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Contact:
Taryn Martinez (212) 979-3185 / tmartinez@audubon.org
Doreen Whitley 718-965-0545/ dwhitley@audubon.org

Columbus Woman Singled Out for Environmental Leadership *Honoree Receives Audubon/Toyota TogetherGreen Fellowship*

New York, NY, November 19, 2009-A Columbus, Ohio woman is the recipient of a national fellowship designed to advance the work of individuals with outstanding leadership potential to help shape a brighter environmental future.

Doreen Whitley is one of 40 individuals nationwide selected as a 2009 *TogetherGreen* Fellow. The *TogetherGreen* Fellowship offers specialized training in conservation planning and execution, the chance to work and share best practices with gifted conservation professionals, and assistance with project outreach and evaluation. Each Fellow receives \$10,000 towards a community-focused project to engage local residents in conserving land, water and energy, and contributing to greater environmental health.

For her fellowship, Whitley will utilize community members to conduct two interconnected research projects based around bird and habitat conservation. Both projects enlist volunteers to participate in “Birding for a Better Columbus” to acquire the data necessary, become better birders, and receive incentives through the center. The first project will determine the Grange Insurance Audubon Center’s importance as stopover habitat for migrating birds through bird banding; the second will match birders from the local Audubon Chapter with inner Columbus residents to acquire bird population data from point counts in restored habitat areas. Together, the data will be mapped in GIS to depict how birds respond to habitat restoration, helping the Audubon Center to better plan habitat restoration for threatened bird species.

Whitley is currently the Conservation Program Coordinator at Grange Insurance Audubon Center. In that capacity, she manages Ohio’s Audubon At Home program, Important Bird Area Program and implements the Center’s conservation plan for the Scioto River-Green Lawn Important Bird Area through community partnerships.

“Doreen is the kind of person who can make a real difference in the health of our environment and the quality of our future,” said Audubon President John Flicker. “Each of our *TogetherGreen* Fellows demonstrates exceptional environmental understanding and commitment, combined with tremendous potential to inspire and lead others. Together, they represent the talented and diverse leadership the environmental community will need to tackle the huge challenges and opportunities confronting us now and in the years to come.”

“This is a great opportunity for Columbus residents to bird for a purpose, meet new people, and work to make the City of Columbus a better place by using birds as indicators,” said Whitley.

Whitley has been affiliated with the Grange Insurance Audubon Center since 2006. Half of the *TogetherGreen* Fellows come from within Audubon's far-reaching national network; half channel their environmental efforts through other organizations.

Whitley received her Bachelor's degree in environmental sciences from Florida Gulf Coast University and is studying towards her Associate in the Science of Geographic Information Systems degree from Columbus State Community College. A dedicated environmental educator, Whitley has previously worked for the New York City Department of Education, The Prospect Park Audubon Center, the Audubon Everglades Education Center, and the National Park Service.

A distinguished advisory committee- composed of conservation professionals and experts in environmental education, communications, outreach, and conservation planning-selected the fellowship beneficiaries from a competitive pool of scores of highly qualified individuals. Qualified applicants must have at least six years of experience in conservation, environmental education, policy, or environmental issues, as demonstrated through current and past work experience, academic studies related to conservation, and/or volunteer work. Candidates must have a passion for conservation, the desire to learn and grow, and demonstrate a proven ability in reaching previously unengaged audiences.

"We must engage the best and brightest leaders representing the broadest and most diverse communities in this country to solve our ever more complex conservation challenges," said Diane Wood, President, National Environmental Education Foundation. "*TogetherGreen* is a creative program that uncovers such leaders, nurtures their talents, supports their dedication to conservation and holds them up to inspire others to follow."

A complete list of the 2009 *TogetherGreen* Fellows can be found at www.TogetherGreen.org/fellows.

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About *TogetherGreen*

Audubon and Toyota launched the five-year *TogetherGreen* initiative in 2008 to build the promise of a greener, healthier future through innovation, leadership and volunteerism. To date, 80 environmental leaders-half from within Audubon and half from outside organizations-have received *TogetherGreen* Fellowships to protect land, water, and energy resources nationwide. For more information, visit www.togethergreen.org.

About Audubon

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

About Toyota

Toyota (NYSE: TM) established operations in the United States in 1957 and currently operates 10 manufacturing plants. Toyota is committed to being a good corporate citizen in the communities where it does business and believes in supporting programs with long-term sustainable results. Toyota supports numerous organizations across the country, focusing on education, the environment and safety. Since 1991, Toyota has contributed more than \$464 million to philanthropic programs in the U.S. For more information on Toyota's commitment to improving communities nationwide, visit www.toyota.com/community.