth's surface is directly affected by people, the human influence on the planet's lands and waters has reached unprecedented levels.

The Human Footprint map will be altered over time, by our actions and priorities. Our influence can be positive or negative, benign or catastrophic, but it is a certainty that the natural world is now, and will continue to be, under the care of the global human community. To rise to the challenge national governments, the international community, and individual citizens must unite to positively transform the Human Footprint and shape a sustainable future for all species, including our own.



Deforestation, urbanization, land development, farming, natural resource consumption, and the construction of roads deeper into wildlife areas all contribute to the global human footprint.

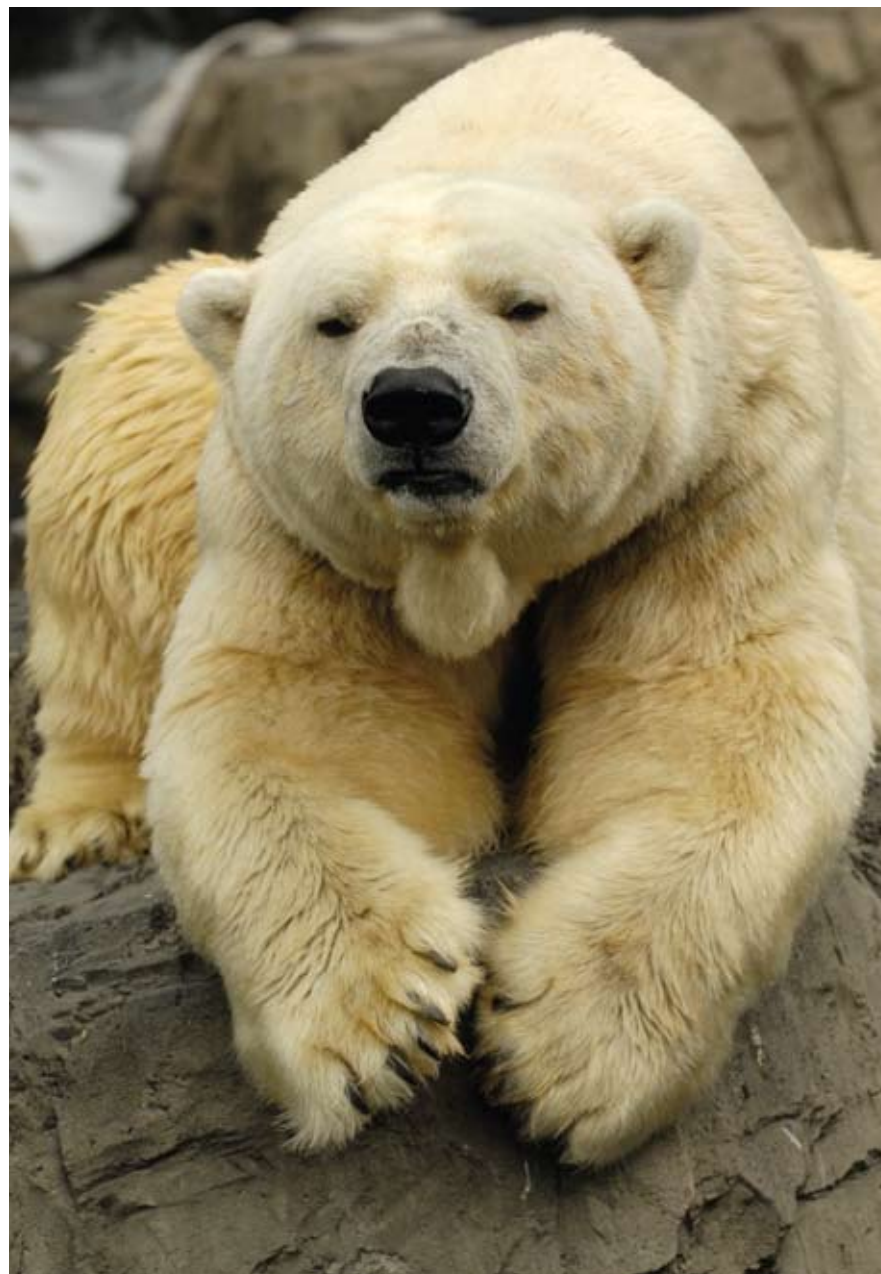




## *Climate Change*

The natural world is under siege. Half the world's wetlands were lost in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Half the planet's original forests are now gone. An estimated one in four mammal species, one in five reptile species, and one in eight bird species face imminent extinction, in almost all cases because of human activities. To add to this bleak situation, global climate change now endangers the remaining wildlife and wild places around the globe.

Tropical forest loss is a primary driver of climate change, accounting for as much as 25 percent of annual global greenhouse gas emissions. Protecting these forests and their wildlife is essential to mitigating climate change around the world. Over the past 100 years, WCS has helped protect millions of acres of tropical forests.



In Madagascar, the establishment of the WCS Makira/Masaola Protected Forests alone will prevent the emission of nearly 10 million tons of carbon dioxide over the next 30 years.

## *Illegal Wildlife Trade*

The illegal trade of wildlife, for their parts or as exotic pets, has become part of a global crime wave, worth \$6 billion a year—third in the illegal marketplace after drugs and guns. A major threat to wildlife—perhaps even more serious than pollution, global warming, or even habitat destruction—the trade has a deadly component that also impacts human health. Crowded wildlife markets bring animals from various parts of the globe in close contact, creating a perfect environment for pathogens to jump across species. WCS and TRAFFIC—the wildlife trade monitoring network of The World Conservation Union (IUCN)—are working with governments and international organizations to fight back: mounting anti-poaching patrols, raiding warehouses and shops, and trying to slow the expanding illegal trade in wildlife.



## *Conservation Without Borders*

Conservationists understand that animals do not recognize international boundaries. WCS's Dr. George Schaller is currently working to establish a transboundary protected area where the borders of four countries—Afghanistan, Pakistan, China, and Tajikistan—meet. This area is one of the most spectacular mountain regions on Earth and home to snow leopards, Marco Polo sheep, and brown bears. By managing these resources, jointly based upon a solid scientific foundation, transboundary protected areas effectively safeguard wildlife and encourage cooperation between nations.



## *Biological Corridors*

To increase genetic diversity and link isolated populations, conservationists strive to connect animals in protected areas through wildlife or biological corridors. WCS has worked for more than 20 years to establish a jaguar migration corridor, collaborating with public and land owners to connect pockets of habitat from Mexico to Argentina and restore the natural path of the jaguar.



## *For the King of Beasts, A Master Plan*

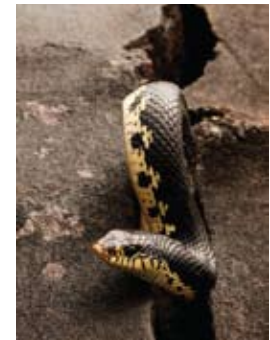
Until recently, many assumed that the African lion population—estimated at about 200,000—was stable. In fact in the past years, across the continent, lion numbers have dropped sharply to approximately 25,000 animals. Lions are often killed when they range outside protected areas and come into contact with humans and livestock, now living closer and closer to park boundaries. WCS and the IUCN are working with other organizations to develop a comprehensive, range-wide conservation plan to preserve this icon of Africa in every country it is found.



WCS staff in Africa radio-collar lions, monitor the signals to track movement, and look for patterns related to the lions' predation of livestock. Preventing predation and helping local people improve their methods of livestock protection are key to reversing the decline of lion numbers.

## *Conserving Biodiversity*

Madagascar contains an estimated two percent of the planet's biodiversity, making the island one of WCS's highest conservation priorities. Madagascar has a magnificent variety of life forms found nowhere else on Earth. WCS collaborates with the national government and local communities to improve conditions for the island's growing human population, while protecting its remaining wildlife and habitats.





## *Protecting Marine Areas*

The world's oceans are complex, as are the problems that they face. Massive coral die-offs, degradation of coastal ecosystems, and overexploitation of marine resources all contribute to marine conservation challenges around the world.

WCS conservationists conduct research that is vital to the maintenance, conservation, and recovery of marine wildlife populations and the habitats that support them—from coral reefs in the Indian Ocean to elephant seals in the Patagonian Sea.





## *Working with Governments*

Wildlife and wild places represent great potential for the economy of a region. WCS works with governments to develop initiatives to responsibly use natural resources for the benefit of the local and regional economy.

### *Gabon*

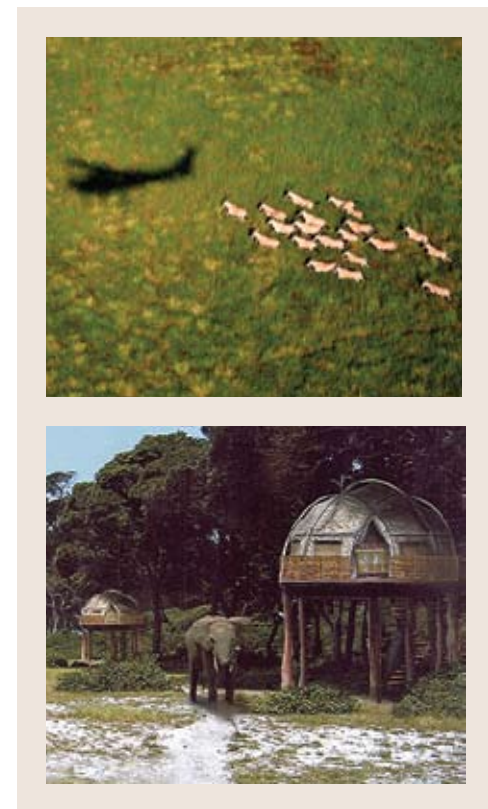
WCS and the government of Gabon have a long history of partnership. In 2003, we worked together to create 13 national parks covering 11 percent of the country. Currently, WCS is helping Gabon manage a number of these areas, including planning for major ecotourism initiatives to benefit the people, wildlife, and natural resources of the country.

The planning process of ecotourism initiatives in Gabon employs WCS's zoo exhibit design expertise. The Gabon National Park System will

be developed to create powerful visitor experiences and convey potent conservation messages, making this country's ecotourism program a force for economic health and wildlife and wild lands protection.

