



## PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release: Thursday, January 31, 2008

### **Come to Connecticut Audubon Society's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Eagle Festival™! A Great Family Getaway on Feb. 16-17 in Essex, CT That:**

- a) Celebrates the Bald Eagle, a National Conservation Success Story!**
- b) Celebrates the Connecticut River and our State's Natural Beauty!**
- c) Offers FREE Family Programs All Weekend Long!**
- d) Offers Up-Close Encounters with Birds of Prey & Eagle-Viewing Boat Tours!**
- e) Saves Gas and Promotes Family Harmony during Feb. School Break!**

**Essex, Connecticut, January 31, 2008** – Gas prices are over \$3 a gallon and climbing and you can't afford to buy a fuel-efficient toaster right now. The rest of the economy is tanking, or not. February school break hasn't even begun and your children are already showing signs of chronic boredom and cabin fever. *What's a family to do?*

Come to Connecticut Audubon Society's 9<sup>th</sup> Annual Eagle Festival™ on Feb. 16-17 in Essex, CT. It's a great way to shake off the winter blues and kick off February vacation week with your family. Join us for the "Largest Birding Event in North America" in the "Best Small Town in America" -- a record-breaking 20,000 visitors did in 2007 to enjoy a weekend full of FREE children and family programs and activities plus Guided Eagle-Viewing Boat Tours along the Connecticut River to see Bald Eagles in their natural habitat.

Our 2008 Festival offers an amazing Schedule of Events (below) for children, families and adults. All activities are FREE except for a new "Portraits with a Raptor" program and the 8 special Guided Eagle-Viewing Boat Tours aboard "Mystique," a dinner/cruise vessel owned and operated by Lady Katharine Cruises that ferries visitors right into the thick of things on the Connecticut River for premium Bald Eagle viewing.

**On Feb. 16-17, Guided Eagle-Viewing Boat Tours will depart four times daily,  
led by Connecticut Audubon Society Naturalists. Tours are approximately 1-½ hours long:**

- ▶ 8 a.m.: tickets are \$35 for adults, \$20 for children
- ▶ 10 a.m.: all tickets are \$40
- ▶ noon: all tickets are \$40
- ▶ 2 p.m.: tickets are \$35 for adults, \$20 for children.

Please note: children 4 years and younger ride FREE on all boats!

Boat reservations must be made in advance; only a small number of standby tickets will be available during Festival weekend. For boat information/reservations please call 800-714-7201 or 860-767-0660.

Our 2008 Honorary Festival Co-Chairs are Phil Donahue and Faith Middleton of WNPR, whose commitment to the environment and support of Connecticut Audubon Society's mission are extraordinary. Connecticut Volvo Retailers is the "Bald Eagle" and "Official Car" Sponsor of Connecticut Audubon Society's 2008 Eagle Festival™. We also gratefully acknowledge the generous donations of time, talent, goods, space and service that have been made by so many to help make CAS's 2008 Eagle Festival™ a success.

**Connecticut Audubon Society's 2008 Eagle Festival™ is made possible by:**

- ▶ Connecticut Volvo Retailers, "Bald Eagle" and "Official Car" Sponsor;
- ▶ WNPR, Media Sponsor;
- ▶ Connecticut Light & Power, Yankee Gas & Northeast Utilities Transmission, "Eagles in Flight" Program Sponsor;
- ▶ Lady Katharine Cruises, "Eagles in Flight" Boat Sponsor;
- ▶ Essex Savings Bank, Community Partner;
- ▶ Noble Environmental Power, Community Partner;
- ▶ Bank of New York, Community Friend;
- ▶ Saybrook Point Inn & Spa, Community Friend;
- ▶ Southern Connecticut Gas, Community Friend;
- ▶ Muriel Clough, Benefactor;
- ▶ Centerbrook Architects, Benefactor;
- ▶ Swarovski Optik, Optics Sponsor;
- ▶ Pentax, Optics Sponsor;
- ▶ Meopta, Optics Sponsor;
- ▶ Leupold, Optics Sponsor;
- ▶ Zeiss, Optics Sponsor;
- ▶ The Fat Robin;
- ▶ The Audubon Shop; and
- ▶ North Cove Outfitters.

