

# NEWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: 02-08-13



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## Endangered Species Day Youth Art Contest Announced

WASHINGTON – Elementary, middle and high school students throughout the country are participating in the 2013 Endangered Species Day Youth Art Contest with entries due on March 15, 2013.

Started in 2006 by the United States Congress, national Endangered Species Day emphasizes the importance of protecting the nation’s rare, threatened, and endangered animal and plant species. The Youth Art Contest is an integral part of the eighth annual Endangered Species Day, to be celebrated on and around May 17, 2013. Students from kindergarten to high school and as well as those who are home schooled and participate in youth groups are eligible to submit their art. Entries must be postmarked by due date.

“The Youth Art Contest is a great opportunity for young people. Not only do they learn more about endangered species, but they also have their artwork reviewed by amazing artists and conservationists,” said Leda Huta, executive director of the Endangered Species Coalition, primary sponsor of Endangered Species Day. “We never know who the judges will choose as the finalist. In our first year, they chose a kindergartener from Alaska!”

The International Child Art Foundation (ICAF) will select the 40 semifinalists from thousands of entries. “It takes empathy, direct action and creativity to stop the extinction of endangered species,” said Dr. Ashfaq Ishaq, executive chairman of ICAF. “Art can certainly play an important role. An art contest to celebrate Endangered Species Day is an ideal way to engage the next generation.”

The Endangered Species Day Art Contest finalists will be judged by a prestigious panel of artists, photographers and conservationists, including Wyland, the marine artist; Jack Hanna, host of *Jack Hanna's Into the Wild*; David Littschwager, a freelance photographer and regular contributor to National Geographic Magazine; Susan Middleton, a photographer who has collaborated with Littschwager and whose own work has been published in four books; and Alice Tangerini, botanical illustrator for the Smithsonian Institution.

“The winners receive incredible recognition for their artwork,” according to David Robinson, the director of Endangered Species Day. “The grand prize winner is flown to Washington, D.C. to be honored at a reception in May. The winner also receives an art lesson (via Skype) from Wyland. Our panel of distinguished judges also choose winners in four categories: K-Grade 2, Grades 3-5, Grades 6-8 and Grades 9-12 who receive an award plaque and art supplies to encourage them to pursue their art.”

The Youth Art Contest is organized by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Endangered Species Coalition, the Association of Zoos and Aquariums, and the International Child Art Foundation.

For more information, including judging criteria and an entry form, visit [www.endangeredspeciesday.org](http://www.endangeredspeciesday.org).

#### **About the International Child Art Foundation**

The ICAF has served as the leading art and creativity organization for American children and their international counterparts since 1997. The ICAF employs the art for the development of creativity and empathy – key attributes of successful learners and leaders. Every four years, ICAF launches the Arts Olympiad, the world's largest and most prestigious art and sport program for children, which culminates in the World Children's Festival in Washington, DC as 'Olympics' of children's imagination and co-creation.