



CONSERVE WILDLIFE
FOUNDATION OF NEW JERSEY

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**Gov. Kean, biologists enliven premiere for
James Fiorentino traveling art exhibit
at D&R Greenway Land Trust in Princeton**

*Over 200 attend kickoff for three-year art exhibit scheduled for venues
across New Jersey and New York*

Princeton, NJ – This weekend the nonprofit Conserve Wildlife Foundation attracted over 200 art and wildlife enthusiasts to the premiere showing of their *Rare Wildlife Revealed: The James Fiorentino Traveling Art Exhibition* at D&R Greenway Land Trust in Princeton.

Former Gov. Tom Kean headlined the program, along with the nationally recognized artist Mr. Fiorentino, Conserve Wildlife Foundation (CWF) executive director David Wheeler, and D&R Greenway president & CEO Linda Mead. CWF field biologists were also present to discuss their innovative work protecting and restoring the region's vulnerable wildlife species, many species of which were featured in Mr. Fiorentino's paintings, as well as a live peregrine falcon, the fastest animal on earth, displayed by Mercer County Wildlife.

The event also honored several 5th-grade winners of the statewide Species on the Edge Art and Essay Contest, who were congratulated by the former Governor and Mr. Fiorentino before a cheering audience to conclude the program.

Mr. Fiorentino has painted 25 stunning watercolor images of at-risk wildlife species from New Jersey for this exhibition, from the bobcat and bald eagle to the Pine Barrens tree

frog and little brown bat. The exhibition will travel around New Jersey and the Northeast over the next three years.

At 15, Mr. Fiorentino became the youngest artist to be featured in the National Baseball Hall of Fame with paintings of baseball legends like Reggie Jackson, Cal Ripken Jr. and Ted Williams; his sports art has since graced national magazines and landed him in interviews with ABC World News Tonight and countless other news studios. Now 39, Fiorentino's Conserve Wildlife Foundation exhibit is being hosted at D&R Greenway through October 14. ,

“Renowned as one of the best sports artists in the country, Jim’s works hang in major museums,” says Governor Kean, who met the artist while serving as president of Drew University—Fiorentino was a student there in the 1990s, when his sports figures started receiving national attention. He was featured on ABC World News and in *The New York Times*. “In recent years he has turned to wildlife. Jim has created an amazing body of work... Many of the creatures he paints are endangered, and Jim celebrates their uniqueness and beauty.”

Fiorentino's realistic paintings depict some of the state’s most endangered and vulnerable species. **Among other venues, the exhibition will be shown at Salmagundi Club at 47 Fifth Avenue in New York next spring.**

“Mr. Fiorentino’s incredibly evocative artwork inspires viewers by reconnecting them with the natural world all around us,” says Conserve Wildlife Foundation executive director and wildlife author David Wheeler. “His watercolor paintings help to educate and engage viewers about the precipitous declines that many of these vulnerable wildlife species have suffered, and helps us bring attention to the very tangible steps that people can take to save these species.”

Gov. Kean and Wheeler wrote the foreword and introduction, respectively, for the art exhibition hardcover book accompanying the exhibition. Through October, sales of the original paintings, limited edition digital prints, the exhibition book, and wildlife merchandise will benefit Conserve Wildlife Foundation and D&R Greenway Land Trust.

“The subject of disappearing New Jersey wildlife speaks directly to the work that we do to protect habitats,” says D&R Greenway President & CEO Linda Mead. “As an admirer of James Fiorentino’s artistic talent, I am thrilled that we were selected as the premiere venue for this exhibition.”

Fiorentino started painting animals when he was 10, and he later became a trustee for the Raptor Trust in Millington, N.J.

“We rehabilitate 4,000 wild birds a year and release about half that number,” says Fiorentino. “These wild birds have had a tremendous influence on me. I enjoy getting close to birds of prey, and it brought me back to nature art.” Before going back to his

studio to paint the details, Fiorentino sketches the animals up close, sometimes holding them, taking in their details.

His two young sons enjoy being in nature, the oldest son joining his father to draw wildlife, especially butterflies—proving that humans, too, benefit from having wildlife in their midst. “I am awed by what we see in our own backyard: the (endangered) Eastern box turtle, great horned owl, pileated woodpeckers, foxes, hawks and butterflies,” says Fiorentino. “It’s an amazing backyard ecosystem.”

Rare Wildlife Revealed: The James Fiorentino Traveling Art Exhibition is sponsored by Omni Distribution, LLC, Flying Fish Brewing Company, Merrill G. & Erita Hastings Foundation, Studio 7 Fine Art Gallery, and Somerset Patriots.

Conserve Wildlife Foundation has been a long-time partner with D&R Greenway, exhibiting our *Species on the Edge* fifth-grade art and essay contest winners annually in D&R Greenway’s Olivia Rainbow Gallery. This year, the fifth graders art will be exhibited simultaneously with the Fiorentino exhibit.

For more information on James Fiorentino, please visit www.JamesFiorentino.com. To learn more about CWF, please visit www.ConserveWildlifeNJ.org.

Digital photos from the event are available upon request, as are high-resolution images of the original Fiorentino artwork.

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Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey has worked to protect rare wildlife in New Jersey and beyond for over two decades. CWF biologists and educators utilize field science, habitat restoration, environmental education, public engagement, and volunteer stewardship to ensure our most vulnerable wildlife species can continue to call New Jersey home. Our dedicated and innovative scientists have helped many species recover and thrive again in our densely populated state. More information can be found at www.ConserveWildlifeNJ.org.

CWF's education program meets the latest educational standards in helping kids grow in STEAM - or Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics. CWF's wildlife webcams, Story Maps, live webcasts, and e-books help bring wildlife directly to the screens of tens of thousands of people, while our public events and volunteer projects give people of all generations the opportunity to experience the wonders of wildlife up close. Our educators utilize art and essay contests, educational field trips, summer camps, afterschool programs, technology initiatives, classroom presentations, and wildlife-based curriculum and lesson plans.