### *Southern Sudan*

Despite decades of civil war in Southern Sudan, recent aerial surveys by WCS field staff confirmed the existence of a massive wildlife migration. WCS is working with the new government to launch a conservation strategy to safeguard the region's wildlife and wild lands, and to develop sustainable initiatives, such as ecotourism. Sudan's rich wildlife represents great potential for this impoverished nation.





## *Private-Public Partnerships*

The private sector is a key collaborator in global conservation, as modeled in the unprecedented public-private alliance between WCS and Goldman Sachs. This unique partnership will protect—in perpetuity—a 680,000-acre tract of wilderness at the southernmost point of South America, on the island of Tierra del Fuego. Together, WCS and Goldman Sachs are working with Chilean conservationists and other partners to establish the reserve and to conserve its unique wildlife and ecosystem for future generations.





## *Connecting Livelihoods to Conservation*

Outside the conservation community, there is often little appreciation or understanding of the value of biodiversity protection and wildlife conservation. Often, conservation is portrayed as having a negative impact on people or adversely affecting development goals. Yet, WCS has considerable experience in establishing models of conservation that benefit both wildlife and local livelihoods by encouraging local people to embrace the protection of the wild.

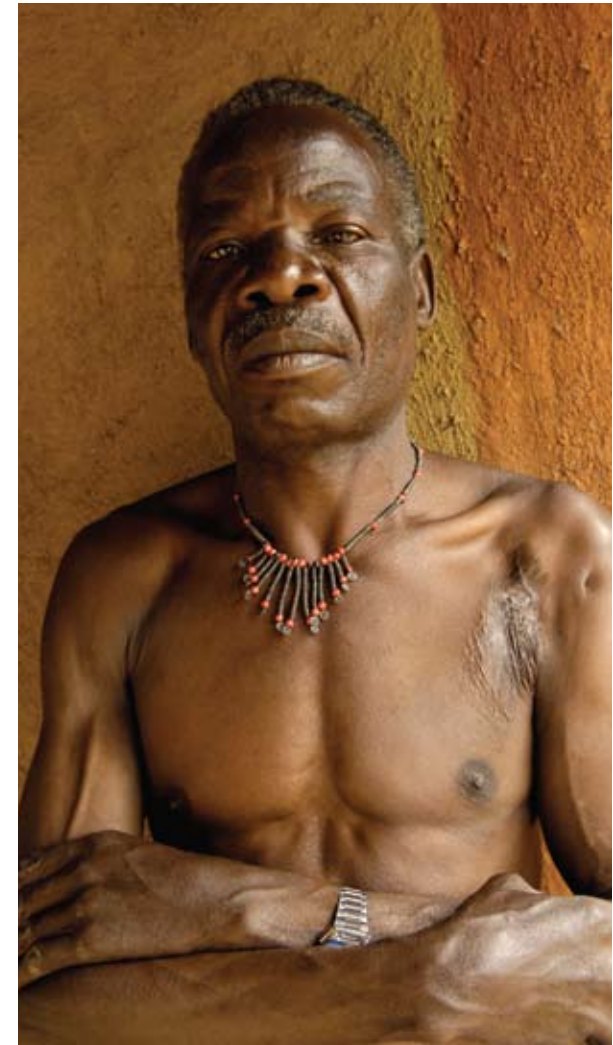
### *From Poacher to Jewelry Maker*

In Zambia, where wildlife poaching was once rampant, the same snares used to trap elephants, lions, and leopards are now being crafted into one-of-a-kind jewelry, known as “Snarewear.” Pictured at right, 70-year-old reformed poacher Thomson Tembo, who killed an estimated 700 elephants over 40 years, proudly models a Snarewear necklace.

### *It's Wild!*

Community Markets for Conservation (COMACO) provides a revolutionary approach that uses rural markets to support conservation in Zambia. Operating as a cooperative non-profit and through a community-owned trading center, COMACO supports poor communities by providing viable alternatives to poaching and solutions to poverty and hunger through a process of skills-training and markets. It is a model of hope for people and nature.

It's Wild! is the COMACO brand name. Products such as organic cotton, locally-grown produce, non-timber forest products, and many more goods and services promote conservation, serve as incentives for food security, and provide sustainable incomes for people living near Zambia's national parks and forests.



In exchange for the 40,000 snares and 800 firearms turned in, former poachers now draw their income from beekeeping, organic farming, gardening, and carpentry, in addition to the jewelry-making.





## Warning Signs

### *Amphibian Extinction*

Considered to be one of the greatest threats to global biodiversity, dramatic declines in amphibian populations have been detected all over the world. Among key factors contributing to this mass extinction are habitat destruction and modification, environmental factors such as pollutants and climate change, and disease. Amphibians are extremely sensitive to their environment, and their decline could be a signal that the planet's health is in jeopardy. WCS is a participant in the Amphibian Ark, an international group of scientists and conservation organizations actively working to protect these animals through breeding programs and habitat protection.

### *The State of the Adirondack Loon*

The call of the loon may be a forecast of danger in New York's Adirondack State Park. Much like the fabled "canary in a coal mine" warning of imminent danger, toxic levels of mercury found in common loons today are a harbinger of hazardous environmental conditions—and a wake-up call for the nine million New Yorkers who rely on the drinking water found here. While the Adirondack Park is a unique mix of public and private land, WCS brings a variety of stakeholders together to advance the mutual benefits of conservation to local communities, both human and animal.



## One World, One Health

The Wildlife Conservation Society's "One World, One Health" program is a holistic initiative that manages human, wildlife, and domestic animal health issues according to a fundamental truth: There is only "One Health" that affects all—the ecosystem of the planet.

### Zoonotic Disease

Sixty-one percent of known human pathogens are zoonotic—able to pass from animals to humans. Since the mid-1970s, more than 30 new diseases have emerged, including AIDS, Ebola, Lyme disease, and SARS. Damaged ecosystems—characterized by toxins, degradation of habitat, removal of species, and climate change—create conditions for pathogens to move in ways they were previously unable. Combating their spread requires the global, integrated approach created in WCS's One World, One Health program.



Avian flu looms as a global pandemic. WCS is at the forefront of tracking the disease via the Global Avian Influenza Network for Surveillance (GAINS). Groundbreaking discoveries gleaned from monitoring wild bird populations in Asia have contributed to the development of a vaccine for humans.



The Ebola virus has killed some 1,000 people in Africa, along with thousands of gorillas and chimpanzees. In 2006, WCS Field Veterinarian Billy Karesh led a mission in Congo to monitor the health of gorillas. Unfortunately, WCS found the population had been wiped out, most likely by Ebola. WCS has been instrumental in bringing the international community together to address the human-wildlife connection of Ebola and other zoonotic diseases.



WCS was instrumental in the identification of the West Nile virus when it emerged in the eastern U.S. More than 280 species of birds have been affected by the virus. New World birds such as the Chilean flamingo are especially vulnerable. A vaccine against West Nile has protected birds at the Bronx Zoo, like this baby flamingo.



## *Global Center for Wildlife Health*

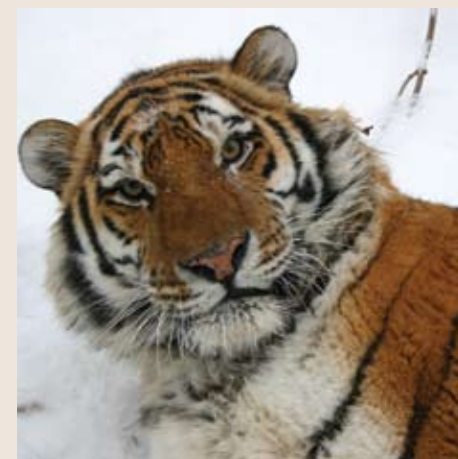
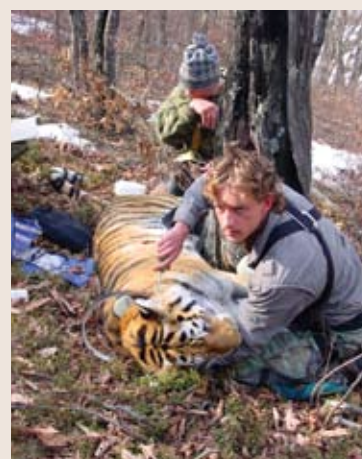
The Wildlife Health Center at the Bronx Zoo applies cutting-edge science to the care of zoo animals and their wild counterparts. Veterinarians care for nearly 20,000 animals living at WCS's four zoos and aquarium in New York City.



African wild dogs at the Bronx Zoo are directly contributing to the well-being of their kind in the wild. Zoo vets and field staff collaborated on determining the efficacy of oral vaccines to fight the distemper outbreaks that can devastate the already decimated wild dog populations in Africa.

## *Monitoring Wildlife Health*

Long-term study of wildlife health is essential to evaluating conservation efforts. WCS's Global Field Veterinary Program is the first of its kind, with experts in animal nutrition, pathology, and clinical medicine, assessing, monitoring, and protecting the health of wildlife worldwide.



The examination of a tiger in Russia requires a careful approach from the air. Scientists spot the tiger on the ground and dart it with a tranquilizer from the safety of the helicopter. When the big cat is asleep, field and health staff radio-collar the animal and then complete a quick check-up. They stay within range until the tiger wakes up.



## Connecting People To Nature

Opportunities for inspiring a passion and commitment to wild nature are few and fleeting in large cities and sprawling urban areas of the United States. In many other parts of the world, impoverished people who once lived in balance with nature now have little alternative but to take from it. In too many classrooms nearly everywhere, there is a declining emphasis on the teaching of science and natural processes.

People need, and want, meaningful connections to nature, and those connections nurture a conservation ethic. WCS provides opportunities for people to connect with nature, in New York and across the globe.

