

## PRESS RELEASE

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### Connecticut Audubon Society Recognizes Volunteers and Supporters, Elects New Board Member, During 112<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

*Volunteers honored are **Ross Strickland (Fairfield)**, **Ben Williams (Pomfret)** and **13-year-old Alexander Burdo (Fairfield)**; new Board member is **John Salisbury (Fairfield)**.*

During its 112<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, held September 16 at The Pequot Library in Southport, **John (Jack) W. Salisbury Jr. of Fairfield** was elected to serve on Connecticut Audubon Society's Board of Directors. Mr. Salisbury is a retired executive and spent over 20 years with the Playtex Corporation in various senior management positions. He served as CEO of Aris Isotoner Corporation and American Pacific Enterprises. He is vice president of the Ocean Reef Conservation Trust and is a member of many non-profit conservation-related organizations, including the Coastal Conservation Association, Bonefish and Tarpon Trust, and the Islamorada Fishing and Conservation Trust. Mr. Salisbury resides in Fairfield, CT and Islamorada, Florida. He and his wife, Linda, have two grown children and three grandchildren.

Connecticut Audubon Society's science-based education programs were the focus of the keynote address, delivered by CAS Conservation Biologist Dr. Twan Leenders and CAS Director of Shoreline Education Frank Gallo. During their overview they described many of CAS's education initiatives: the hundreds of programs for children, families and adults offered annually at CAS's five Centers around the state; CAS's nature-focused summer camps; the variety of science-enrichment programs presented by CAS teacher-naturalists in school classrooms and to visiting school groups; CAS citizen-science programs that engage children, teen and adult volunteers, trained and supervised by CAS staff, in bird-banding and bird population studies, bird habitat restoration, invasive plant removal on CAS Sanctuaries, Horseshoe Crab-tagging and mammal monitoring, among other activities; and Connecticut Audubon Society's EcoTravel program, which runs day trips and overnight expeditions that provide people of all ages with first-hand experience of places of great natural significance, in and around Connecticut and the world. "Through these science-based programs, Connecticut Audubon Society puts its conservation mission to work, and attempts to inspire a new generation of conservation-minded individuals," said CAS President Robert Martinez.

Another focus of the Society's 112<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting was the critical role that volunteers play in helping the organization to fulfill its mission. **Ross Strickland of Fairfield** has been involved with Connecticut Audubon Society for over 20 years, and served as Chairman of the Board of Directors from 2007-2009. "Ross Strickland has been a key participant in every major initiative that Connecticut Audubon Society has undertaken, working tirelessly to ensure the organization's long-term financial health while maintaining its vitality," said Bob Martinez. Because of his unique contributions, the CAS Board of Directors elected Mr. Strickland as the sixth "Honorary Director" of the Society. Mr. Strickland also received a bird carving of American Goldfinches created by CAS member and renowned bird carver Phil Stein.

Connecticut Audubon Society also presented its annual "Dave Engelman Benchmark Award" for outstanding volunteerism to **Ben Williams of Pomfret**, who is a founding member and former chairman of CAS's Northeast Corner Regional Board, and a former Chairman of the CAS Board of Directors. "Ben Williams has been volunteering for over 20 years and literally breathes the mission," said Bob Martinez. "His two greatest passions are conservation and education. Ben is a nationally recognized lepidopterist. He shares his knowledge of moths, insects and creatures of the field and forest regularly with children at our Center at Pomfret, when he is not maintaining our Sanctuary trails, pulling out invasive plants, searching out a rare moth or running a Center at Pomfret meeting. Our 700-acre Bafflin Sanctuary in Pomfret contains much of Ben's former property, and he is

currently chairing the \$2 million capital campaign in Pomfret to construct a new facility.” Mr. Williams was presented with a hand-crafted teak bench with a bronze plaque, which will be placed in his honor in CAS’s Bafflin Sanctuary.

Thirteen-year-old Alexander Burdo of Fairfield was also recognized as an extraordinary volunteer and as the kind of young person that Connecticut Audubon Society strives to encourage and nurture through its education programs. Alex is an extremely gifted birder, and he volunteers as a bird bander at CAS’s Birdcraft Museum. He is well known for his willingness to teach others, children and adults, sharing both his knowledge and enthusiasm for birds and nature. Earlier this year, Alex received L.L. Bean’s “Outdoor Hero Award” and a video profiling Alex, created for the L.L. Bean website, was shown at the Annual Meeting which Alex, his parents Gaby and Gerry Burdo, and his grandfather Jim Orrico (who is Alex’s birding partner) attended. There have been only 17 other “Outdoor Hero” winners and Alex is by far the youngest recipient to date. In his honor, L.L. Bean presented Connecticut Audubon Society with a \$5,000 donation. (Read more about Alex and watch the video on <http://www.lbean.com/outdoorsOnline/conservationAndEnvironment/outdoorHeroeRecipients.html>.)

Connecticut Audubon Society also gratefully acknowledged its many supporters who understand the importance of CAS’s mission, and highlighted the John Patrick Flanagan Foundation. The Foundation’s grant enabled 500 inner-city children this year to explore CAS’s 155-acre Larsen Wildlife Sanctuary in Fairfield, under the guidance of CAS teacher-naturalists, and participate in a program to explain in greater detail what the children had experienced outdoors. In announcing the grant, Amanda Flanagan, the Foundation chairperson, said of her late husband, “John loved to explore and spend time here [the Larsen Wildlife Sanctuary], and he would be very pleased to know that his Foundation is giving children the opportunity to share that experience.”

Connecticut Audubon Society conserves Connecticut’s environment through science-based education and advocacy focused on the state’s bird populations and habitats. Founded in 1898, Connecticut Audubon Society (CAS) operates nature facilities in Fairfield, Milford, Glastonbury and Pomfret, an EcoTravel office in Essex and an Environmental Advocacy program 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, CAS is an independent organization, not affiliated with any national or governmental group. Visit [www.ctaudubon.org](http://www.ctaudubon.org).