

5th Annual Great Stratford Bird Festival Takes Wing in early October with Expanded Programming

STRATFORD (Sept. 25, 2012) –Bird enthusiasts and nature lovers are invited to enjoy Stratford’s many natural assets from forest to shore, all of which figure prominently in the 5th Annual Great Stratford Bird Festival, Oct. 5 through 7.



The annual bird festival celebrates the Town’s natural history, rich bird habitat, and the many indigenous shore, song and prey birds that live there and pass through on their migratory routes south for the winter.

This year’s festival – which has as its spotlight bird the Great Egret, features bird walks, presentations of live birds of prey, displays of historic decoys and contemporary bird-related artwork, boat trips on the Housatonic River, and children’s activities. The full schedule of activities is available on the festival website.



“With its beautiful beaches, marshes and woodlands, Stratford is the premier location for birding in Connecticut, and early fall is the best time to take advantage of the thousands of birds stopping by here on their way south,” said Milan G. Bull, Senior Director of Science and Conservation of the Connecticut Audubon Society.

“From eagles, hawks and herons, to ducks, shorebirds and songbirds, there is something for every bird enthusiast, and The Great Stratford Bird Festival celebrates this migration with enthusiasm, offering the public a host of opportunities to see some spectacular birds in some

spectacular Stratford habitats. If you love birds, this event is not to be missed,” Bull said.

“Stratford’s birding heritage and history harken back to a time when the skies darkened with clouds of ducks and other waterfowl descending into Stratford’s marshes. The Great Stratford Bird Festival seeks to recall those times with a celebration of the many birds that still make Stratford’s rivers, shoreline, marshes and forest part of their home and flyway,” said David Wright, Festival chairman.

Birding experts will lead walks at the Great Meadows Marsh, Long Beach, Booth Park, Roosevelt Forest and other locations throughout the Town. Representatives from Connecticut’s Beardsley Zoo and Horizon Wings will allow audiences to see live birds up close, and Falconer Brian Bradley will dazzle audiences with exciting aerial exhibits of birds in flight. Wildlife in Crisis will close the event with a hawk release on Sunday, October 7th.

Some of the vintage decoy carvings created Albert Laing and Charles “Shang” Wheeler of Stratford, will be displayed at the Festival along with the work of contemporary local carvers whose work is influenced by these masters. Wheeler is credited with revolutionizing the carving process, creating realistic decoys.



The event will open this year with a new feature, a trip to Deep River on Wednesday, October 3rd, to participate in, and observe, the “Swallow Spectacular” which Roger Tory Peterson described as “one of the seven birding wonders of the world.”

Also new this year is a student art contest, with awards going to the winners. Wildlife photographer Shawn Carey, who has created many

signature birding films will discuss his latest film work on shorebirds as the guest speaker at the Festival's annual dinner on Friday, Oct. 5.

For more information about the Festival events and schedules visit the website at www.stratfordbirdfestival.com or visit the Festival's Facebook page.