

Audubon Taps Noted Conservation and Communications Leader as New President

New York NY –EMBARGOED UNTIL 2PM ET 29 July 2010---The National Audubon Society today announced that David Yarnold has been named its new President and Chief Executive Officer, giving new momentum to efforts to connect people with nature and their power to protect it. A passionate conservationist, Yarnold currently serves as Executive Director of Environmental Defense Fund and President of Environmental Defense Action Fund. Prior to that, he was a Pulitzer Prize-winning editor at the San Jose Mercury News.

“David brings proven leadership in the for-profit and non-profit sectors to Audubon at a time when efforts to protect birds, habitats and the resources that sustain us are needed more than ever;” said Holt Thrasher, Audubon’s Board Chair. “His leadership ability, his passion for conservation and grassroots action, his communications skills and his organizational expertise all make him the perfect fit for the Audubon of 2010 and beyond.”

“David is a boundary-crosser, the kind of flexible thinker and values-based executive that a complex conservation and fundraising landscape demands right now,” Thrasher said. “He shares Audubon’s traditional passion for birds and its visionary understanding that helping people to protect them will safeguard our own future as well. I have no doubt that David will lead Audubon in expanding its reach to new audiences and elevating its conservation successes to new heights.”

Yarnold has been at EDF since April 2005, where he is responsible for all operations, from programs, to development and marketing/communications. He helped expand EDF’s innovative corporate partnerships work, focused on EDF’s international programs, particularly in China, and helped the organization grow from \$52M to \$117M in revenue. He is also President of the organization’s Action Fund, its political action arm.

“Audubon’s mission has never been more relevant. From the grassroots to state houses to national and regional policy, its wingspan is unparalleled,” Yarnold said. “I’m excited by the opportunity to work with a nationwide network of Audubon Chapters and Audubon Centers that combine local concern, knowledge and action to equal conservation that makes a difference on a grand scale. It will be an honor to lead an organization whose name has meant ‘trust’ and ‘conservation achievement’ for more than a hundred years.”

Yarnold’s *San Jose Mercury News* was consistently ranked as one of America’s 10 Best Newspapers. His paper was called, “America’s Boldest Newspaper” by a panel of international judges. During his time in San Jose, the *Mercury News* was widely recognized for its commitment to diversity and for its in-depth coverage of technology. He was also one of three Pulitzer Prize finalists for editorial writing in 2005.

“For me, going to Audubon is like going home. Community-based education and action that breeds broader changes has always been engaging and rewarding for me and those are the things Audubon does best,” Yarnold said.

He will assume the Presidency of Audubon on Sept 1.

Now in its second century, Audubon connects people with birds, nature and the environment that supports us all. Its national network of community-based nature centers, Chapters, and scientific, education, and advocacy programs engage millions of people from all walks of life in conservation actions to protect and restore the natural world. www.audubon.org

###