

# The Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy

Research • Education • Conservation Action

SUMMER 2011

## NEWSLETTER

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## DUCK DAY EDITION

The Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy (LRWC) hosted its sixth annual Duck Day on June 5th, and the beautiful spring weather helped create an event that attracted over 1,000 attendees. Duck Day has become an annual tradition that provides our friends in the community, along with new visitors, the opportunity to experience LRWC and learn about our programs and projects. The focus of Duck Day is



Visitors get a bird's eye view of, you guessed it, the birds!

always to promote environmental awareness, and this year we increased the number of educational exhibits and opportunities. Pond dipping was our newest attraction, where kids of all ages could discover the diversity of insects, crustaceans, amphibians and other life forms that inhabit our local ponds. Attendees were allowed to explore the covered bird enclosures, take a stroll to our



Ducklings warm themselves under a heat lamp in the rearing barn.

special sea duck enclosure, and tour the rearing barn to view the growing ducklings from the spring breeding season. The rearing barn is home to our new environmental education classroom, which displayed incubators with hatching chicks, our dermestid beetle colony, and waterfowl artwork and photography from Wamogo and Litchfield High School students.



Pond dipping fascinated kids of all ages.

Kids watch dermestid beetles hard at work cleaning skulls for the LRWC education program.



Kids watch dermestid beetles hard at work cleaning skulls for the LRWC education program.

Special events included an amazing demonstration of the flight and hunting skills of birds of prey by Jennifer Pena from Flight of the Raptor. Returning guest presenter Erin O'Connell of Audubon Sharon also provided close-up interactions with

birds of prey. Not to be outdone by the birds, herpetologist Brian Kleinman displayed a host of reptiles and amphibians. For the younger kids, there were ducklings, goslings and even giant rabbits, along with the mystifying skills of magician Jerry Hornak.

# MORE DUCK DAY FUN!

We would like to thank all our dedicated volunteers, presenters, exhibitors, and Duck Day sponsors for their time and effort in making this year's Duck Day fun and educational for all! Photos by Anthony Healy.



Volunteer Alex Hubbell contemplates one of the ducklings.

Smiles, laughter and wonder all around!



Kids learn that Duck Day is more than just ducks as they investigate the skins and skulls of native mammals at the Master Wildlife Conservationist booth of the CT Department of Energy and Environmental Protection.



Herpetologist Brian Kleinman wows the audience with a variety of reptiles and amphibians.



Falconer Jennifer Pena gets assistance from a young volunteer to demonstrate the hunting abilities of a Harris' hawk.



The hayride back to the parking lot is a fun way to end the day.

# 2011 ANNUAL FUNDRAISER

Traditionally held the night before Duck Day, the LRWC Annual Fundraiser is an evening at the Conservancy to generate financial support for our mission to promote conservation awareness and environmental stewardship. Guests could explore the aviary, meet and greet our Avian Ambassadors, view our new environmental education classroom, and check out the Duck Day educational exhibits. The evening provided opportunity to bid on a unique selection of exotic trips, wildlife art and photography in our *Everything Avian* silent auction. Teacher Mary Ellen Birdsall (James Morris School) and student volunteer Claire Chapman each gave a presentation about their experiences with LRWC's education programs. Rounding out the night was the presentation of the first LRWC Lifetime Achievement Award to Dr. Tom Lovejoy. Proceeds from this event support Duck Day and the wide range of environmental education programs that we offer to the public. We would like to thank the 2011 Benefit Committee and our dedicated volunteers for making this special night a success!



Top photos: Volunteer Claire Chapman introduces member Fran Macomber to a young gosling. Bottom left: Teacher Mary Ellen Birdsall shares her experience with LRWC's education programs. Bottom right: Volunteer Crystal Gagnon greets guests with Woody, one of our Avian Ambassadors. Far left: Newly painted plasticine duck skulls wait to dry before being added to the *Use Your Head* education board that teaches students how different bill shapes are adapted to specific food sources. Photos by Michele Goodman.

## LRWC HONORS DR. TOM LOVEJOY



LRWC Director of Aviculture and Education Ian Gereg, Sylvia Ripley Addison, Tom Lovejoy, and Rosemary Ripley at the 2011 Annual Fundraiser.

LRWC was proud to select Dr. Thomas E. Lovejoy as the first recipient of the LRWC Lifetime Achievement Award. Tom is a world-renowned biologist who is credited with creating public awareness of conservation issues for tropical rainforests. One of the leading advocates for the preservation of biological diversity, he made the first estimation of global extinction rates in 1980, and played a central role in establishing the science of conservation biology. He directed the conservation program at the World Wildlife Fund from 1973 to 1987, and is the founder of the public television series *Nature*. Tom serves on numerous scientific and conservation boards, including the LRWC Board of Directors. His advice is widely sought on policy matters relating to science, the environment and sustainable development. Tom was presented with this award at the 2011 Annual Fundraiser in appreciation of his service and dedication to the conservation of our planet's biodiversity. Congratulations, Tom!

# STUDENT ART/PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST WINNERS

Wamogo High School and Litchfield High School art and photography students visited LRWC in May, ready to tackle the challenge of wildlife art and photography. The resulting masterpieces were displayed in the LRWC classroom on Duck Day, where visitors voted on their favorites. Congratulations to Brooks Bittel (grade 11; Wamogo) for taking first place in the art contest with her painting of a black swan. Congratulations to Hayley Gravel (grade 11; Wamogo) for taking first place in the photography contest with her photo of a wood duck. You can view the second and third place winners at [lrwc.net](http://lrwc.net).



First place - Art: Black Swan by Brooks Bittel



First place - Photography: Wood Duck by Hayley Gravel



Another happy customer!



Magician Jerry Hornak

Even  
more  
Duck  
Day  
fun!



Need a volunteer? Pick me!

## VOLUNTEER PROFILE

Twin sisters Crystal and Heather Gagnon and their friend Melanie Palleria have dedicated their Sunday mornings for the past two years helping care for the LRWC collection of waterfowl. In addition to their weekly routine of feeding and cleaning in the aviaries, the trio has enthusiastically undertaken the time intensive project of imprinting young ducks on humans. The resulting tame birds are excellent education animals and help LRWC spread its message of waterfowl and wetland conservation during on and off-site education programs. Melanie, Heather and Crystal have imprinted mandarin ducks, Australian wood ducks and black-bellied whistling ducks, and are currently imprinting a red-breasted goose. With the help of dedicated volunteers like these young women, LRWC plans to maintain a representative bird species from each continent (except Antarctica, of course!) for classroom education programs.



Volunteers Heather Gagnon, Crystal Gagnon and Melanie Palleria with demoiselle crane chicks.