



City of West Haven Revealed to be Audubon’s First-Ever *Share the Shore* Award Winner

A model for best practices across the Long Island Sound and Atlantic coastline, West Haven’s community-led beach stewardship effort has made a big impact on birds and people.

They share the award with the Town of Hempstead in New York.

HARTFORD (May 19, 2021) – “In 2013, ten years after recognizing Sandy Point as an official Important Bird Area, we put out a call for volunteers to teach beachgoers about keeping a safe distance from nesting birds and chicks. The City of West Haven provided space for volunteer training and a local resident offered up her garage for storing materials. This one effort was so successful that after two years, the bulk of Sandy Point visitors had learned how to protect vulnerable species like Piping Plovers. And that’s just one example!” said **Corrie Folsom-O’Keefe, director of bird conservation for Audubon Connecticut.**

“Share the Shore” is Audubon's effort to protect federally and state-threatened shorebirds that depend on our beaches to nest successfully. Every May–August, vulnerable species like the Piping Plover and American Oystercatcher hatch chicks on the shores of the Long Island Sound and Atlantic Coast. Their chicks can weigh less than a single scoop of ice cream.

The program unites scientists with local community members and leaders who love their shorelines and are dedicated to improving them for birds and people.

Thanks to nearly two decades of growing efforts to make their entire shoreline a place where vulnerable birds can thrive, Audubon is proud to present the City of West Haven with our first-ever “Share the Shore Award” in Connecticut.

Learn how your community can do more award-worthy work at <https://ct.audubon.org/conservation/audubon-celebrates-share-shore-award-winners>.

“The transformation of the Sandy Point area and the community morale has been incredible. We started with the smaller, manageable projects while remaining conscious of larger projects so that when resources became available, we could act,” said **Mark Paine Jr., director of parks and recreation for the**

City of West Haven. “It has given a huge jolt of positive energy to the community. Birders, beachgoers, fishermen, and neighbors all enjoy the sanctuary together.”

“The City of West Haven is thrilled to accept Audubon’s *Share the Shore Award*, and we especially want to thank those local community members who helped launch and grow this effort,” **said Mayor Nancy R. Rossi.** “In 2003, West Haven residents nominated, and Audubon Connecticut recognized, Sandy Point as an Important Bird Area. Since then we have seen volunteers, state agencies, students, scouts, and more come together to make our community safer and healthier for people and wildlife.”

Audubon’s [newest science shows](#) that the population of vulnerable species grows 2 to 34 times faster at stewardship sites, compared to birds in protected areas without known stewardship. Thanks to their commitment to protecting and managing their beaches, the City of West Haven has helped turn Sandy Point into a haven for beachgoers and vulnerable wildlife.

“On behalf of the many volunteers who have worked tirelessly to provide native plantings which benefit beach-nesting birds and wildlife, while also continually maintaining the Sandy Point Bird Sanctuary, we are extremely excited and proud to see that our efforts are being recognized with the *Share the Shore Award* being presented to the city of West Haven,” **said Georgianna Jette, long-term volunteer.**

“Thanks to the City of West Haven’s interest in improving habitat for birds and other wildlife, Menunkatuck Audubon Society has been able to install eight Osprey platforms in the marshes of Old Field Creek, Cove River, and Oyster River. Working with the West Haven Watershed Restoration Committee and the Wildlife Guards, we have removed invasive plants and replaced them with native ones. This past winter we were able to install monofilament fishing line recycling bins at seven locations along the shore. The bins will help prevent birds from dying after becoming entangled in discarded fishing line. The City understands the importance of sharing the shore, and we congratulate them on a well-deserved award,” **said Dennis Riordan, president of the Menunkatuck Audubon Society.**

Audubon invites all coastal communities to learn more about how to launch or grow your own beach-nesting bird stewardship programs at <https://ct.audubon.org/conservation/audubon-celebrates-share-shore-award-winners>.

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ABOUT AUDUBON

Audubon Connecticut, a state office of the National Audubon Society, protects birds and the places they need, today and tomorrow. Audubon works throughout the Americas using science, advocacy, education, and on-the-ground conservation. State programs, nature centers, chapters, and partners give Audubon an unparalleled wingspan that reaches millions of people each year to inform, inspire, and unite diverse communities in conservation action. A nonprofit conservation organization since 1905, Audubon believes in a world in which people and wildlife thrive. Learn more at <https://ct.audubon.org/> and on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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