

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **The 2009 Connecticut Audubon Society Eagle Festival® Is Cancelled**

**Fairfield, CT, Nov. 13, 2008** -- The Connecticut Audubon Society has decided to suspend its annual festival for the year. The 2009 Connecticut Audubon Society Eagle Festival® was originally scheduled for Feb. 14-15, 2009 in Essex, CT. “This year, the national economic downturn has prohibited the depth and breadth of support that we usually enjoy from our corporate sponsors,” said Robert Martinez, Connecticut Audubon Society’s President. “This corporate support is what allows Connecticut Audubon Society to offer festival visitors the opportunity to see Bald Eagles in the wild, enjoy live birds of prey demonstrations and attend environmental lectures from noted experts -- all free-of-charge to the public. We are grateful for the enthusiasm that all of our constituents feel for this, the largest birding festival in North America, and we look forward to continuing and revitalizing this popular event the moment the economy allows.

“We remain extremely proud of the Connecticut Audubon Society Eagle Festival® and its impact on the community, bird lovers and nature enthusiasts,” he went on to say. “Each year, this event draws thousands of spectators to the Town of Essex, to witness the results of how successful conservation initiatives can have a profound impact on the environment. The Festival, which celebrates the return of the wintering population of Bald Eagles to the lower Connecticut River, ties directly to Connecticut Audubon Society's mission: to conserve, educate and advocate for Connecticut’s birds and habitats. In addition, the Festival is credited with filling hotel rooms and restaurants and sparking other business opportunities, boosting the area’s economy during an otherwise slow mid-winter season.

“Connecticut Audubon Society will continue to provide Bald Eagle viewing opportunities at the Shepaug Dam Bald Eagle Observation Area in Southbury, CT and through its EcoTravel programs in Essex, CT (see details below). In addition to these eagle-viewing opportunities and in keeping with our conservation mission, we at Connecticut Audubon Society will also offer more opportunities during the 2009 season for people to view eagles through additional CAS EcoTravel programs.

“Connecticut Audubon Society thanks all of the past event sponsors, the Town of Essex and the many others who supported the Connecticut Audubon Society Eagle Festival® for the past nine years. Everyone involved with the Festival should be very proud, knowing that they help Connecticut Audubon Society to educate tens of thousands of children and adults about the importance of conserving our state’s birdlife and enabling them to see one of the greatest conservation success stories -- the Bald Eagle – in its natural habitat.”

Connecticut Volvo Retailers have generously donated a Volvo 2008 C30 Hatchback as top prize in a raffle to benefit Connecticut Audubon Society and help raise up to \$125,000 to support CAS's education and conservation programs. A maximum of 2,500 tickets will be sold at \$50 each. Anyone wishing to support Connecticut Audubon Society and purchase a raffle ticket should contact Ann O'Leary, CAS Development Director, at [aoleary@ctaudubon.org](mailto:aoleary@ctaudubon.org) or 203-259-6305 ext. 102.

### Eagle Viewing Opportunities

1. Connecticut Audubon Society's EcoTravel Program will continue to offer guided "Eagle-Viewing Boat Tours" in 2009 on the Connecticut River aboard "Riverquest." These trips begin Saturday, February 7, 2009 and run through Sunday, March 22, 2009. Trips take place on Saturdays and Sundays at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. (including Feb. 14-15), and starting February 19 on Thursdays at 10 a.m. Tickets are \$40 and must be reserved in advance by calling 860-767-0660 or 800-996-8747. Seats are limited and sell out quickly so call today! (These make great holiday gifts!)

Visit <http://ecotravel.ctaudubon.org/> or call 860-767-0660 for more information.

2. Starting December 27, Connecticut Audubon Society staff naturalists and volunteers will be on hand to assist visitors, provide information and answer questions at the Shepaug Dam Bald Eagle Observation Area in Southbury, CT. The Observation Area is open from the last weekend of December through mid-March on Wednesdays, Saturdays, and Sundays from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. Reservations are required and may be made by calling 800-368-8954 from December 7 through March 7, Tuesday through Friday, between the hours of 9 a.m. and 3 p.m.

Visit <http://www.shepaug eagles.info/> for more information.

**Connecticut Audubon Society** conserves Connecticut's environment through science-based education and advocacy focused on the state's bird populations and habitats. Connecticut Audubon Society operates the historic Birdcraft Museum as well as other conservation and education facilities in Fairfield, Milford, Glastonbury and Pomfret, and an EcoTravel office in Essex. Through its conservation advocacy efforts, Connecticut Audubon Society provides leadership and key information on environmental issues to state legislators, policymakers and citizens. Connecticut Audubon Society also manages 19 wildlife sanctuaries around the state, preserving over 2,600 acres of wildlife habitat, and serves over 200,000 people annually, including 60,000 children reached through school programs, summer camps, scout groups and special events. Working exclusively in Connecticut for over 100 years, Connecticut Audubon Society is an independent organization, not affiliated with any national or government group. For more information, visit [www.ctaudubon.org](http://www.ctaudubon.org).