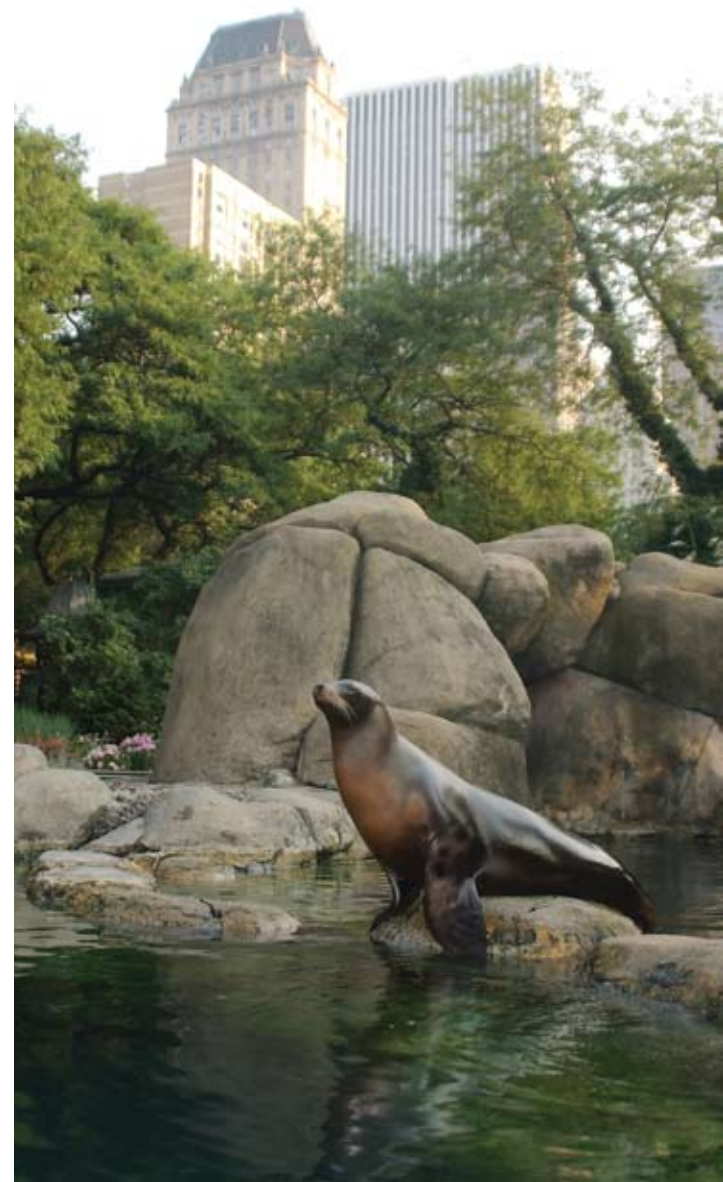
### *The Natural World In the City*

More than four million people each year have wildlife experiences like no other at the zoos and aquarium that comprise WCS's unique network of wildlife parks in New York City, including the flagship Bronx Zoo. Innovative exhibit designs engage, inform, and inspire visitors to care about the natural world. WCS has led the way in transforming zoos and aquariums into important centers for conservation action.

### *Environmental Education*

To meet the challenges of conservation in this century, conservation education must be accelerated in classrooms around the globe. WCS believes a solid understanding of how nature works is the right of every student and an obligation of every citizen.

WCS's award-winning education programs are informing young people throughout the world—from classrooms in Zambia, the Congo Basin, and Russia, to the banks of the Bronx River in New York City.





## *Conclusion*

“WCS’s goal is the conservation of wildlife and wild places for future generations, essential in its own right and a reaffirmation of the best of the human spirit.”

Steven E. Sanderson, WCS President and Chief Executive Officer

As the world’s human population grows at a dramatic pace and the demand for food and other goods requires ever further exploitation of the Earth’s resources, the wild is losing ground. Nature is fast disappearing, at least in the sense of vast expanses of wild, untouched by humanity. Contemporary societies have created urban centers in constant expansion, incorporating more and more land. For food, cities rely on commercial agriculture that furthers the industrial development of wild places.

These are facts of today’s world. Wildlife is confined to ever smaller areas as the human footprint is spreading and intensifying on all continents. Nevertheless, WCS remains hopeful, and chooses to focus not on what is already lost but on what will remain. WCS’s central strategy is to concentrate on the preservation of vital areas for wildlife around the world, and to protect the most endangered species. In addition to field work, through our education programs, zoos, and aquarium, WCS aims to inspire people to care about wildlife and to live sustainably with nature. WCS is committed to this mission because it is essential to the integrity of life on Earth. In the end, this planet is all we have—we must preserve it.

### *Photo Credits:*

Julie Larsen Maher, Elizabeth Bennett, Laurence Frank, Alan Rabinowitz, Luke Hunter, George B. Schaller, Mike Fay, John Goodrich, Ullas Karanth, William Karesh, John Gwynne, Tim Davenport, Tim Collins, Paul Elkan, Martin Gilbert, Darin Collins, Cresolus Design: Andrew and Elizabeth Coates





# *AFC Flag Expeditions*

## *Exploration for Art & Conservation*

*[www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/](http://www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/)*

Launched in March, 2005, this ground-breaking program was created to make possible the field study and artistic rendering of endangered species or habitats deserving of greater public attention. AFC Signature Members can apply for fellowship grants and the privilege of carrying the AFC flag on their journeys to remote and ecologically important areas of the planet.

Upon return from the expedition, participating artists are required to submit to the Foundation, a written journal and sketchbook of their journey, photos with the AFC flag in situ, a signed flag and video footage when possible. The AFC provides funding, as well as prominent exposure in a growing number of

venues including on the AFC Web site, for each artist and each expedition. Each year at least two Fellowships are offered - each worth up to \$5,000 US.

The Program is open only to AFC Signature Members, who can apply to obtain financial support and the privilege of carrying the AFC flag on their journey.

Three Flag Expeditions are featured in the 2008 exhibit. The AFC's Flag Expeditions website documents these and other past expeditions and highlights new ones yet to be run. For more information about the program, please visit [www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/](http://www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/).

### *Featured Flag Expeditions*

- *"Observing & Portraying the Endangered Harpy Eagle & its Habitat";*  
Fellowship Recipient: David Kitler
- *"The Flora & Fauna of Bhutan - An Artist's Journey through the Land of the Thunderdragon";* Fellowship Recipient: Pollyanna Pickering
- *"Painting the Painted Dogs - Artistic Study of an Endangered Hunter";*  
Fellowship Recipient: Alison Nicholls





# *AFC Flag Expedition #1: Observing & Portraying the Endangered Harpy Eagle & its Habitat*

*[www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/kitler2005/](http://www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/kitler2005/)*



In this inaugural Flag Expedition, David Kitler and his wife, Ly, spent a month in the dense tick and snake-infested rainforest of Panama where they and the endangered Harpy Eagle shared the same forest canopy.

The objectives of the expedition were to observe, study, and gather reference material for the subsequent portrayal of the Harpy Eagle and its habitat. The resulting artwork and publicity from the expedition have been used to support conservation efforts currently underway to restore the Harpy Eagle to its historical ranges, while helping to educate the

40

public on the key role that conservation of this species plays in the maintenance of a healthy ecosystem.

“We saw it all and we were blown away. We had deliberately kept our expectations low. To sit there and observe a mother and her chick was something we had only dreamed about. To have had this opportunity from day one and then spend nine days under the nest was the highlight of our amazing experience.”

David Kitler’s journey began on December 1, 2005, when he and his wife, Ly, left Calgary, Canada and headed into







Left: Harpy keeping an eye on David and a possible meal (anteater).

unknown territory to observe and portray the endangered Harpy Eagle. What awaited them was something beyond their wildest expectations. On December 7, accompanied by their guide, Guido Berguido, the Kitlers set out into Panama's Darién province to a native village called Llano Bonito (meaning beautiful plain.) What was extraordinary about this particular village was that within a half-hour's walk there was the ideal Harpy Eagle nesting site. Secretive by nature, the Harpy Eagle pairs left in the wild also range over a wide territory, which makes them extremely hard to find. The Kitlers had not anticipated that their good fortune would come so early into the journey.

Perched on a hillside, sitting eye-level looking into the nest, Kitler captured the life and habits of the Harpy mother and her eaglet. "It was the next best thing to sitting in the nest," an enthusiastic Kitler declared, as he talked about positioning his hammock adjacent to the nest for yet another night of sleeping under the stars. "Spending time in that spot in the jungle left me feeling completely in touch with nature and all its unspoiled beauty."

This amazing raptor once ranged from Mexico to Argentina. Unfortunately, the Harpy Eagle has disappeared almost entirely from these areas, and has become one of the most critically endangered species, its numbers declining sharply. The most powerful bird of prey in the world (around 3 feet tall, with a 7-foot wingspan), the Harpy Eagle has few, if any, natural predators. Only humans are a threat to this species, mainly through the practice of killing the birds for food and/or feathers, and destroying the birds' habitat through development, logging and agriculture. Deforestation has impacted heavily on the survival of the Harpy Eagle.

Conservation of the Harpy Eagle in Panama received a helping hand when the Harpy Eagle became the country's National Bird in 2002. This status has translated into greater public awareness, mingled with national pride at being the home of such a majestic bird. It has also provided the legal clout necessary for the enforcement of anti-poaching laws. Today Panama has the largest concentration of Harpy Eagles in all of Central America, at an estimated 200 breeding pairs, and is the home of the Neotropical Raptor Center, a facility





funded and managed by the Peregrine Fund for the captive breeding of Harpy Eagles for subsequent release in the wild. The Center utilizes the same species restoration techniques that were used to re-establish Peregrine Falcon populations, and to date almost 30 captive-bred Harpy Eagles have been released in Panama and Belize. If everything went as planned, some of these Harpy Eagles should have started reproducing in 2007.

The presence of Harpy Eagles is said to indicate the health of the forest's ecosystem, as top predators are among the first to disappear when pristine habitat is altered. Where the Harpy Eagle thrives, the tropical forest thrives as well. Protecting the Harpy Eagle also protects large areas of rainforest, along with everything that lives in them. Rainforests cover only 5-6% of the earth's landmass, yet they contain 70-90% of all species. Supporting the conservation of Harpy Eagles and their habitat is akin to supporting biodiversity and a healthy ecosystem.

Around 50 years ago, 70% of Panama was covered by forest; today, that number is just over 40%, making deforestation one of the country's worst environmental problems. The destruction of the rainforest not only wipes out the animals that live in it, but also leads to soil erosion and water shortages, and is a threat to traditional indigenous cultures. According to the World Conservation Monitoring Centre, there are over 100 species threatened with extinction within Panama, including the Harpy Eagle, jaguars, and all five species of sea turtles. It becomes imperative that these species are protected from any further threats.

