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The Messenger: a plea from our songbirds

by Dave Titterington / Wild Bird Habitat Stores Apr 15, 2016

In ancient times humans looked to the flights and songs of birds to foretell the future. Today once again the birds have something to tell us.

An International event focusing on the decline in songbird populations will be held in Lincoln, Nebraska on Earth Day (April 22). Dr. Bridget Stutchbury and JoAnne Jackson from Ontario will talk about their new documentary film "The Messenger," a visually thrilling ode to the beauty and importance of our imperiled songbird, and what it will mean to all of us on both a global and human level if we lose them.

Born in Montreal, Stutchbury, featured in the documentary, was a fellow and research associate at the Smithsonian Institute; She is a professor of biology at York University in Toronto after completing her Ph.D. at Yale. Bridget is affiliated with more than a dozen organizations that work to preserve bird habitats. Her book, *Silence of the Songbirds*, is a best seller.

Joanne Jackson from Toronto produced the documentary film "The Messenger." She is an award-winning documentary and television producer from Canada and the driving force behind many compelling, thought provoking programs over the last 20 years. Her background includes hundreds of hours of television programming.

Stutchbury and Jackson will speak at 2 p.m. in the auditorium of Hardin Hall at the University of Nebraska's East Campus, 3310 Holdrege St. A meet-and-greet will follow the presentations. Friendly Coffee will be offered at the reception for Bridget and JoAnne.

That evening, April 22, is the opening night premier of the documentary film THE MESSENGER at UNL's Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center, 313 North 13th St. The film will begin at 7:30 p.m. with Dr. Stutchbury and JoAnne Jackson providing a question and answer session with the audience after the film.

In May, 2015, a private showing of the documentary was held at the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center with the 150 attendees being the first American audience to preview this international award winning documentary ahead of the U.S. release last December. Su Ryn, director of THE MESSENGER, and JoAnne Jackson provided Q&A with the audience via SKYPE after the viewing.

While the film continues to win International awards as a feature documentary, the reviews across the country give added credibility to THE MESSENGER's cutting edge videography and compelling content about imperiled songbirds across North America and worldwide. Lincoln Wild Bird Habitat Stores, Impact Partners for the documentary film, partnered with UNL's School of Natural Resources and the Mary Riepma Ross Media Arts Center to bring this event to Lincoln.

"The Messenger" will show at the Ross Media Center from April 22 to 28, 2016. Tickets go on sale April 17. For movie times and tickets visit theross.org. You can view trailers and learn more at songbirdsos.com.

"Our songbirds are trying to send us a message" says Dave. "Will we act too late before we hear that message anymore?"

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