

PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Mara Neville, 203-259-6305 ext. 103
or mneville@ctaudubon.org



Connecticut Audubon Society Celebrates 2008 “International Migratory Bird Day” During May at CAS Nature Centers in Fairfield, Glastonbury, Milford, Pomfret and Hampton

“International Migratory Bird Day 2008” will be officially celebrated in the continental U.S. on May 10, 2008 – but many IMBD events in the U.S. and Canada take place throughout May. (See more detailed explanation of IMBD on page 4, bottom.)

“For Connecticut Audubon Society, this year’s International Migratory Bird Day events are also a celebration, featuring activities that highlight Connecticut Audubon Society’s 110-year effort to conserve birds and their habitats through science-based education and advocacy,” said Milan Bull, Connecticut Audubon Society Senior Director of Science and Conservation and Editor-in-chief of “Connecticut State of the Birds.” **(Below are listed all the 2008 IMBD events taking place at CAS Nature Centers statewide.)**

“In our small and highly developed state of Connecticut, some 290 different bird species occur here annually and of these, some 170 species regularly nest in Connecticut, according to Greg Hanisek, Editor of ‘The Connecticut Warbler,’ a publication of the Connecticut Ornithological Association,” said Bull. “At least 10 different bird species, all migratory, rely on Connecticut as important breeding habitat. These are the Piping Plover, American Oystercatcher, Roseate Tern, Least Tern, Golden-winged and Blue-winged Warbler, Ipswich Sparrow, Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow and Seaside Sparrow.”

“As documented in our first annual ‘Connecticut State of the Birds’ Report, published in 2006, habitat loss is the Number 1 threat to our state’s birdlife, and all six of Connecticut’s major bird habitat types are at risk,” said Bull. “Based on the recommendations presented in our report, and among other activities, Connecticut Audubon Society actively maintains the largest privately owned grassland left in Connecticut, the 700-acre Bafflin Sanctuary in Pomfret. Grassland birds are among the most threatened in our state. So Connecticut Audubon Society actively manage this large grassland for use by ‘specialist’ species including Bobolink, Eastern Meadowlark, Savannah Sparrow and Kestrel, all species at risk due to habitat loss as human population growth and development pressure turns farmland into box stores.”

“As indicated in our ‘Connecticut State of the Birds’ Reports, it is ‘citizen-scientists’ who provide much of the information we know about birds in Connecticut,” said Bull. **“So Get Involved!”** Read about Connecticut Audubon Society Nature Centers’ IMBD events on our web site, at www.ctaudubon.org. There you’ll also learn about hundreds of other programs and events we offer year-round for children, families and adults. On our web site you can also read our ‘Connecticut State of the Birds’ Reports and recommendations for needed conservation actions. And you can contact the CAS Nature Center nearest you and learn how you can help, not only to protect birds and their habitats in Connecticut, but also the quality of life we humans all enjoy here.”

Connecticut Audubon Society Nature Centers Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day

CONNECTICUT AUDUBON SOCIETY BIRDCRAFT MUSEUM IN FAIRFIELD

314 Unquowa Road, Fairfield, CT 06824, 203-259-0416

Visit www.ctaudubon.org/visit/birdcraft.htm for directions and more information.

Saturday, May 10, 7:30 a.m.-noon.

Come one, come all! Adults and kids of all ages are welcome to help us celebrate “International Migratory Bird Day” at Birdcraft Museum and Sanctuary. Discover the amazing journey that birds undertake each spring and fall. How do they know where to go? How long does it take them to get there? What are the challenges they face along the way? These questions and more will be answered during our bird banding demonstration. Come meet some live Birds of Prey, learn how to use binoculars and much more.

Scheduled Events include

°**Breakfast with the Birds.** Enjoy a complementary continental breakfast on our picturesque patio.

°**10:30 a.m.: Wildlife in Crisis/Bird Release.** Watch a rehabilitated bird return to the wild as it is released into the Birdcraft

Sanctuary. Weston-based Wildlife in Crisis cares for over 5,000 injured and orphaned wild animals annually.

°**Best Bird Photo Contest.** Includes a Children's Division and an Adults' Division.

°**10:00 a.m. – noon, Birdcraft Museum Tours.** Connecticut Audubon Society Curator Frank Mitchell will discuss the Museum's collection and exhibits.

°**I Spy Scavenger Hunt.** Look for nature's treasures in our 6-acre Birdcraft Sanctuary. Founded in 1898 by pioneering conservationist (and CAS founder) Mabel Osgood Wright, it is the first/the oldest private songbird sanctuary in the U.S.

Throughout the morning enjoy:

SPECIAL Bird-banding demonstrations by licensed CT Audubon staff and volunteers;

SPECIAL Live "Birds of Prey" shows by licensed CT Audubon staff (including owls, vultures, falcons and other raptors).