**Connecticut Audubon Society's 2008 Eagle Festival™**

**Schedule of Events for Saturday, Feb. 16, 2008**

**The Riverside Tent on the Connecticut River Museum Lawn at the foot of Main St., Essex, CT**

9:30–10:15 a.m.  
10:30–11:15 a.m.  
11:15–11:30 a.m.

**"Raptor Watching 101"** with Connecticut Audubon Society EcoTravel Staff.

**Live "Birds of Prey" Show** with Tom Ricardi from the MASS Birds of Prey Rehabilitation Facility.

**Opening Ceremony** with Honorary Festival Co-Chairs Phil Donahue and Faith Middleton of WNPR, CAS President Robert Martinez, Essex First Selectman Phil Miller.

11:30 a.m.–Noon

**"Are You Smarter Than an Eagle?" Game Show.** As a contestant or an observer, see how much (or how little) you know about Bald Eagles and other birds of prey.

Noon–12:45 p.m.  
1–1:45 p.m.  
2–2:45 p.m.

**“The Wonderful World of Owls” Live Bird Presentation!**

**Live “Birds of Prey” Show** with Tom Ricardi from the MASS Birds of Prey Rehabilitation Facility.

**SPECIAL! Connecticut’s Conservation Agenda: Where Do We Go From Here?** Some 35 years after the Bald Eagle was declared a federal “Endangered” species in the lower 48 States, this magnificent raptor is back from the brink of extinction and returning in increasing numbers to CT and many other states. But how do we keep our Bald Eagle population healthy and sustainable? How do we solve the complex and costly challenges related to habitat loss that continue to threaten the Bald Eagle and many other bird species in CT? **Honorary Festival Co-Chair Phil Donahue** interviews a panel of experts including State Representative **Dick Roy**, Co-Chair of the Environment Committee; CT DEP Wildlife Biologist **Julie Victoria**; Wade Elmer of the CT Agricultural Experiment Station; **Patrick Comins**, Director of Bird Conservation for Audubon Connecticut; and **Milan Bull**, Senior Director of Science and Conservation for Connecticut Audubon Society.

3–3:45pm  
4–4:45 p.m.  
9 a.m.–5 p.m.

**“The Wonderful World of Owls” Live Bird Presentation!**

**“Bird Watching for All Ages”** presented by CT Audubon Society Director of Education Ken Elkins.

**Connecticut Audubon Society Showcase**. Our 5 Nature Centers represent Connecticut’s diverse habitats. Learn about our state’s birds and other wildlife through interactive displays and activities for young and old alike at our Birdcraft Museum, Center at Fairfield, Coastal Center at Milford Point, Center at Glastonbury and Center at Pomfret display.

**Children’s Programs and Activities on Sat., Feb. 16 at The Garvin Gallery, 8 Novelty Lane, Essex, CT**

10:45–11:15 a.m.  
11:30 a.m.–Noon  
and 2-2:30 p.m.  
  
12:15–12:45 p.m.  
1:15–1:45 p.m.  
2:45–3:15 p.m.

**Story Time: “Quack, Caw, Hooooo . . . and Other Sounds Birds Make.”** For children 8 years and younger.

**Special Program: “Portraits with a Raptor”!** Stand next to one of our live, rehabilitated Birds of Prey and take home a copy of your portrait with your new feathered friend. Cost is \$10 and helps support the birds of prey we care for at CAS. Limited spots available; pre-register at the Riverside Tent.