Kitler's experience is captured in hundreds of photographs and a special journal containing nearly 150 pages of sketches, writings, paintings and collages. A comprehensive section on the AFC website has been dedicated to showcase this incredible body of work produced primarily in-situ, in the remote rainforests of Panama.



David holds the AFC flag with the old insignia in front of a Harpy Eagle nest tree in the Darién.





## David N. Kitler

Born in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, David Kitler's appreciation of nature began in his youth as he explored the Canadian outdoors. Later he embarked on longer reference gathering trips and taught himself to paint, experimenting with a variety of media and techniques. Because of his love of wildlife, Kitler had initially geared his education towards becoming a veterinarian, believing that art could only be treated as a hobby. However, due to tragic events involving his family, he had to find ways to support himself and secure his future. So he gave up his dream of attending university, and started working at a local factory.

Soon, however, Kitler's sketches and paintings, which he continued to work on whenever he had a free moment, began to garner attention, opening a door to a world he never knew existed. It was then that he decided to pursue a degree in art. Fending for himself, he overcame incredible odds and eventually graduated with honors from the Ontario College of Art. His paintings have since gained recognition, having received a number of "Best of Show" and Excellence awards, and are part of collections worldwide. His detailed portrayal of birds of prey also earned him feature articles in several magazines. Besides being a member of the AFC

from its very early days, Kitler is a member of the Society of Animal Artists, and his work has been included in some of North America's most prestigious exhibitions and art shows.

His expedition into the jungles of Panama adds a unique dimension to conservation efforts: it has led to the creation of images (i.e. a visual record) that makes Harpy Eagles, and the problems they face, more accessible to a larger number and wider variety of individuals, than could be accomplished by any scientific paper. It was expected to be the most extensive artistic study of the Harpy Eagle ever attempted, and will complement the scientific projects currently underway.

The paintings created as a result of this expedition are directly supporting current conservation projects by providing financial backing, raised through the sale of artwork. They are also a vehicle to increase public awareness and education about the birds, their habits and habitat.

Since the expedition, Kitler has given several presentations and interviews, and recently unveiled a series of studio paintings resulting from his time in the field with the eagles.



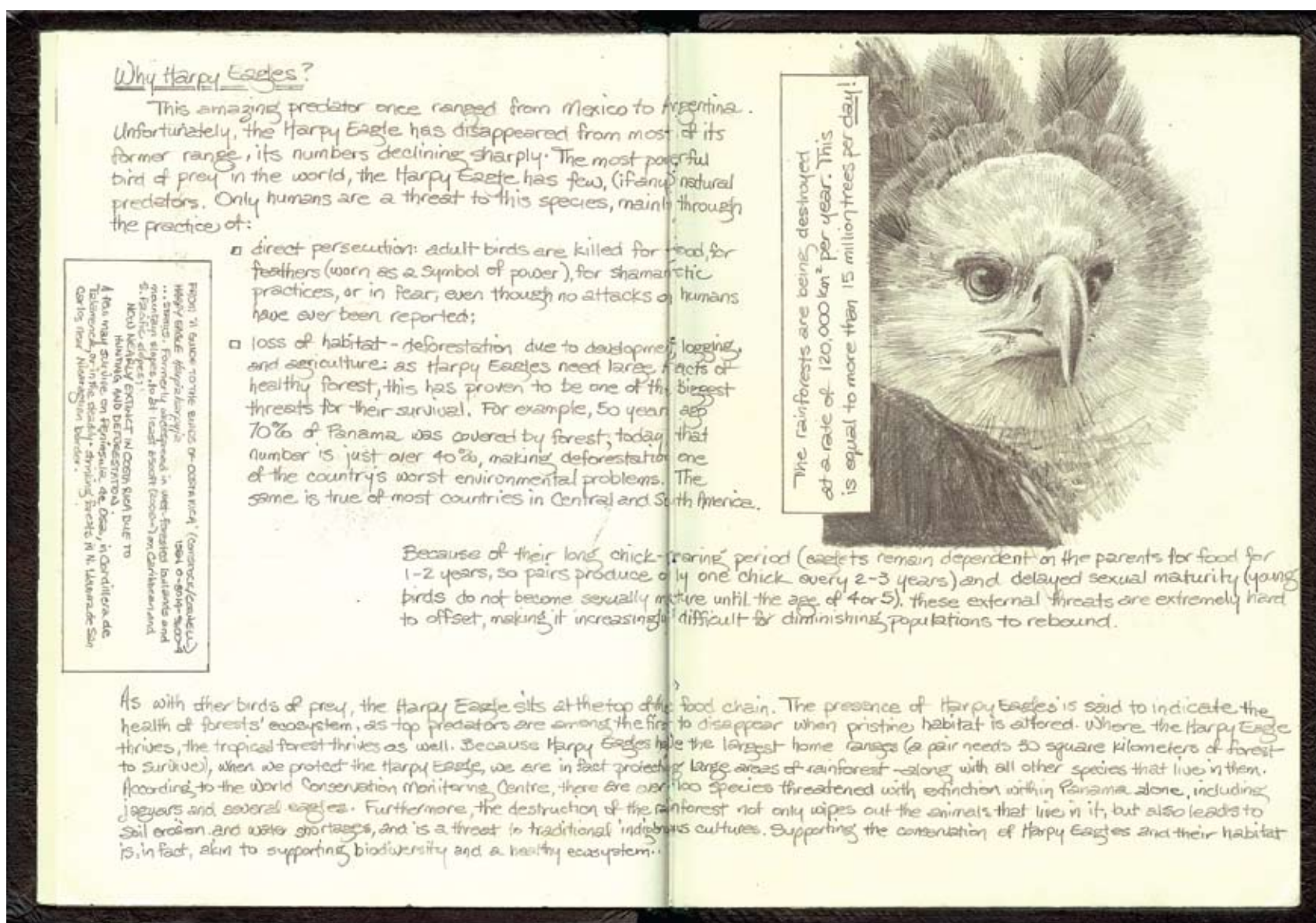
Left: Young girl from village Llano Bonito. Right: Mother Harpy with chick.



David and his wife have also since returned to Llano Bonito—the village they called home—on a humanitarian mission and to give back to the community that befriended them. After a successful fundraising and donation campaign, they transported and delivered to the villagers, hundreds of pounds of school supplies and baseball equipment, as well as other donated items, including fabric, toothbrushes, toothpaste, etc. It took five horses (and a 3-hour hike) to get all of the supplies from the closest town to the village. The natives were overwhelmed by the fact that so many people, from so far away, had cared so much as to try to help their children and their community.

The return visit was bittersweet, as David and Ly learned that their 9-year-old friend, Omar, had been killed five months earlier by a snake (fer-de-lance). In the group photo of the villagers taken during the Kitler's first visit (see page 40), Omar is the little boy holding the AFC/WNAG Flag behind Ly, while his mother is behind him and to the immediate left.

Comprehensive coverage of David's expedition, including photo gallery, blog, video clips, finished paintings, and his Flag Expedition journal can be found at:  
[www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/kitler2005](http://www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/kitler2005).





Sample pages from the "Flag Journal" David completed during his Expedition in Panama.

*"We saw it all and we were blown away. We had deliberately kept our expectations low. To sit there and observe a mother and her chick was something we had only dreamed about. To have had this opportunity from day one and then spend nine days under the nest was the highlight of our amazing experience."*

— David N. Kitler



# *AFC Flag Expedition #4: The Flora & Fauna of Bhutan: An Artist's Journey through the Land of the Thunder Dragon*

*[www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/pickering2007/](http://www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/pickering2007/)*



In March, 2007, Pollyanna Pickering became the first western artist to comprehensively document Bhutan's wildlife and habitat in a series of paintings.

The journey was made possible in large part by a Fellowship grant under the AFC's Flag Expeditions Program and served to support the conservation of the rare and unique flora and fauna of the remote Himalayan country.

"Who knows what undiscovered secrets this mystical terrain is hiding? My aim is to capture the atmosphere and spirit of the Himalayas, and document the breathtaking diversity of life in this mountain kingdom," said Pickering, prior to embarking on her 21st expedition, her most ambitious and challenging project yet. Pollyanna is a seasoned traveler with past excursions including treks into China, Namibia,

Transylvania, India, Siberia, Kenya, Central America and the Arctic, to name a few.

Bhutan jealously guards its lifestyle and ancient traditions, and respecting these values was first and foremost on Pickering's agenda.

The month-long journey into Bhutan began on March 28th, 2007, taking Pickering and her daughter, Anna-Louise, an accomplished wildlife photographer, the entire width of the Himalayan kingdom. This gave them the opportunity to experience firsthand the incredible range and diversity of the habitat, forestation and wildlife found in this land.

Bhutan is home to 165 species of mammals, many of which are extremely threatened. The most remote of the Himalayan countries, Bhutan is the least touched by





Golden Langurs in Bhutan

modernity and is included in Conservation International's list of 19 Global Hotspots for conservation of biodiversity. This 'hotspot' list identifies high biodiversity ecosystems under the greatest threat of destruction as well as wilderness ecosystems that remain virtually intact. These priority 'hotspots' occupy less than 2% of the earth's surface between them, but contain more than 50% of earth's terrestrial biodiversity, and house almost 75% of the world's most endangered plant and animal species.

Because of the unique variety of plants and animals found within Bhutan, ecologists consider this eastern Himalayan kingdom to be an area critically important to global efforts to preserve biological diversity. A total of 26% of the country is within protected areas – either wildlife sanctuaries or national parks, providing habitat for the many endangered species. Large areas of the country remain virtually unexplored. Even the protected areas have not yet been fully studied, and the indigenous species have not yet been comprehensively catalogued.

As ambassador of the AFC, Pollyanna visited the National Art School in Thimpu and spoke to final year students about her work, as well as a primary school which lies within the Jigme Dorje national park to learn about their program of environmental education for the children. She

arranged several meetings with conservation organizations including WWF and Green Dragon to learn more about the conservation issues facing the country. "These meetings gave me tremendous insight into the conservation programmes and challenges within Bhutan and the Himalayas from the people most closely involved," Pollyanna commented. "We hope to be able to assist with funding of future projects with money raised from the exhibitions of work inspired by the expedition, and through the Pollyanna Pickering Foundation."