EXPERT discussion on all aspects of bird migration.

TOURS of our 6-acre Wildlife Sanctuary, Children's Nature Crafts and more!

Free to all. Donations are most welcome.

CONNECTICUT AUDUBON SOCIETY COASTAL CENTER AT MILFORD POINT

1 Milford Point Road, Milford, CT 06460, 203-878-7440

Visit www.ctaudubon.org/visit/milford.htm for directions and more information.

Saturday, May 10, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Bird Watching *Extraordinaire*

Connecticut Audubon Society's Coastal Center at Milford Point will be open to visitors. Our Center's three spotting scopes will be available for bird watching. The scopes are arrayed in front of a huge picture window overlooking the 840-acre Charles Wheeler Salt Marsh. In the Marsh you'll see our Osprey nesting platform, currently home to a pair of adults and their 4 eggs. Use our scopes or watch our TV monitor to get an insider's view of the ups and downs of Osprey family life – a truly natural reality show – via our 24/7 Osprey Cam, the first in Connecticut! There's also a lot happening at the large array of bird feeders behind our Nature Center. Docents will be available to aid people with bird identification during the day. Enjoy our 8-acre Smith-Hubbell Wildlife Refuge and Bird Sanctuary, our boardwalk and observation platform with interpretive signage, our Nature Center's 70-foot covered observation tower and, of course, Long Island Sound. **Milford Point is one of the most famous birding sites in Connecticut.** It is especially well known for the variety of ducks, shorebirds, waders, terns and gulls it attracts each year. **Some 300 different bird species have been spotted here, one of the highest in the state.** It also has a reputation for attracting rare species. **Milford Point has the distinction of having the *only* continental U.S. record for White-faced Storm Petrel and all three of Connecticut's Red-necked Stint records are from Milford Point.** Other rarities seen here over the years include Brown and White Pelicans, Curlew Sandpiper, Ruff, American Avocet and Gull-billed and Sandwich Tern. In recent years, Yellow Rail, Northern Shrike, Northern Wheat-ear and Connecticut Warbler have all been found on the grounds.

CONNECTICUT AUDUBON SOCIETY CENTER AT GLASTONBURY

1361 Main Street, Glastonbury, CT 06033, 860-633-8402

Visit www.ctaudubon.org/visit/glastonbury.htm for directions and more information.

Early Morning Bird Walk, Thursday, May 1, 7-8:30 a.m.

Join us for bird watching and listening at Earle Park or close by our Nature Center during one of our International Migratory Bird Day events. Fee: \$5 CAS Members, \$7 Non-members.

Brunch with the Birds, Saturday, May 3, 9-11 a.m.

In recognition of International Migratory Bird Day, CAS naturalist Todd Russo will lead a group into Earle Park, noted for migrating warblers. Will you add to your Bird Life List? Wrap up observations over brunch at our Nature Center. Pre-registration required. Fee: \$10 CAS members (family maximum \$35), \$13 Non-members. Rain date is May 10.

Early Morning Bird Walk, Thursday, May 8, 7-8:30 a.m.

Join us for bird watching and listening at Earle Park or close by our Nature Center during one of our International Migratory Bird Day events. Fee: \$5 CAS Members, \$7 Non-members.

Spring's-in-Full-Swing Nature Walk, Saturday, May 10, 11 a.m.

It's a noisy time as birds, squirrels and other wildlife are flirting, defending territories and just singing joyously. During one of our International Migratory Bird Day events, join our Trail Guide for an interpretive nature walk through 48-acre Earle Park adjacent to our Nature Center. Fee: \$4 per participant, which includes entry into the Discovery Room before and after. Rain cancels.

CONNECTICUT AUDUBON SOCIETY CENTER AT POMFRET

189 Pomfret St. (Rte. 169), Pomfret Center, CT 06259, 860-928-4948

Visit www.ctaudubon.org/visit/pomfret.htm for directions and more information.

**In celebration of International Migratory Bird Day, enjoy bird walks, spotting and banding during peak migration!
On our 700-acre Bafflin Sanctuary we have documented over 200 different bird species**

Early Morning Bird Walk, Tuesday, May 6, 8 a.m.

Join Sanctuary Manager Andy Rzeznikiewicz as he points out various bird species. We have access to over 1,500 acres of protected land. Wear drab-colored clothing and bring binoculars (on some occasions a spotting scope is useful). Fee: free CAS Members, \$5 Non-members.

Thompson Dam, Friday, May 9, 8 a.m.

Thompson Dam covers over 1,000 acres of federally owned land. The property has a management plan to protect nesting grassland birds. Expect to find Meadowlarks, Savannah Sparrows and numerous songbirds. Fee: \$10 CAS Members, \$20 Non-members.

