



## Artist Departs on Quest to Capture the Critically Endangered Painted Dogs of Zimbabwe... On Paper.

*Watercolourist Alison Nicholls on her way for the Artists for Conservation Foundation's 5<sup>th</sup> Flag Expedition.*

**Vancouver, B.C., CANADA -- (August 28, 2007)** – Vancouver-based Artists for Conservation Foundation (AFC) is pleased to announce that New York watercolour artist, Alison Nicholls, the recipient of a Fellowship and grant under the AFC Flag Expeditions Program, will be embarking on her scheduled journey to paint the Painted Dogs of Zimbabwe.

Today marks the beginning of Nicholls' journey to northwestern Zimbabwe to the Painted Dog Conservation project (PDC) in the Hwange National Park. Nicholls will create detailed artistic field studies of the dogs and their natural habitat, and other species in the area. (The name Painted Dog is derived from the Latin name for the species *Lycaon pictus*. African Wild Dog is the more commonly used name, but this has a negative connotation and gives the impression of a feral species, failing to recognize the unique and ancient ancestry of the animal.)

*"Painting the Painted Dogs – An Artistic Study of an Endangered Hunter"*, will provide an opportunity for Nicholls to continue to exercise her creative talents and support a much-maligned species.

"As a watercolor wildlife artist I find the African bush provides endless inspiration. I only paint the African wildlife species that I have sketched in their natural habitat and my aim is not to paint photographically, but to catch an impression of a scene, an effect of the light and a glimpse of the wildlife. Dawn and dusk are the times of most activity in a Painted Dog pack and this suits my slightly impressionistic painting style which combines atmospheric washes and dusky silhouettes," says Nicholls.

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.

**About the Artists for Conservation Foundation (AFC):** The Artists for Conservation Foundation (AFC) is the world's leading artist collective, dedicated to the preservation of our natural heritage. Its membership represents 500 of the world's top artists from 27 countries, who focus primarily on nature and wildlife. It reads like a "Who's Who" of nature art, and includes the top names in the field, such as Robert Bateman, John Banovich, Guy Coheleach and David Shepherd. For more information about the AFC's innovative initiatives, visit [www.natureartists.com](http://www.natureartists.com).

**About the Flag Expeditions Program:** The objective of the Flag Expeditions Program is to make possible the artistic field study and rendering of species or habitats deserving of greater public attention with strong emphasis on unique and threatened habitats and rare or endangered species in remote parts of the world. For more information on the AFC Flag Expeditions Program, or sponsorship opportunities, please visit the Expedition Web site at [www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/](http://www.natureartists.com/flagexpeditions/).

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