The main threats to the environment come from poaching and logging. Many of the endangered species in Bhutan are sought after for body parts, which have supposed medicinal or other valuable properties. The Bhutan Forestry Services Division operates an anti-poaching programme, which encompasses endangered plants, animals and trees.

All animals in Bhutan are protected by the Buddhist ethic, which prohibits killing, thus respecting all life and holding that a healthy environment is essential for both material and spiritual happiness.

Pickering had four key target species that she hoped to sight. She was fortunate in finding three – the Red Panda, the Golden Langur, and the Clouded Leopard. The Snow Leopard was her fourth target species, but like the yeti, it too remained elusive. Pickering, however, did manage to speak to several older Bhutanese villagers, who told stories of encounters with the Migo (yeti), who have the power of becoming invisible; hence, why so few people see them. Myth? Hard to tell, since in a monastery temple, Pickering was shown a yeti scalp, which she was able to sketch.

Pickering sketches extensively while in the field, working in pencil and charcoal, making quick studies to capture the essence of her subjects. She works in a variety of media, but primarily in gouache, on board and canvas. Her work, following an expedition, includes landscapes of the area studied, wildlife portraits, and 'study sheets' showing typical behavior of her subjects.

"The paintings will bring visions of a Himalayan landscape to many people who will never have the opportunity to travel to this remote and unspoiled region of the world. There is no substitute for the inspiration which comes from the visit



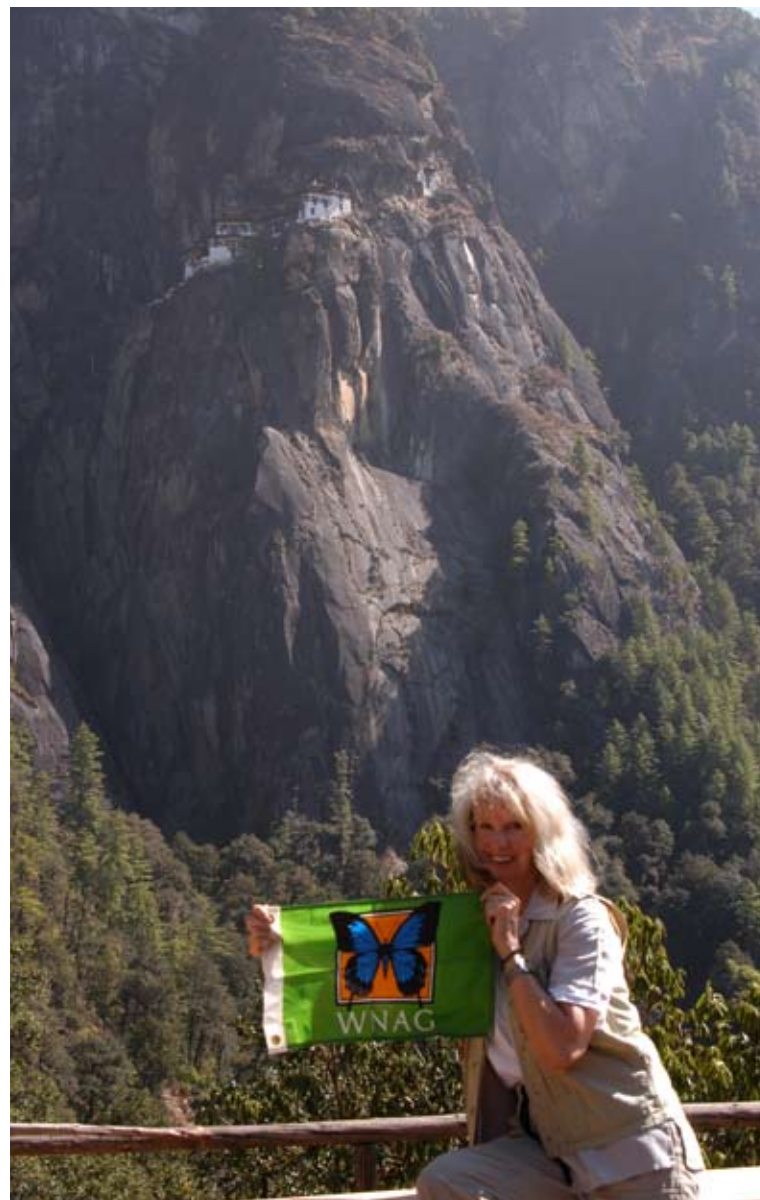


to the habitat, and the sketches made in situ,” notes Pickering, adding that some of her motivation came from the symbols of Bhutan’s religion – the colorful prayer flags which flutter throughout the landscape, as well as the temple paintings.

“Buddhist art aims to transmit, in symbols or signs, a spark of the eternal stream of life and consciousness – a noble tradition to aspire to. We have rarely left a country so optimistic for the future of its habitat and wildlife. Bhutan will remain an invaluable sanctuary for some of the world’s most endangered species,” concludes Pickering.

At the time of printing, Pollyanna was in the process of completing 50 pieces of original artwork for a major exhibition and gallery shows. These will highlight the natural history of a kingdom about which remarkably little is known in the west, and also stress the importance of conserving the ecology of the region. Along with her sketches, paintings, photography, and video clips, Pickering has prepared a detailed journal documenting her experience during the month-long adventure. She will also be publishing a book on her findings, and has an ongoing schedule of lectures.

Pollyanna was accompanied by her daughter and business partner Anna-Louise, who photographed and documented the expedition. Anna-Louise has collaborated with Pollyanna on four books to date, writing the text, and providing the photographic images. An accomplished wildlife photographer, she recently won the Gold Medal in the photographic section of The Wildlife Art Society International’s annual exhibition. Anna-Louise was also responsible for organizing the expedition. Her organizational skills gained her the title ‘P.A. of the Year’ in a national competition in 2004. She was previously a finalist in the Cosmopolitan Women of Achievement awards for her expeditions and work on the books.



Pollyanna holding the AFC flag with monastery in backdrop.







## *Pollyanna Pickering*

Pollyanna Pickering is one of Europe's foremost and highly respected wildlife artists. She recently accepted the post of patron of The Wildlife Art Society International. Pollyanna is a highly experienced traveler having completed research and painting expeditions across five continents.

Pollyanna studied at the London Central School of Art, graduating with distinction, and she has worked freelance since 1969. Her original paintings have been exhibited to critical acclaim in top galleries throughout the UK and Europe. She has her own gallery in the Peak District of

Derbyshire where she lives and works. In 1983 her work was first accepted for display by the Royal Academy, the same year in which she won her first major trophy, the Silver Palette Award. For many years she was accredited to the Tryon and Swann gallery, and has exhibited at the Mall galleries with The Society of Wildlife Artists, and in Australia with Christies Fine Art.

Pickering has dedicated her life to the welfare of animals - not only in conserving habitats and species, but also alleviating the suffering of individuals. She is the Founder of



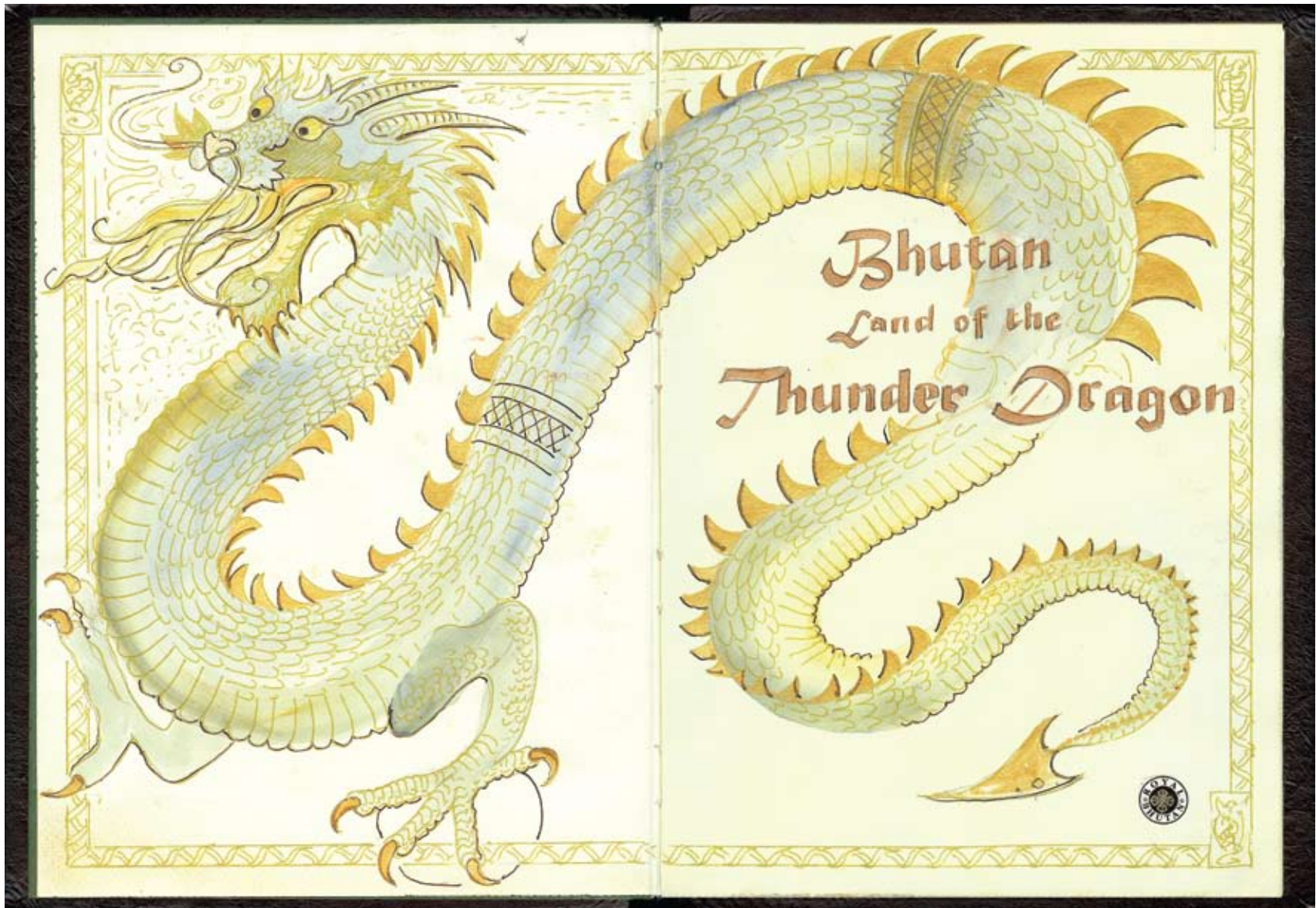
the Pollyanna Pickering Foundation, which raises funds for the protection and rescue of wildlife, endangered species and the environment as well as emergency disaster relief.

