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For immediate release

Contact: Julie OConnor, Symposium Coordinator
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Photographs and interviews available (see below for a list of persons available for interview).

Owl Symposium Registration Opens December 15, 2005!

DULUTH, MN: Last winter, over 5,000 owls descended on northern Minnesota, setting records and drawing bird watchers from across the country to this region. This March, a weekend symposium celebrating the mystique, natural history and ecology of northern owls will be held in Duluth, MN. Featuring owls, art, a poster session and speakers from as far away as Finland, this one of a kind event will appeal to a wide range of owl enthusiasts. Proceeds will be used to further owl research and conservation.

What: “Owls on the Move: When, Where, Why?
A Symposium on Northern Owls”
When: March 17-19, 2006
Where: On the campus of the University of Minnesota Duluth

Sponsored by:

Audubon Minnesota
Department of Biology, University of Minnesota Duluth
Duluth Audubon Society
Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory
Minnesota Ornithologists' Union
Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Non Game Wildlife Program
Natural Resources Research Institute, University of Minnesota Duluth

Schedule of Events:

(Detailed schedule below)

Friday, March 17

Family-oriented Owl Fair. Learn and explore about owls in our area in an informal, fun environment.

Saturday, March 18

Researchers and historians speaking about owl ecology, natural history and specifically, the spectacular numbers of owls that appeared in Minnesota during the winter of 2004-05.

Poster Session and banquet follow presentations.

Sunday, March 18

Discussion panels, workshops and interactive programs focused on research and education about owls.

A list of local birding guides is available for persons interested in field trips.

Call for Posters

Abstracts for posters relating to northern owls are welcome, especially those concerned with biology, management or socio-economics. Contact symposium coordinator for more details.

Cost:

Symposium:

\$45 before February 20, 2006

\$60 after February 20, 2006

Saturday evening banquet:

\$20 per person

Registration opens December 15, 2005

Attendance will be capped at 400 persons

Online registration and mail-in forms available at: www.hawkridge.org

Interviews Available:

Organizers:

Mark Alt, MOU

Jan Green, Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory (HRBO)

Carrol Henderson, Minnesota DNR, Non Game Wildlife Program

Mark Martell, Audubon Minnesota

Gerald Niemi, NRRI, Hawk Ridge Bird Observatory

Julie OConnor, Symposium Coordinator

Robert Shaw, Duluth Audubon Society

Speakers:

Jim Duncan, Manitoba Conservation

Dave Grosshuesch, Owl Bander/Researcher, HRBO, NRRI

Pertti Saurila, Finnish Museum of Natural History

Mark Peck, Ontario Department of Natural History

David Willard, Chicago's Field Museum of Natural History

Detailed Schedule of Events:

Friday, March 17

5pm--Registration opens

6pm--Symposium opens with a fun, family-oriented Owl Fair celebrating owls! This interactive event includes speakers, storytellers, live owls, a photography workshop, owl callers, activities, crafts, a juried photo exhibit and student art exhibit.

Saturday, March 18

7:30am --Registration and coffee

8:15am -4:30pm --Researchers and scientists will present their findings about owl ecology and natural history. Topics include: Past owl movements into this region, the US and Canada, an in-depth exploration of the size and scope of the 2004-05 northern owl irruption, food habits of owls collected during the 2004-05 irruption, breeding summary, habitat and landscape distribution, economic impacts of the on Northeastern MN, management of northern forests for owls, and an overview of owl issues in Northern Europe.

5pm--Poster Session and Discussion time

6pm--Banquet (Open to the public, RESERVATIONS REQUIRED)

7pm--Evening program

Dedication and Awards Ceremony

Photography presentation by Michael Furtman

Sunday, March 19

8am-12pm --Interactive programming, discussion panels and workshops with leading researchers and birding experts. Topics include how to best capture data during future irruptions, ecotourism, photography, audio recording, teaching about owls, volunteering in raptor rehabilitation in this region.

12pm--closing comments