



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

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SECRETARY BABBITT HONORS TOP CONSERVATION CONTRIBUTORS

Five U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service employees were honored for distinguished service, three for valor, and one for lifetime achievement in the commitment to equal opportunity and affirmative action during the Department of the Interior's Annual Awards Convocation held November 22, 1994, in Washington, DC.

Ducks Unlimited, Inc., Southern California Edison, Gallaudet University, and Robert Streeter, Executive Director of the Service's North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office, were also honored by Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt for outstanding contributions to the mission and goals of the Department of the Interior and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Ducks Unlimited, Inc., is this year's recipient of the Conservation Service Award. This award is the highest honor bestowed on private citizens and/or groups for direct contributions to the cause of conservation.

Based in Memphis, Tennessee, Ducks Unlimited, Inc. is a leader among private conservation organizations. It is a solid supporter of the goals of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and a driving force behind numerous wetlands conservation projects across North America.

In particular, Ducks Unlimited, Inc., has been instrumental in the success of the North American Waterfowl Management Plan since the plan's inception in 1986. With no initial Federal funding available for implementation of the plan, Ducks Unlimited, with help from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, breathed life into the international agreement by launching funding efforts. Further, Ducks Unlimited pledged to match state wildlife agency contributions destined for critical habitat in Canada. Also, in 1988, Ducks Unlimited again demonstrated its commitment by pledging \$300 million over the course of the next 15 years towards future plan projects.

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Representatives from Ducks Unlimited have served on every joint venture board in the U.S., Canada, and Mexico, helping to secure such key acquisitions as California's Llano Seco Rancho, Ohio's Pickerel Creek, South Carolina's ACE Basin, and Saskatchewan's Quill Lakes. It has also worked with private landowners to restore or enhance wetlands, developed a progressive system for mapping prairie pothole habitat, and through numerous local chapters raised funds to support and implement the goals of the plan.

Ducks Unlimited, Inc., joins such notable previous Conservation Award winners as Lady Bird Johnson, Walt Disney, and Ansel Adams. The award was first presented in 1951.

The Public Service Award, bestowed on citizens and/or groups for indirect contributions to the cause of conservation and the mission of the Department, was this year awarded to **Southern California Edison** for its efforts to help the restoration of the California condor into its historical habitat.

The proposed release of condors into the U.S. Forest Service's Sespe Condor Sanctuary in 1991 was clouded by concerns over a series of powerlines adjacent to the Sanctuary. Powerlines had been identified as a threat to condors since 1989 when a released Andean condor was electrocuted. Southern California Edison volunteered to help solve the problem by burying 1.6 miles of the most dangerous line and placing anti-perching devices on the remaining powerpoles.

The work was completed in 1991 at a cost of approximately a half million dollars. Largely due to Southern California Edison's efforts, the condors were successfully released on schedule in January of 1992.

The new Equal Opportunity Awards for Partnership Achievement were bestowed on **Dr. Robert Streeter**, Executive Director of the North American Waterfowl and Wetlands Office of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and **Gallaudet University** in Washington, DC. These awards were given in recognition of accomplishments to promote equal opportunity and workforce diversity.

Streeter initiated the "Partners in the Conservation of Fish and Wildlife and their Habitat" agreement between the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Eastern Senior High School, an inner-city school in Washington, DC, with a predominantly minority enrollment. This unprecedented partnership was developed to cultivate an interest in the natural sciences among inner-city students and possibly prepare them to pursue scientific curricula

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in colleges and universities. The program offers the students a full range of scientific exposure and opportunities, including one-on-one mentoring, guest lectures, field trips to national wildlife refuges and fish hatcheries, career planning, and more.

Through the Partners-in-Education Program, Gallaudet University worked closely with the Department to develop training programs and structure course curricula to enhance the scientific knowledge and ability of hearing-impaired students. University students have been placed in internships and cooperative education positions throughout the Department to give them direct experience in environmental education and natural resource management. Also, as part of this partnership, the university has sponsored programs designed to instill in Department employees a greater sensitivity to the needs of the hearing-impaired, including training and assistance to supervisors of hearing-impaired employees.

Secretary Babbitt also presented a number of individual awards during the ceremony.

Recipients of the Valor Award were: **Jon A. Adamson**, a refuge law enforcement officer at the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge for highly courageous action involving great personal risk in the capture of two armed bank robbers; **James D. Oliver**, a social services assistant at the Mingo Job Corps Civilian Conservation Center, for saving the life of the elderly occupant of a house which had caught fire; and **Gale F. Brewer**, Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge, Montana, for rescuing an icefisherman from drowning and hypothermia when the fisherman fell through the ice.

Also honored were a number of employees of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Receiving the Distinguished Service Award were: **David L. Olsen**, retired Assistant Director for Refuges and Wildlife, Washington, DC, **Marvin L. Plenert**, retired Regional Director, Portland, Oregon, **James W. Pulliam, Jr.**, retired Regional Director, Atlanta, Georgia, **Harold W. Benson**, retired Assistant Regional Director for Refuges and Wildlife, Atlanta, Georgia, and **Edward S. Crozier**, retired Wildlife Associate Manager, Twin Cities, Minnesota.

Receiving the Secretary's Annual Equal Opportunity Award for Long-Term Achievement was **Hannibal Bolton**, Fisheries Associate Manager, Twin Cities, Minnesota, for his performance, conduct, and commitment that have promoted the spirit of equal opportunity and affirmative action.