



Connecticut
Audubon Society

Mission Statement

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 as well as 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 open space in Connecticut and educates over 200,000 children and adults annually. Working exclusively in the state of Connecticut for over 100 years, *Connecticut Audubon Society* is an independent organization, not affiliated with any national or governmental group. For membership and other information, please visit www.ctaudubon.org

New Recommendations to Protect Connecticut's Birds

By Betty McLaughlin, Director of Environmental Affairs

Cartoonist Walt Kelly's Pogo character famously parodied Oliver H. Perry's celebrated declaration at the Battle of Lake Erie, saying, "We have met the enemy and they are us." DEP Commissioner Gina McCarthy has adopted the shorthand "Pogo" to address the many environmental threats caused by individual human activities, including personal choices that add excess pollution or waste to the environment, and the threats outlined in Connecticut Audubon's just released "Connecticut State of the Birds 2007" report. Our new report details circumstances that cause serious and avoidable threats to bird populations, and recommends corrective solutions.

Many birds are injured or killed when they encounter tall structures in their flight path. Illuminated cell towers confuse migrating birds that are attracted to their lights. Our "Connecticut State of the Birds 2007" report recommends that the Department of Public Utility Control limit the size of necessary lighted structures along bird migration routes to the shortest effective height, and that these structures be un-guyed and lighted in a manner that is least detrimental to migrating birds while still ensuring public safety.

Glass windows threaten birds that cannot distinguish between open air and glass. They fly into glass at full speed, causing death or injuries. Translucent film that does not reduce human visibility can virtually eliminate this threat. We recommend that the Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) adopt the "Fatal Light Awareness Program" (FLAP) now in use in Toronto, Chicago and New York City. DECD should work with Connecticut municipalities to adopt night lighting reduction programs for large glass buildings, especially during migration periods, and DECD and others should make available information on Collid-Escape window film to reduce bird collisions.

No single state agency is responsible for controlling the damage that feral cats inflict on birds. Some organizations embrace a program known as "Trap, Neuter and Return" as a means of controlling feral cat colonies. But ongoing abandonment of cats and the high number of un-trappable cats will always outpace the efforts of the few (but well-meaning) program participants. Connecticut Audubon believes that the state should determine the number and

size of feral cat colonies in Connecticut to assess the performance of "Trap, Neuter and Return" programs. Our report recommends that anyone receiving state funding for "TNR" programs should report this information quarterly to the state. To protect known sensitive areas, the state should fund the immediate removal of all feral cat colonies from state lands and beaches.

Threats that cause loss or degradation of bird habitats are as problematic as direct threats. With no place to breed, or lacking appropriate food sources, bird populations cannot thrive. Habitats overgrazed by unchecked White-tailed Deer populations or Mute Swans cannot support the native birds that depend on them. Other invasive plants and animals crowd out native species as well. Our report recommends giving the Department of Environmental Protection the tools it needs to manage these out-of-balance populations, including stepping up their regulatory authority when needed.

This year's recommendations are concise and specific, so they can be understood and implemented to achieve the necessary improvements to the health of birds and their habitats in Connecticut. We will look to you, our members, to help us gain legislative and administrative support for these initiatives.

From the Desk of Bob Martinez, President

Dear Connecticut Audubon Society Members,

In the publication we introduced last year, "Connecticut State of the Birds," six independent experts contributed articles about the single greatest threat to our native bird populations: habitat loss and degradation. In our just-released "Connecticut State of the Birds 2007" report, another group of experts describes the next most serious set of threats: specific factors, either man-made or within our control, that kill or injure millions of birds and destroy precious habitat. Just one of these, glass strikes, conservatively kills an estimated 100 million birds every year in the U.S. – and some experts say 1 billion!

With publication of our 2007 edition, we continue to deliver on our mission "to conserve Connecticut's environment through science-based education and advocacy focused on the state's bird populations and habitats." But our work does not end with publishing these reports. Connecticut Audubon has developed specific recommendations designed to mitigate these major threats to bird populations, and we are actively working with the state of Connecticut's Department of Environmental Protection and other key partner organizations to realize them. In this way, we also continue to position ourselves as the "go to" bird conservation organization in the state. Please read Miley Bull and Betty McLaughlin's articles that summarize these findings and our recommendations. Then visit our web site (www.ctaudubon.org) to read this new report.

We have another powerful, mission-specific tool in our arsenal. Our fast-approaching eighth annual Eagle Festival™, which takes place the weekend of February 17 and 18 in Essex, Connecticut, is our unique way of engaging thousands of children and adults in hands-on learning about the environment. Nothing makes the case for conservation more eloquently or elegantly than the sight of an eagle in the wild. Our volunteer committee has planned two full days of wonderful, family-oriented programs that will delight tots, children, teens and adults – and all are free. The only paid activities are the special "Eagle Viewing Guided Boat Tours" that ferry visitors along the Connecticut River and right into the thick of things. The income generated by boat ticket sales help support our year-round conservation, education and advocacy work. It's a wonderful event and an important cause to support. I hope to see you there.

