



Media Advisory

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**CT Audubon Society To Issue 2008 “Connecticut State of the Birds” Report:
Focuses on Conservation Strategies for Five Bird Species “In Serious Trouble”
To Illustrate How Complex the Problems and the Solutions Are
Related to Bird Conservation and Habitat Protection**

**Press Conference: Monday, February 11, 2008 at 11 a.m.,
Legislative Office Building, Room 2A, Hartford, CT**

When: Monday, February 11, 2008 at 11 a.m.
Where: Legislative Office Building, Room 2A, Hartford, CT

Who: Robert Martinez, President, Connecticut Audubon Society (CAS)
Milan Bull, Senior Director of Science and Conservation, CAS
State Representative Richard Roy, House Chair of the Environment Committee
Tentative: State Senator Edward Meyer, Senate Chair of the Environment Committee
Edward Parker, Bureau Chief, Natural Resources Division, CT Department of Environmental Protection

Event: Release of 2008 “Connecticut State of the Birds” Report. Third annual publication focuses on the conservation of five bird species that are in serious trouble -- and for which their Connecticut habitat is critical to their global survival -- to illustrate how complex the problems and solutions are related to habitat protection and bird conservation. These include the Saltmarsh Sharp-tailed Sparrow (a state-listed “species of Special Concern”), the Blue-winged Warbler (“Endangered” species) and Golden-winged Warbler, the American Oystercatcher (“species of Special Concern”), the Cerulean Warbler and the Bobolink (“species of Special Concern”).

Example: Connecticut’s grasslands, which support bird species like the Bobolink, have shrunk to less than 5% of what they were in 1909. In 2004, CT DEP listed the Bobolink as a species of Special Concern. (Many other grassland species are faring far worse.) Many smaller hayfields around Connecticut could likely support healthy Bobolink populations. However, farmers would need to delay mowing until the Bobolinks have finished nesting. But hay has the highest value when it is cut earlier in the season. A possible compromise: subsidize farmers to “grow” grassland birds (like Bobolinks) instead of hay and corn, especially in marginal agricultural areas on their farms. This will require payments to farmers to delay haying and possibly converting cornfields on marginal lands to hayfields to create Bobolink habitat. These solutions can be costly to implement and monitor. The largest tract of privately owned grassland in the state is Connecticut Audubon Society’s 670-acre Bafflin Sanctuary in Pomfret, which is being actively managed as grassland habitat with the help of CT DEP’s Landowner Incentive Program (LIP) grants.

Important: Read the full report on Connecticut Audubon Society’s web site beginning Monday, February 11, 2008 at 1 p.m. at www.ctaudubon.org (where our 2006 and 2007 reports are also available).

2008 Contributing Authors: Chris Elphick is an Assistant Professor at the University of Connecticut, a co-editor of the *Sibley Guide to Bird Life & Behavior* and writes for the nationally syndicated newspaper column, *Sibley on Birds*. Robert Askins is Professor of Biology at Connecticut College, where he is Chair of the Biology Department and Director of the Goodwin-Niering Center for Conservation Biology and Environmental Studies. Jenny Dickson is a wildlife biologist with the Connecticut Department of Environmental Protection and leader of DEP’s Wildlife Diversity program; she specializes in songbirds, inland and freshwater wetland birds and small mammals. Patrick Comins is Audubon Connecticut’s Director of Bird Conservation for Connecticut and is Vice President of the Connecticut Ornithological Association. Greg Hanisek is News Editor at the Republican-American newspaper in Waterbury and writes a twice-weekly nature column; he is also editor of *The Connecticut Warbler* magazine. Stephen Oresman is Chairman of Connecticut Audubon Society’s Conservation Committee and a Board member of CAS and Hawk Mountain Sanctuary.

ALL MEMBERS OF THE MEDIA ARE INVITED!

Founded in 1898, Connecticut Audubon Society conserves Connecticut’s environment through science-based education and advocacy focused on the state’s bird populations and their habitats. Connecticut Audubon Society operates nature facilities in Fairfield, Milford, Glastonbury and Pomfret, an EcoTravel office in Essex and an Environmental Advocacy office in Hartford. Connecticut Audubon Society manages 19 wildlife sanctuaries around the state, preserves over 2,600 acres of wildlife habitat/open space in Connecticut, and educates over 200,000 children and adults annually. Connecticut Audubon Society is an independent organization, not affiliated with any national or government group. For membership and other information please visit www.ctaudubon.org.