

Audubon gala honors leading conservationists with top environmental awards

Title

Riding on Bette Midler's wings, The National Audubon Society (BirdLife Partner in the US) soared at the Plaza Hotel in New York, last night. For the first time, the organisation awarded two of the nation's most prestigious environmental honors on the same night: the inaugural Dan W. Lufkin Prize for Environmental Leadership and the Audubon Medal.

George Archibald, co-founder of the [International Crane Foundation](#), received the first Lufkin Prize and its \$100,000 award, and philanthropist [Louis Bacon](#) received the esteemed Audubon Medal. The Moore Charitable Foundation, of which Louis Bacon is the founder, will provide a new gift to Audubon to create a resource center and powerful new advocacy tools for citizens who want to take action to minimise the impact of energy development on communities and wildlife.

"It is a wonderful honor to receive the Audubon Medal from the National Audubon Society, which for more than a century has fought tirelessly to protect and preserve our natural resources and environment for future generations", Bacon said. "Much like the conservationists who previously have received the Audubon Medal, including Stewart Udall, Rachel Carson and Ted Turner, I realise that this recognition cannot be a cause to rest, but a spur to continue our work."

Of his achievement, Archibald said: "I am honored to be the first recipient of The *Dan W. Lufkin Prize* for Environmental Leadership, and I am especially grateful to Dan and Cynthia Lufkin for their loyal support and dedication to crane conservation. This award is recognition of the achievements of the entire International Crane Foundation staff, our colleagues around the world and the thousands of people who give annually to our global conservation efforts. I really can't think of a better way to kick off the International Crane Foundation's 40th anniversary." Bette Midler performed a "People" parody, "Skylark", "When the Red Red Robin Comes Bob Bob, Bobbin' Along" and closed the evening with "Wind Beneath My Wings." "Audubon is a visionary organisation that has seen the importance of conservation for more than one hundred years", said Midler, founder of the [New York Restoration Project](#). "We only have one planet, and by protecting the birds and lands that make up their habitats, we are protecting our future." "The Audubon Medal and the Lufkin Prize celebrate men of compassion and courage, and it's pretty remarkable to be able to honor both of these leaders at one

event”, said Audubon President and CEO [David Yarnold](#).

“Not only that, it was the most successful fundraiser Audubon has ever had.” The evening raised over \$2.4 million for the organisation. Tom Brokaw hosted gala. “I had the privilege of serving as the emcee at the National Audubon Society’s Centennial Gala in 2005, and am thrilled to be here tonight to celebrate the achievements of two of this country’s great conservationists,” Brokaw said. Guests included Uma Thurman and Arki Busson, Robert F. Kennedy Jr., New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg, Maya Lin, Jane Alexander, Ambassador Ana Irene Delgado, Allison Rockefeller, Louis and Gabrielle Bacon, Cynthia and Dan W. Lufkin, Sonia and Paul Tudor Jones II and many more. Speakers included Louis Bacon, George Archibald, National Audubon Society President and CEO David Yarnold, Chairman of the Board Holt Thrasher, Dan W. Lufkin and Paul Tudor Jones II. The evening closed with a special performance by Bette Midler.