She is a member of The Wildlife Art Society International, and The Society of Animal Artists (New York) and a Signature Member of the Artists for Conservation Foundation and the Society of Feline Artists.

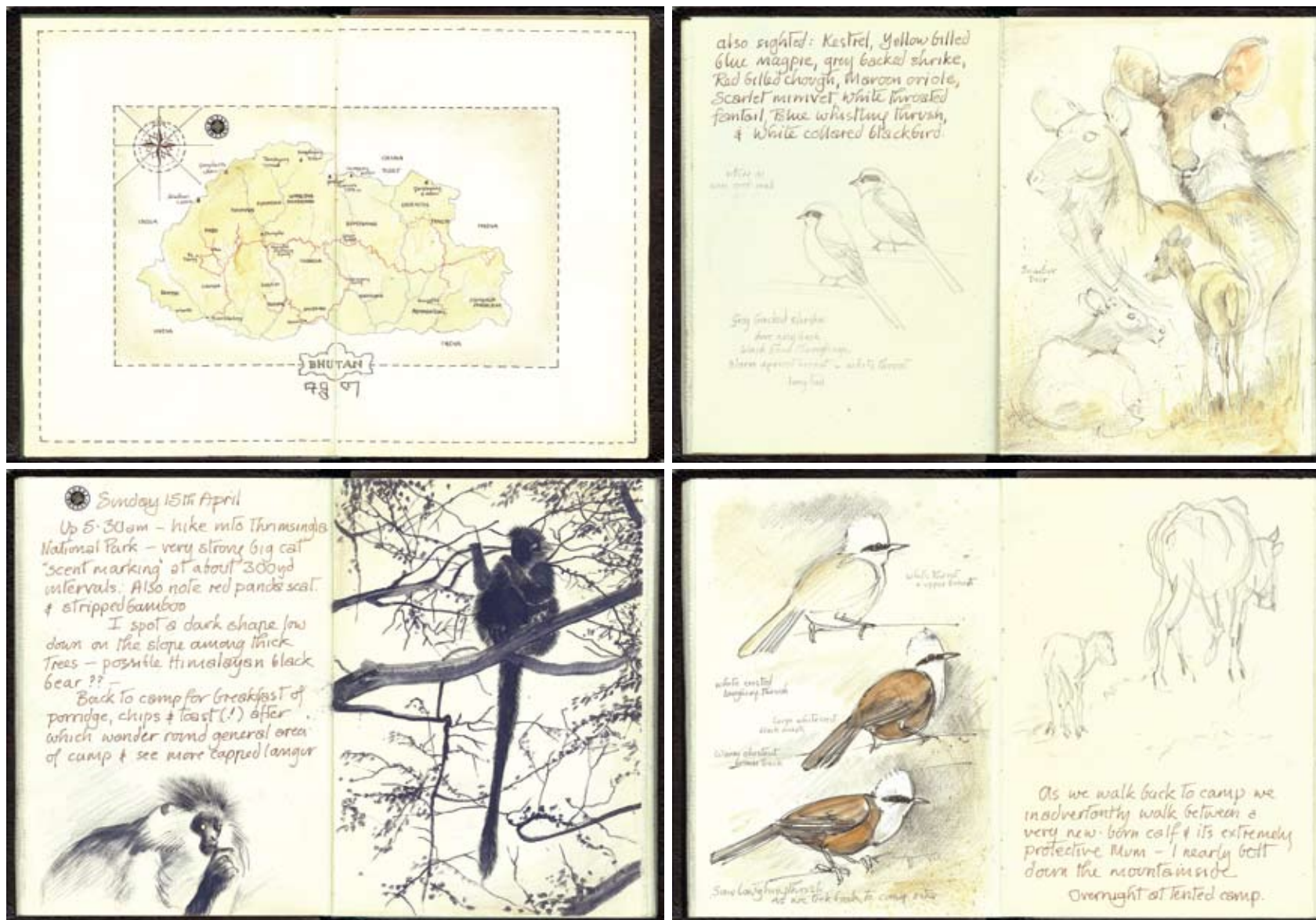
Pickering is a highly acclaimed public speaker, giving over 100 talks each year about her expeditions and conservation work. She is currently booked for lectures

through to 2008, with many venues and societies inviting her back annually to hear her latest talks. In 2004 she was voted 'Speaker of the Year' at the National Speaker Finders Conference, beating strong competition from professional lecturers, politicians and actors. Most recently, Pollyanna received an honorary degree from the University of Derby.

Comprehensive coverage of Pollyanna's expedition, including her photo essay and blog, as well as her AFC Flag Expedition journal can be found at:  
[www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/pickering2007](http://www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/pickering2007).



Above: Excerpt of cover page from Pickering's flag journal.



Above: Excerpt of notes and sketches from Pickering's flag journal.

*"I have rarely left a country so optimistic for the future of its habitat and wildlife. Assuming Bhutan continues to exist in its current state of relative isolation it will remain an invaluable sanctuary for some of the world's most endangered species."*

— Pollyanna Pickering



# *AFC Flag Expedition #5:* *Painting the Painted Dogs - Artistic Study of An Endangered Hunter*

[www.natureartists.com/nicholls2007/](http://www.natureartists.com/nicholls2007/)



Above: Alison Nicholls painting at sunset in Hwange National Park, Zimbabwe. Photo by Margie McClelland

In late August 2007, Alison Nicholls embarked on a six-week expedition to Hwange National Park in northwestern Zimbabwe, with a view to raising public awareness of and support for the plight of the endangered Painted Dogs.

The journey was made possible in large part by a Fellowship grant under the AFC's Flag Expeditions Program. The expedition also served to support and draw attention to the Painted Dogs Conservation Project (PDC) based in Zimbabwe.

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Today, Alison is recounting her exciting adventure through a series of artworks, lecture series, and a traveling exhibition.

The much-maligned Painted Dog is on the endangered species list, in large part due to poaching activities. Painted Dogs are a highly nomadic species that, like many top predators, have been regarded as vermin and eradicated accordingly. Their numbers have dropped dramatically from over 300,000 in 1900 to approximately 3,000 today.





They have vanished from 25 of the 39 countries forming their historical range and are on the International Union for Conservation of Nature & Natural Resources (IUCN) list of endangered species. Zimbabwe contains one of the last viable dog populations and the main threats to their survival today are snares intended for other species, disease, and road traffic accidents.

Painted Dogs are also highly social. They are cooperative hunters and the loss of even one pack member can have a devastating effect on the entire pack. Every member of the pack is involved in caring for pups once they leave the den and even sick and injured pack members are fed and cared for by their companions.

With the help of scientists from the PDC, Nicholls was able to get up close and personal with the subjects of her paintings. Along with 12 and 13 year-old visiting school children, Nicholls embarked on game drives, and anti-poaching patrols with the Anti-Poaching Unit (APU) to remove snares that had been set up to trap wildlife in the area. The snares are then used by local artisans to make

creative items for sale to support the PDU in its ongoing efforts to save the targeted species. Each year, 20 schools visit the area for a week-long stay to learn more about the Painted Dog and Conservation efforts.

The Visitor Centre and the dog rehabilitation unit also contributed to the learning experience, recounting the life of 'Eyespot', a real Painted Dog collared by researchers. Through photos, paintings and text, Eyespot's life is illustrated and focuses on his early days as a pup, his family life, the hunt, his training, leaving his birth pack to start a new pack, and finally the uncertainty of the species' future.

Having seen firsthand the animals in their natural habitat, and collaborating with the scientists and researchers at the PDC, Nicholls will take the next several months to complete a number of large watercolors, using the knowledge and images she acquired on her journey.

"My aim," explains Nicholls "is to have the artworks on display for the whole of 2008, coupled with a lecture series. The exhibition will travel to various venues to help spread



Left: Alison sketching elephants in Hwange National Park. Right: Painted do with radio collar attached by the Painted Dog Conservation Project.





Above: Alison at Victoria Falls, showing the AFC Flag with its former insignia.

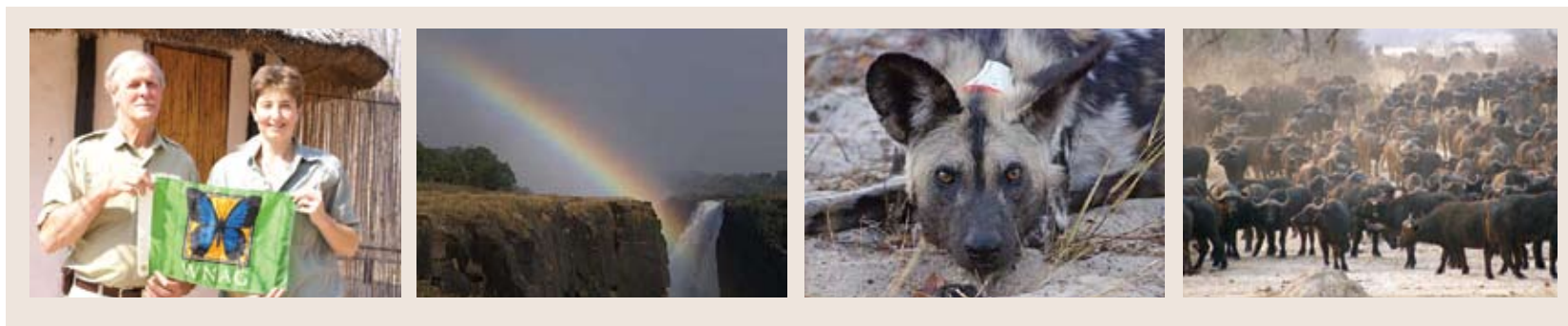
the word about this amazing species. I was so impressed with the efforts of the PDC that all fees from my lecture series and 25% of all artworks sold, will go in support of this amazing organization. As well, the expedition journal, detailing my six-week adventure, complete with photos, sketches, and personal observations, is now posted on the AFC website at [www.natureartists.com](http://www.natureartists.com). I am truly grateful for the opportunity that AFC has afforded me in enabling this tremendous journey."