**Story Time: “Owl Babies” plus a Special (Live Owl) Guest Appearance!** For children 6 years and younger.

**Story Time: “In the Snow . . . Who’s Been There?”** For children 6 years and younger.

**Story Time: “Owl Babies” plus a Special (Live Owl) Guest Appearance!** For children 6 years and younger.

**Activities at Other Locations on Saturday, Feb. 16 and Sunday, Feb. 17**

7 a.m.–5 p.m. on Saturday

**Boat Tickets and Information Tent** in the Connecticut River Museum parking lot.

7 a.m.–3 p.m. on Sunday

**Boat Tickets and Information Tent** in the Connecticut River Museum parking lot.

**8 a.m. on Sat. and Sun.**

**Eagle-Viewing Boat Tour Departs. Tickets and Boarding Passes at Boat Tickets Tent.**

9 a.m.–5 p.m. on Saturday

**“Natural World” Photography Exhibit**, St. John’s Church across from Town Green.

Noon–5 p.m. on Sunday

**“Natural World” Photography Exhibit**, St. John’s Church across from Town Green.

9 a.m.–5 p.m. Sat. & Sun.

**Eagle Viewing and Optics Sales** at the Optics Tent on the Connecticut River Museum Lawn.

10 a.m.–4 p.m. Sat. & Sun.

**Live Entertainment all along Main Street**, from Griswold Square to Griswold Corner, at Village Provisions, A Pocketful of Posies, Essex Coffee & Tea, and more!

10 a.m.–5 p.m. Sat. & Sun.

**Hands-on Exhibits, Children’s Activities, Holiday Train Show**, at the Connecticut River Museum.

**10 a.m. on Sat. and Sun.**

**Eagle-Viewing Boat Tour Departs. Tickets and Boarding Passes at Boat Tickets Tent.**

11 a.m.–3 p.m. Sat. & Sun.

**Horse-Drawn Carriage Rides provided by Foxglove Farm**. Departing from Village Provisions (6 Main St.) and Griswold Corner (in front of Toys Ahoy at 43 Main St.).

**Noon on Sat. and Sun.**

**Eagle-Viewing Boat Tour Departs. Tickets and Boarding Passes at Boat Tickets Tent.**

**2 p.m. on Sat. and Sun.**

**Eagle-Viewing Boat Tour Departs. Tickets and Boarding Passes at Boat Tickets Tent.**

**Schedule of Events for Sunday, Feb. 17, 2008**

**The Riverside Tent on The Connecticut River Museum Lawn. Foot of Main St., Essex, CT**

9:30–10:15 a.m.

**“Bird Watching for All Ages”** presented by CAS Director of Education Ken Elkins.

10:30–11:15 a.m.

**“The Wonderful World of Owls” Live Bird Presentation!**

11:30 a.m.–Noon

**“Are You Smarter Than an Eagle? Game Show**. Be a contestant or an observer in the audience to see how much (or how little) you know about Bald Eagles and other birds of prey.

Noon–12:45 p.m.

**Live “Birds of Prey” Show** presented by CAS Teacher/Naturalist Tricia Lombardi.

1–1:45 p.m.

**The Quabbin Lake Singers, Drummers and Dancers of the Nipmuc Tribe.**

2–2:45 p.m.

**“The Wonderful World of Owls” Live Bird Presentation!**

3–3:45 p.m.

**Live “Birds of Prey” Show** presented by CAS Teacher/Naturalist Tricia Lombardi.

4–4:45 p.m.

**“Raptor Watching 101”** with Connecticut Audubon Society EcoTravel Staff.

9 a.m.–5 p.m.

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**Children’s Programs and Activities on Sun., Feb. 17 at The Garvin Gallery, 8 Novelty Lane, Essex, CT**

11–11:30 a.m. &  
2-2:30 p.m.

**Special Program: “Portraits with a Raptor”!** Stand side by side with one of our live, rehabilitated Birds of Prey and take home a copy of your portrait with your new feathered friend. Cost is \$10 and helps support the birds of prey we care for at CAS. Limited spots available; pre-register at the Riverside Tent.

12:15–12:45 p.m.

**Story Time: “Owl Babies” plus a Special Guest appearance!** For children 6 years and younger.

1:15–1:45 p.m.

**Story Time: “Goodnight, Owl!”** For children 6 years and younger.

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