

## **Bhutan, “Land of the Thunder Dragon” and a “hot spot” for threatened ecosystems.**

*Worldwide Nature Artists Group (WNAG) announces fourth Flag Expedition into remote territory.*

**Ottawa, Ontario, CANADA (October 5, 2006)** - The Worldwide Nature Artists Group (WNAG) is proud to support its fourth Flag Expedition to record the threatened species and habitats of Bhutan.

Pollyanna Pickering, one of Europe’s foremost and highly respected wildlife artists, was chosen for her unique story and it's relevance to conservation, endangered species and threatened habitats. The location of her expedition is Bhutan, and her objective, is to study and paint in one of the world’s last true wilderness environments and document the remarkable range of flora and fauna which survives there. Pickering will embark on her month-long journey in the Spring of 2007, the year which marks the 21<sup>st</sup> anniversary of her first expedition to study threatened species in their natural habitats; however, Bhutan will be one of her most ambitious and challenging projects yet.

Bhutan jealously guards its lifestyle and ancient traditions. Many village people in the region have stories of their sightings and meetings with the “yeti” or Migoi as the Bhutanese refer to these creatures, which are widely believed to exist throughout the northern part of the country.

"Who knows what undiscovered secrets this mystical terrain is hiding? My ambition is to capture the atmosphere and spirit of the Himalayas, and document the breathtaking diversity of life in this mountain Kingdom," beams Pickering after being notified of the \$5,000(US) grant that the WNAG awards under its Flag Expeditions Program.

Pickering works in a variety of media, but primarily in gouache, on board and canvas. A typical collection of work, following an expedition, would include landscapes showing the habitat of the area studied, alongside wildlife portraits and ‘study sheets’ showing typical behaviour of the subjects. Before beginning work on the completed paintings, Pickering will also make a detailed study of the wildlife using reference books and scientific reports to ensure the accuracy of her work.

“Pollyanna noted in her proposal that ‘there is no substitute for the inspiration which comes from the visit to the habitat, and the sketches made in situ,’ ” said Jeff Whiting, President and Founder of the WNAG. “I could not agree with her more, which is why we make WNAG Flag Expeditions Fellowships available to our member artists. “

Along with her sketches, paintings, photography, and video clips, Pickering will also prepare a detailed journal documenting her experience during the month-long adventure. Pickering, will be accompanied on the journey by her daughter and business partner, Anna-Louise, an award winning wildlife photographer.

Pickering has already been invited to submit details of her proposed journey to His Royal Highness the Crown Prince of Bhutan, with a view to using her journey and the subsequent exhibitions to strengthen relations between Bhutan and the UK. Pickering also intends to use this privileged contact to stress the importance of ongoing conservation in the Himalayan Kingdom directly with the Bhutanese royal family.

**(over)**

**About the Worldwide Nature Artists Group:** The Worldwide Nature Artists Group (WNAG) is the world's foremost international organization of nature artists, dedicated to the celebration and preservation of our natural heritage. Membership is by invitation-only, and is limited to 500 artists worldwide. 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, Andrea Rich, and David Shepherd. For more information about the WNAG's innovative initiatives, visit [www.natureartists.com](http://www.natureartists.com).

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

**Media Enquiries:**

Ermelinda Mancini  
Senior Communications Manager  
(613) 256-8434  
[emancini@natureartists.com](mailto:emancini@natureartists.com)

Jeff Whiting  
President & Founder (WNAG)  
(604) 608-2392  
[jwhiting@natureartists.com](mailto:jwhiting@natureartists.com)