## *Alison Nicholls*

Alison Nicholls has traveled extensively her entire life. Her travels have taken her to Nepal and Namibia, Hong Kong and Poland, Italy and New Zealand. While all of these destinations are beautiful and varied, it was southern Africa that captured her imagination and this is where she began to paint in earnest.

Between 1994 and 1996 Nicholls lived in Zimbabwe and then moved to neighboring Botswana until late 2002. She now lives in New York, but returns to Africa on a regular basis. Her years in Africa have allowed her to travel widely, camp in remote areas, and gain a thorough knowledge of the numerous wildlife species that abound there.

Says Nicholls, "As far as I am concerned there is nothing quite like camping in the African bush, falling asleep in your tent listening to hyenas whooping, elephants breaking branches nearby and the calls of distant lions. It is pure magic and as a result I now paint only the African wildlife I have come to know through hours of observation and sketching."





Left: Alison with students from St. Francis Xavier school and Jealous in Painted Dog Project Conservation Project vehicle.

*“As an African wildlife artist I have a special relationship with the southern African region which I know best. I try to support small, grass roots conservation groups focusing on that region, especially those which involve local communities, giving them a stake in the future of the wildlife and habitat that surround them.”*

Right: Wildlife at a watering hole in Hwange National Park.

Opposite bottom bar (left): Alison in chance encounter with AFC member Chris McClelland in Zimbabwe holding the flag. Photo by Margie McClelland.



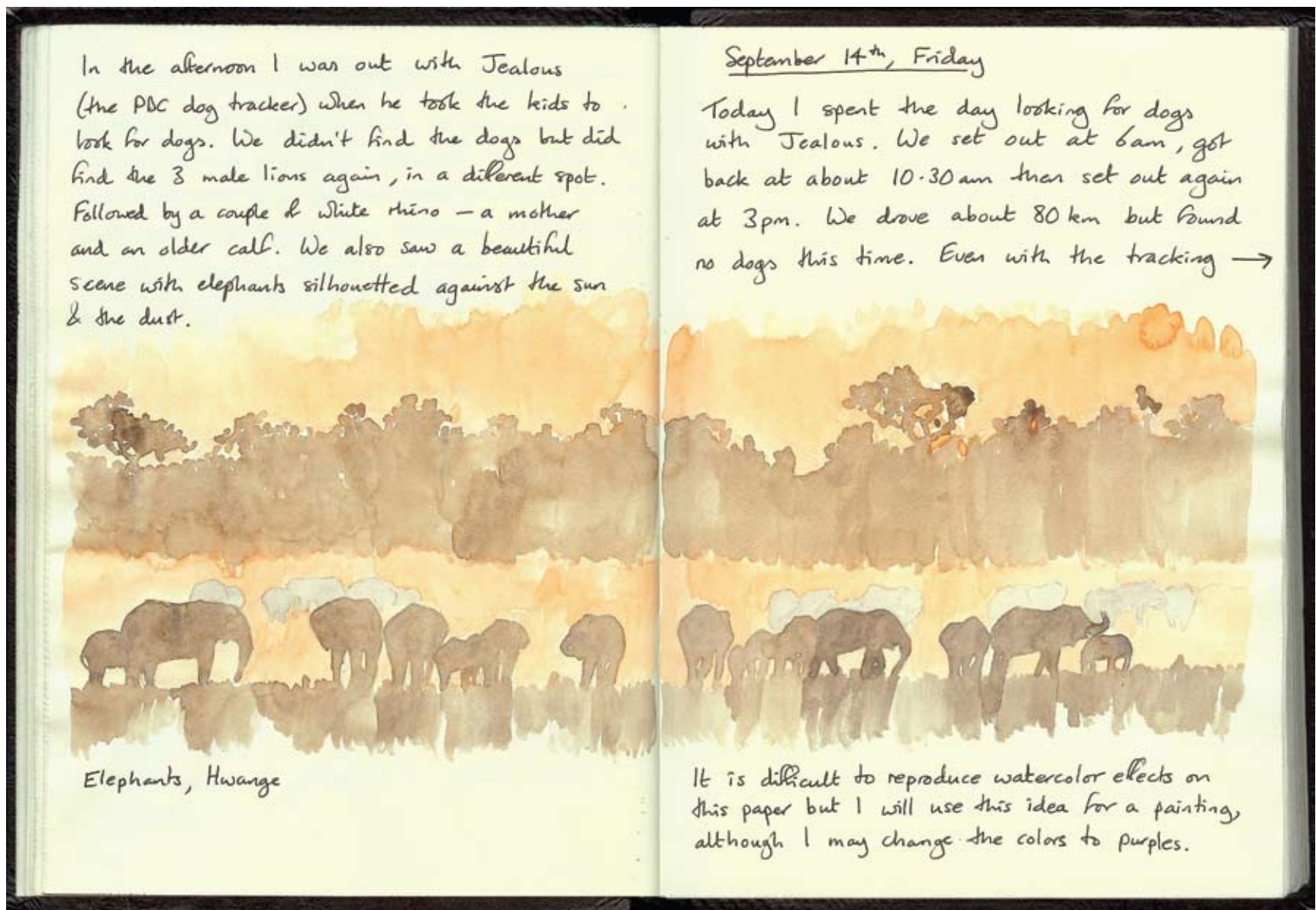
As a self-taught artist, Nicholls has developed her own style and has discovered the intricacies of her wonderful and demanding watercolor medium by trial and error.

Even before Nicholls began to paint she was intrigued by the natural world and interested in conservation issues, but as a professional artist she now has a means of raising funds for conservation on a much more personal level by donating her artwork.

"There are so many deserving projects and conservation groups that deciding which ones to support can be a

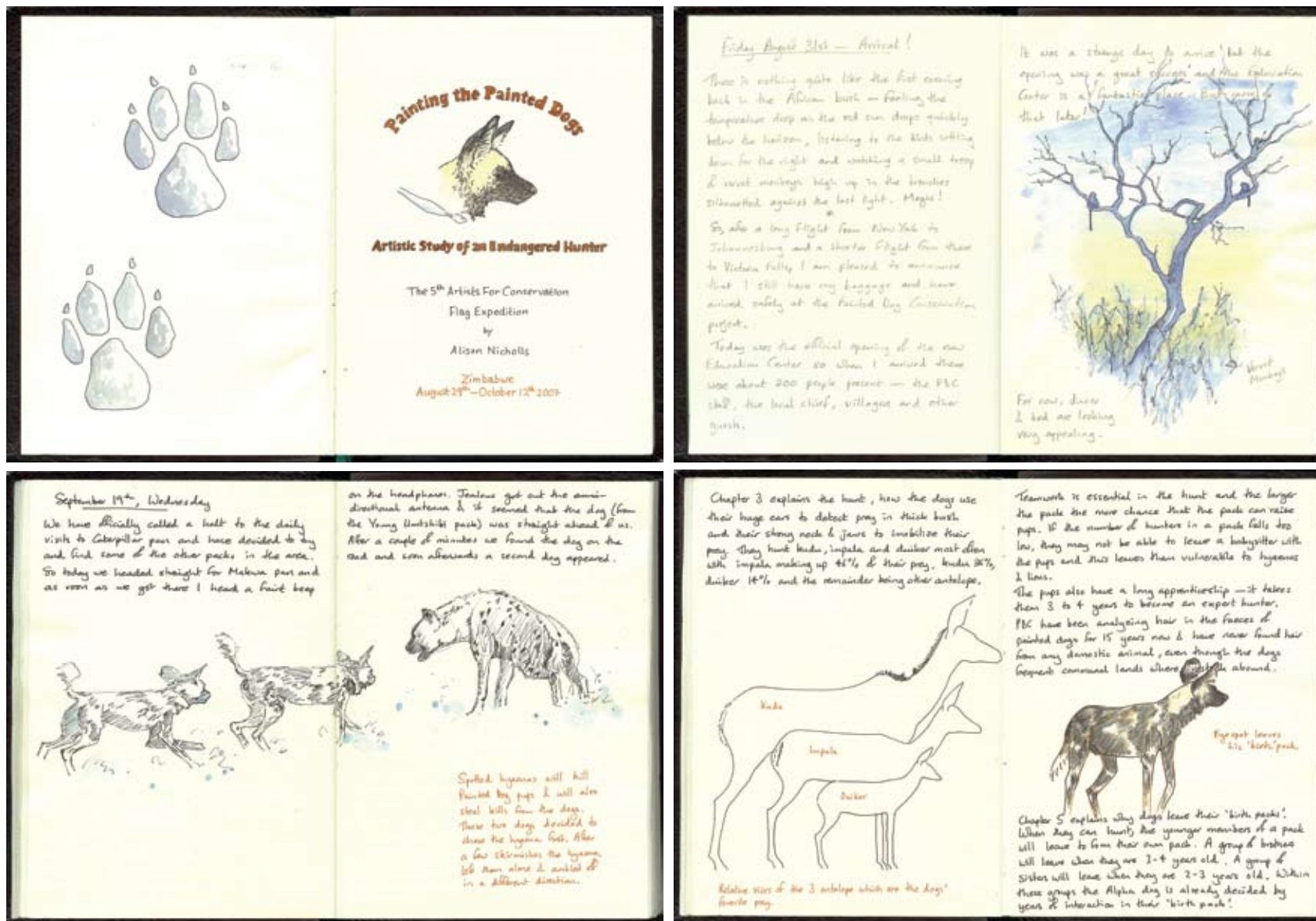
daunting task," says Nicholls. "As an African wildlife artist I have a special relationship with the southern African region which I know best. I try to support small, grass roots conservation groups focusing on that region, especially those which involve local communities, giving them a stake in the future of the wildlife and habitat that surround them."

Nicholls also writes a quarterly newsletter featuring her latest paintings, exhibits, slide talks and trips to Africa.



Above: Excerpt of cover page from Nicholls' flag journal.





