

# CREATING A CULTURE OF CONSERVATION

ON JANUARY 5<sup>TH</sup>, 1905, the National Association of Audubon Societies for the Protection of Wild Birds and Animals' constitution, by-laws and incorporation papers were filed with New York State's Secretary of State. Twenty-five days later at the American Museum of Natural History, Audubon's first President William Dutcher called the first organizational meeting of the new society. Dutcher's vision was to create an organization that would be "a barrier between birds and animals and the large unthinking class" as well as a shield from "a smaller but more harmful class of selfish people." As he articulated this objective in *Bird Lore*, he outlined the organization's main weapons to be public education, scientific knowledge and for those selfish people "control through the enforcement of wise laws, bird refuges and the warden system."

Among his first board of directors stood George Bird Grinnell, founder of *Bird Lore*, as well as leaders from state Audubon societies stretching from Massachusetts to Florida to Oregon. The National Association of Audubon Societies took flight and in 1940 became known as the National Audubon Society and *Bird Lore* known as the *Audubon* magazine. However, the fundamental principles for birds, other wildlife and their habitats have stayed true to this day as we embarked upon its second century of conservation.

Audubon New York is continuing this tradition with many exciting programs for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration. Our programs to enforce and enact wise conservation laws to protect the environment from the "selfish" users from passing state laws to save previous wetland resources and to provide public funds to purchase critical open spaces for future generations to enjoy. Our educational programs build on the early recognition of Dutcher that our best ally in conservation is the informed public at large. Through conservation education, they can become the loudest voice for birds and wildlife. The public outcry for Pale Male in New York City this past December was a great example of many voices coming together for conservation. Whether in Prospect Park in Brooklyn or the secluded marshes of the Hudson River, every



day someone new is being connected to nature, thanks to Audubon.

Over this year the Important Bird Area program will be promoted across the state. In 1905, Dutcher called for a system of bird refuges, and in 2005 these important bird areas provide the next generation of bird conservation priorities with management and partnership uses part of the conservation equation. New York State is a leader in bird conservation with the first Important Bird Area book published, the first state bird conservation area law enacted and the first public/private Audubon Center project created. While terminology from Dutcher's time may have changed, the underlying goals remain true to the Audubon mission. Audubon has journeyed 100 years and will journey centuries to come, because its mission for birds, wildlife and habitats matter to people. This is reinforced every day Audubon opens the eyes of another child to the mysteries of the outdoors and connects another person to the wonders of nature.

Join us in the 100th anniversary celebration of the National Audubon Society and become active in the conservation mission that rings true to us all.

In conservation,

David J. Miller



AUDUBON NY OFFICE

Long Island Sound

## Audubon NEW YORK

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