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Emmy Award-winning Phil Donahue to Co-Host  
Stratford Bird Festival for a Second Year

STRATFORD (Sept. 8, 2011) Phil Donahue, the multiple Emmy Award-winning former talk show host and self-described purple martin landlord, will co-host the 4<sup>th</sup> annual Stratford Bird Festival. This marks Donahue's second consecutive year of participation in the annual festival, which runs Sept. 30 through Oct. 2.

Donahue will attend some of the Festival's featured events and will speak at the Festival dinner on Saturday, Oct. 1, at Connecticut's Beardsley Zoo's Carousel.

The annual bird festival shines a spotlight on the Town's natural history, rich bird habitat, its numerous indigenous shore, song and prey birds, and on the historic influence of decoy carving by two of its residents. Albert Laing and Charles "Shang" Wheeler are two of the most prominent names in decoy carving history, and some of their carvings will be displayed at the Festival. Wheeler is credited with revolutionizing the carving process, creating realistic decoys.

Stratford is home to some of the country's best waterfowl preserves and bird-watching areas, which will be highlighted during the Festival. Other activities and events will include presentations of live birds of prey, displays and sales of bird-related art, boat rides on the Housatonic, and birding experts will lead bird walks at the Great Meadows Marsh, Roosevelt Forest and other locations throughout the Town.

According to the National Audubon Society, the entire mouth of the Housatonic River is the seventh best bird-watching area in the country.

This year's spotlight bird is the semi-palmated plover.

According to Festival Co-chair David Wright, “Stratford’s birding heritage and history hearken 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.”

For more information about the Festival events and schedules visit the website at [www.stratfordbirdfestival.com](http://www.stratfordbirdfestival.com) or visit the Festival’s Facebook page.

The mission of the bird festival is to expose people all over America to the wonders and beauties of the bird populations, locations, and diversities of the birds in the Town of Stratford, Connecticut.