Above: Excerpt of notes and sketches from Nicholls' flag journal.

*"As far as I am concerned there is nothing quite like camping in the African bush, falling asleep in your tent listening to hyenas whooping, elephants breaking branches nearby and the calls of distant lions. It is pure magic and as a result I now paint only the African wildlife I have come to know through hours of observation and sketching."*

— Alison Nicholls



Opposite: Robert Bateman—recipient of the 2008 Simon Combes Conservation Award. Photo by Birgit Freybe Bateman



*"Pelican Diving"*  
by Robert Bateman  
Brown Pelican  
Acrylic on canvas  
48" x 42"

"One of the most spectacular of nature's phenomena is a feeding frenzy. It can happen with various creatures and their food chain but one of the best known begins with a dense school of herring or sardines. These get pushed near the surface by predators from below and the watchful sea birds seize the opportunity. Birgit and I were lucky enough to find ourselves in the middle of this madness (safely in a Zodiac) in the Sea of Cortez. There were hundreds of blue-footed and brown boobies as well as pelicans hovering and plunging like vertical rockets, with dolphins working the fish from below. Dozens of Heerman's gulls were striving to rob the diving birds of their prey when they came to the surface.

"This painting composition was inspired by the abstract expressionist Franz Kline and also the awkward, tumbling figure painting of Robert Longo. The pose is the slightly out-of-control contortions the pelican makes in the split second transition from a great, flapping bird into a diving javelin."





## *The Simon Combes*

# *Conservation Award*

### *2008 Recipient: Robert Bateman*

**O**n December 12th, 2004, Simon Combes was tragically killed by a charging Cape Buffalo while hiking near his home in Kenya. He was a prominent member of the AFC (then still known as the Worldwide Nature Artists Group) and Project Director of the Kenya chapter of the Rhino Rescue Trust, an organization founded in 1985 to protect endangered species from being poached and to help the communities surrounding Lake Nakuru National park affected by wildlife conflicts.

Born in Shaftesbury, England in 1940, Simon Combes moved with his family to Kenya at a very young age. At the age of 24, while enlisted in the army, he began to draw and was encouraged to exhibit his work. The public response was extremely encouraging and it was all that Simon needed to leave the army and pursue his passion full-time. He never looked back. Numerous awards and honors followed, all in the name of conservation. His efforts contributed greatly to raising the profile of several conservation organizations and he was appointed Project Director of the Kenya Chapter of the Rhino Rescue Trust, an organization dedicated to anti-poaching activities, and now headed by his widow, Kat Combes.

Simon was widely respected as a man of superb artistic talent, a brilliant communicator, writer, instructor, world-traveler, painter, and steward of our planet. We were honored to have had him as a member of our Group.

Each month, the AFC recognizes one of its members for artistic excellence and extraordinary contribution to the conservation cause, with its monthly Conservation Artist Award. Simon received this honour in November of 2004, only a month before his passing. The Simon Combes Award represents a selection from within this highly dedicated group of individuals.

Simon authored several books. One in particular that received wide acclaim—Great Cats—was a dream realized and resulted in a beautiful and informative coffee-table book featuring a spectacular body of artwork. The project lasted nearly 4 years and involved travelling to some of the most remote places on the planet.

The inspiration to honour Simon following his death was instantaneous and the idea for the award was introduced to Simon's wife Kat during her very difficult time. She embraced it wholeheartedly.



Above: Simon Combes

The award's trophy design, the result of a competition among AFC members, was created by Peter Gray of South Africa. Sculpted in clay and founded bronze with personalized inscription, AFC's highest award pays a lasting tribute to the man for whom it is named, while honoring, at the same time, an artist member who has demonstrated tremendous commitment in support of conservation, exemplifying the same qualities as the trophy's namesake.

Peter's design involves a bronze column approximately 6 inches wide by 3 inches deep by 10 inches high. Two running Wildebeest are emerging out of the mass and fragmenting slightly to indicate the fragility of our efforts to sustain the wilderness areas and the disappearing herds. Wildebeest were chosen by Peter as an apt symbol of the wilderness, and their migratory habits sum up the challenges we face with trying to find new and inspiring ways to conserve the natural world we live in.

David Shepherd from the UK—one of the world's most recognized wildlife painters and founder of the David Shepherd Wildlife Foundation—was the first recipient of the Simon Combes Award. The presentation was made in 2006 during a special retrospective exhibition of Simon's work at the Hiram Blauvelt Art Museum.

The latest award goes to world-renowned Canadian artist, environmental activist and philanthropist, Robert Bateman.

## *Robert Bateman*

Robert Bateman is recognized the world over for his exceptional masterpieces and for his unwavering dedication to the conservation cause. An avid orator, he shares his love of our natural heritage with anyone who will listen and impresses upon his audiences his fervent love for all things living. His paintings reflect his caring nature and devotion to creatures big and small. As a member and director of numerous conservation organizations, Bateman endorses and supports their continued efforts in promoting, through their respective disciplines, the conservation of our natural world.

"I can't conceive of anything being more varied and rich and handsome than the planet earth. And its crowning beauty is the natural world. I want to soak it up, understand it as well as I can, and to absorb it.... and then I would like to put it together and express it in my painting. This is the way I want to dedicate my life."

Since his early childhood in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, where he was born, Bateman has enjoyed a special bond with the earth and the creatures that roam it. While he derives endless pleasure capturing flora and fauna on canvass, it is not without a struggle.

"Painting, for me, has never been a hobby. It is not relaxing - writers and athletes would say the same. Since I was twelve, I have always painted unless I am interrupted. It is a labor, but it is what I do . . . a labor of love let us say.

"My life, so far, has been immersed in nature and of course it always will be. It has been inspiring, adventurous and fun. I have been thrilled by the gorillas in the rainforests of the Congo, the whales of the Pacific, the penguins of the Antarctic and the lions of the Serengeti. But none of these spectacular experiences has been any more enchanting than the nature I discovered as a young boy in the ravine below our backyard in Toronto."

Bateman has been instrumental in raising millions of dollars through the sale of his artwork for conservation organizations.

Museums, galleries, royalty, and other avid collectors the world over treasure his artwork and admire his dedication to preserving and protecting nature's glory.





Bateman's special commissions have included a wedding gift for HRH The Prince Charles, a Platinum Polar Bear Coin Series for the Royal Canadian Mint, and an Endangered Species Postage Stamp Series from 1976-1981 for Canada Post. His temporary and traveling exhibitions draw sell-out crowds both in Canada and abroad.

His major academic honors include Doctorates in Fine Arts, Laws, and Science. Canada's highest civilian award, Officer of the Order of Canada, was bestowed upon him in 1984. The Queen's Jubilee Medal in 1977 and 2002 are also to his credit. In 1987 Bateman received the Governor General's Award for Conservation. The Society of Animal Artists presented him with the Award of Excellence in 1979, 1980, 1981, 1986, and 1990. In 1998 the American Academy of Achievement honored him with the Golden Plate Award.

His published works detail his professional life, artistic techniques, and endless passion for conservation. The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, the National Film Board of Canada, and Eco-Art Production have produced documentaries featuring his life and his art. He holds honorary memberships in many conservation organizations.

This year, the Artists for Conservation Foundation acknowledged Bateman with its highest recognition--the Simon Combes Award.

"I am honored to have been chosen as the recipient of the Simon Combes Conservation Award. The Artists for Conservation Foundation, through its varied programs and initiatives, is a leader in furthering the objectives of the artists who make up the Group. You have to be passionate and committed to make a difference in the world of conservation. This award, which not only underlies everything that I believe in, but also keeps the memory of a dedicated individual alive, is yet another example of AFC's contribution to preserving our natural heritage," said Bateman, after being notified of the award.

Before becoming an artist full-time Bateman was a high school educator for 20 years. (Three schools in Canada now proudly bear his name). Bateman strongly endorses environmental education in the school system.

"The overwhelming reason to increase nature study and outdoor education in the schools is nothing short of the salvation of the planet. Almost all scientists and other thinking



Photo of the Simon Combes Conservation Award trophy, designed by Peter Gray of South Africa.

people say that we are headed in a very destructive direction with the desecration of our atmosphere and life on land and in our waters. These things are nature. E. O. Wilson has said, 'Biodiversity is the creation.' The destruction of biodiversity is a sin against creation and is, in his words, 'the death of birth'. How can we expect to preserve and protect biodiversity if we don't even know the names of the plants and animals that share our neighborhood? And, what is worse, if we don't care?

"Nature always offers adventure since it is always dynamic and full of surprises. Although it is not usually considered an 'extreme' sport, it is not without risks and physical challenges. This, of course, is exactly what is considered 'fun', especially for young people. How much better is it to push yourself in the real world than in the virtual world of a video game? One can even add to the sport and competition by keeping lists, for example, the number of different species of birds seen in one year. Recent studies at the University of



Illinois indicate that being out in nature (not inorganic playgrounds) decreases ADHD, reduces stress, increases civil behavior by 80% and increases productivity in schoolwork. 'Green' schools have far fewer colds and incidences of flu.

"Love is a part of the picture, maybe the most important part. E. O. Wilson has a name for it ... biophilia ... the love of living things. In contrast to increasing destructive trends towards self-indulgence, this love is generous and gratitude based - gratitude for what nature offers us. You cannot love a human being without knowing that person and you cannot love nature without knowing about it."

For the last few years, Robert has been focused on the creation of a very special new facility near his home in British Columbia. Shortly, Royal Roads University, near Victoria, Canada will become the home of the Robert Bateman Art

and Environmental Education Centre - a unique facility designed to host art exhibits, and environmental educational programs, including lectures by special guests and by Bateman himself. The centre will also become the home for Robert's personal legacy of sketchbooks and paintings.

Several years ago, Bateman launched a unique initiative called "Get To Know", to support youth nature education and outdoor activity programs for school children across Canada. More recently he completed four paintings each for Alberta Parks, British Columbia Parks, and Ontario Parks to raise money to offer programs in nature for kids.

Robert Bateman lives on Saltspring Island in British Columbia, Canada, with his wife, Birgit. He is the proud father of Alan, Sarah, John, Christopher, and Robbie.



Above: "African Oasis" © by Simon Combes. Private Collection. Image courtesy of Greenwich Workshop and Kat Combes.