Early Morning Bird Walks on Saturday, May 10, 8 a.m., and Sunday, May 11, 8 a.m.

Join Sanctuary Manager Andy Rzeznikiewicz as he points out the various bird species. We have access to over 1,500 acres of protected land. Wear drab-colored clothing and bring binoculars (on some occasions a spotting scope is useful). Daily fee: free CAS Members, \$5 Non-members.

Early Morning Bird Walk, Tuesday, May 13, 8 a.m.

Join Sanctuary Manager Andy Rzeznikiewicz as he points out various bird species. We have access to over 1,500 acres of protected land. Wear drab-colored clothing and bring binoculars (on some occasions a spotting scope is useful). Fee: free CAS Members, \$5 Non-members.

Afternoon Bird Walk, Wednesday, May 14, 5 p.m.

For those of you who can't make our morning walks, we offer this afternoon walk during peak bird migration. Wear drab-colored clothing and bring binoculars. Fee: \$4 CAS Members, \$10 Non-members.

SPECIAL EVENT! 90 Bird Day, Thursday, May 15, 7 a.m.–4 p.m.

During this, our third annual event, the goal is to hear or see at least 90 species of birds in nine hours or less. We'll be visiting many locations within a 10-mile radius. In 2007 we found 91 species in eight hours, stopping early due to ominous weather. In 2006 we encountered 90 species. Interesting sightings from 2007 include Semi-palmated Plover, Dunlin, American Pipit, Barred Owl, Orchard Oriole and Hooded Warbler. Bring lunch, drinks and a snack. Fee: \$20 CAS Members, \$35 Non-members.

Pumpkin Hill, Saturday, May 17, 8 a.m.

On this large parcel of state forest land in Chaplin, Sanctuary Manager Andy Rzeznikiewicz will lead a bird-watching group to numerous locations in the area. Expect to find Cerulean Warbler, Worm-eating Warbler, Prairie Warbler and numerous other songbirds. Fee: \$10 CAS Members, \$20 Non-members.

Afternoon Bird Walk, Wednesday, May 21, 5 p.m.

For those of you who can't make our morning walks, we offer this afternoon walk during peak bird migration. Wear drab-colored clothing and bring binoculars. Fee: \$4 CAS Members, \$10 Non-members.

Bird Banding Demonstration, Saturday, May 24, 9 a.m.

Join Sanctuary Manager Andy Rzeznikiewicz and fellow bird banders to see various songbirds up close. Watch how we gently catch them, record data and safely release the birds. Participants may release a bird. Fee: \$4 CAS Members, \$10 Non-members.

CONNECTICUT AUDUBON SANCTUARY TRAIL WOOD SANCTUARY

93 Kenyon Road, Hampton, CT 06247, 860-928-4948

Visit www.ctaudubon.org/visit/trailwood.htm for directions and more information.

Bird Walk, Thursday, May 8, 8 a.m.

Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with birder Andy Rzeznikiewicz as he walks around the many trails searching for various bird species. Hooded Warblers, Red-shouldered Hawks, Chestnut-sided Warblers and Louisiana Waterthrush can be found here regularly. Fee: free CAS Members, \$5 Non-members.

Bird Walk, Sunday, May 18, 8 a.m.

Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day with birder Andy Rzeznikiewicz as he walks around the many trails searching for various bird species. Hooded Warblers, Red-shouldered Hawks, Chestnut-sided Warblers and Louisiana Waterthrush can be found here regularly. Fee: free CAS Members, \$5 Non-members.

About International Migratory Bird Day

International Migratory Bird Day was created in 1993 by visionaries at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. From 1995 to 2006, the program was under the direction of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Because of its consistent growth, IMBD is now the premier education project of Environment for the Americas. IMBD continues to focus attention on one of the most important and spectacular events in the life of a migratory bird: its journey between its summer and winter homes. Today it is celebrated in Canada, the U.S., Mexico and Central America through bird festivals and bird walks, education programs and Bird Day! IMBD officially takes place on the second Saturday in May. But it was recognized that this date doesn't work well for all bird event and bird festival organizers, or for the migratory birds themselves. To the south, migratory birds have already left, heading for breeding sites to the north. Farther north, the birds haven't arrived. Now, IMBD is celebrated almost year-round. Most U.S. and Canada events take place in April and May, while fall events are the norm in the Caribbean and Latin America. Each year, a team of IMBD coordinators and sponsors work together to select a theme that meets diverse criteria -- conservation-based, current, positive, tangible, educational and engaging -- to reach the varied audiences that celebrate IMBD. The 2008 IMBD Theme is "Tundra to Tropics: Connecting Birds, Habitats and People."
(Source: <http://www.birdday.org/history.php>)