This newsletter is also jam-packed with hundreds of activities offered by our Nature Centers, starting on page 6, plus dozens of EcoTravel adventures near and far, starting on page 12. We hope you'll make a date to spend part of your springtime with us.

Sincerely,

Bob

Bob Martinez, President

Connecticut Audubon Society Board of Directors 2007

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VISIT THE CONNECTICUT AUDUBON SOCIETY AT 8 LOCATIONS

1 | CAS Birdcraft Museum

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

Hours:
Tuesday-Friday, 10am-5pm
Saturday & Sunday, Noon-5pm

2 | CAS Center at Fairfield

2325 Burr Street
Fairfield, CT 06824
203-259-6305

Hours:
Tuesday-Saturday, 9am-4:30pm

3 | CAS Coastal Center at Milford Point

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

Hours:
Tuesday-Saturday, 10am-4pm
Sunday, Noon-4pm

4 | CAS Environmental Affairs

118 Oak Street
Hartford, CT 06106
860-527-6750

Hours:
Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm

5 | CAS Center at Glastonbury

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

Hours:
Tuesday-Friday, 1pm-5pm
Saturday, 10am-5pm
Sunday, 1pm-4pm

6 | CAS EcoTravel

35 Pratt Street
Essex, CT 06426
860-767-0660

Hours:
Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm

7 | CAS Center at Pomfret

189 Pomfret Street
Pomfret Center, CT 06259
860-928-4948

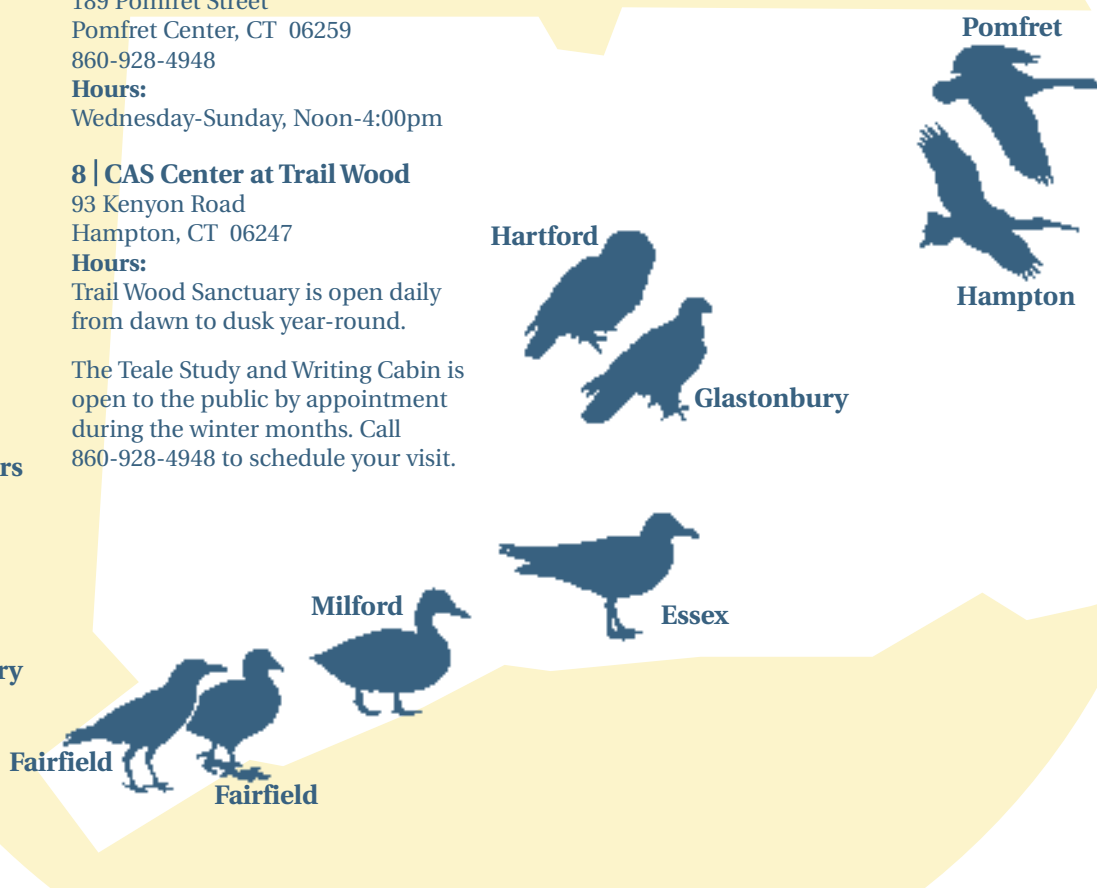
Hours:
Wednesday-Sunday, Noon-4:00pm

8 | CAS Center at Trail Wood

93 Kenyon Road
Hampton, CT 06247

Hours:
Trail Wood Sanctuary is open daily from dawn to dusk year-round.

The Teale Study and Writing Cabin is open to the public by appointment during the winter months. Call 860-928-4948 to schedule your visit.



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