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Karen Strier Carries WINGS WorldQuest Flag on Conservation Expedition to Brazil

Monday May 23, 2016—Anthropologist Karen B. Strier will represent WINGS WorldQuest™ on a conservation expedition to southeast Brazil's Atlantic Forest from May 23 through June 14, 2016. She will continue her 33 consecutive years of research on one of the world's most critically endangered primates, the northern muriqui, whose population suffers the direct effects of extreme overhunting and habitat destruction.

Strier's observations have led her to suspect that a new founding population is developing off of the reserve she has been studying, protecting and enhancing for three decades—a discovery that would mark groundbreaking advances in muriqui conservation. Strier was selected from a number of applicants to carry a WINGS WorldQuest flag on this journey, as it initiates the first systematic investigation of recent colonization events outside of the protected reserve.

"This tantalizing prospect is what we urgently need to explore," said Strier about her upcoming trip. Strier and her team will conduct a comprehensive survey of the surrounding Caratinga region forests and embark on the first trek in search of muriqui in regenerating habitat pockets.

"It is a rare scientific opportunity to follow the demography of a founding population. Not only that, but understanding the processes of colonization will help us manage this and other populations more effectively...The muriquis have changed the way we view other primates, including ourselves," Strier continued.

Dr. Strier's research of this species, in affiliation with University of Wisconsin-Madison, has spanned over three decades, making it the longest ongoing field study of its kind. Since establishing the project, Strier has trained more than 60 Ph.D. students in muriqui behavioral research to progress population rehabilitation. Her dedication has been rewarded with commendable advances, including an increase in her observed isolated population of northern muriqui from 50 to 350, as well as the federal protection for 1,000 hectares of the forest habitat fragment.

Since 2005, more than 50 women have flown the WINGS WorldQuest flag during expeditions in over 35 countries and all of the world's continents as they pursue groundbreaking discoveries. The WINGS WorldQuest flag is recognized as a symbol of excellence in discovery and knowledge, and certifies the significance of its carrier's endeavor.

"We are proud to be the first American partner to recognize and promote Dr. Strier's commitment to saving the endangered northern muriqui. She truly embodies the WINGS mission with her focus on training and mentoring other women scientists and explorers," said Yael Jekogian, Managing Director of WINGS WorldQuest.

WINGS WorldQuest looks forward to bringing Strier's work to life with a field webinar on June 7, publishing her Flag Expedition Report to make her work accessible to all, and welcoming her into the WINGS international community of extraordinary women in science and exploration.

WINGS WorldQuest™ is a registered nonprofit organization founded in 2003 to recognize and support extraordinary women in science and exploration. It is the only organization of its kind, awarding unrestricted funding to women in scientific field endeavors. WINGS' support knows no boundaries—women of all races, nationalities, ages, and cultures who show initiative, passion, and promise toward future scientific advancement have been granted funds that are often critical to seeing their ambitious ideas through. In return, they have become part of the WINGS community, and strengthen the organization's mission to inspire the next generation of intrepid explorers and global problem-solvers through various outreach programs. For more information, visit www.wingsworldquest.org.

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