

Jess Skepper

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Located Melbourne, Victoria Australia

I grew up in Christchurch, with good trout streams a short cast away, and the Southern Alps on my doorstep. My first job was as a surveyor at Mt. Cook. The surrounding mountains held the elusive Himalayan tahr, and chasing these magnificent creatures led to an interest in wildlife photography and eventually to alpine climbing.

Being in this environment gave me an insight into the natural world of animals, especially birds which inhabit our unique land. Hunting honed a variety of skills; weather observation; safe snow travel, river crossings, and mostly observing animals as they went about their daily rituals. A big part of the time in the hills, was spent looking at both the animals and the landforms.



After the huge development job in the McKenzie Basin was completed, I spent several years in Australia before traveling to Europe to have a look at their mountains. A chance encounter found me driving double-decker buses from Europe to the Middle East to Nepal, which let me wander around the Himalayas on numerous occasions.

Traveling through many diverse countries led to many animal encounters, including a wolf in Persia, ibex and chamois in Switzerland, rhino and leopards in Nepal and bears in Kashmir. There was always something in the wild to capture my imagination.

Upon my return to Australia, I chanced upon an art gallery and was amazed at the paintings of birds by a well known artist. That inspired me to try my hand at painting. Luckily the artist was holding a demonstration at the gallery, so I watched him for six hours, then went home and painted a Wedge-tailed Eagle portrait. I was hooked! It was in 2000 when I first picked up a brush, and so began my addiction!

Whilst recent trips to East and Southwest Africa have given me a wealth of material for future artworks, my passion is New Zealand's unique wildlife and hopefully my paintings will help others to see the animals and landscape as I do.

I am involved with Eco-Artists NZ and we contribute a portion of our painting sales to fund worthy groups around the country to help preserve their particular 'Arks', whether it be predator fencing, pest eradication or vegetation rehabilitation.

Memberships

Wildlife Art Society of Australia
N Z Eco-Artists

Awards

2008	Wildlife Art Society	Highly commended (Rosellas)
2006	St Edwards art show	Merit award(Barn Owl)
2005	Box Hill art group	Highly commended (Morepork owl)
2004	Whitehorse art show	Highly commended (Barking Owl)
2003	Whitehorse art show	2nd place (kotuku)
2003	Whitehorse art show	Encouragement award (NZ Falcon)
2003	Whitehorse art show	Encouragement award (NZ Kea)
2003	St Edwards art show	Merit award (Falcon)
2002	Whitehorse art show	Encouragement award (Roaring stag)
	St Edwards art show	Kneebone Award (Kingfishers)

