



UNIVERSITIES FEDERATION FOR ANIMAL WELFARE

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Media Release

**From the
Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW)**

24th May, 2010

For Immediate Release:

Wild bird care in the garden UFAW symposium highlights the benefits of bird feeding and of ‘citizen science’

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) held a very successful symposium ‘Wild bird care in the garden: a scientific look at large scale, do-it-yourself wildlife management’, believed to be the first of its kind in the UK, at the Zoological Society of London on 4th May.

Presentations from an international line-up of speakers, including from universities in the UK, USA, Canada and Australia, the UK’s BTO, RSPB and the Institute of Zoology discussed the huge growth in the feeding of garden birds, the effects of this on breeding biology and population sizes and its benefits to bird welfare and conservation.

Much evidence was presented as to the beneficial effects of supplementary feeding in promoting breeding success and survival, but it was clear from the presentations that the subject is a very complex one with many questions regarding the role and interplay of feeding practices, environmental, biological and other factors yet to be answered.

The conference also addressed disease risks in garden birds and how these risks may be minimised. It was clear that the work of UFAW’s Garden Bird Health Initiative which includes members the Institute of Zoology, BTO, RSPB and representatives of the bird care industry amongst others, plays a vital role in this process. The Institute of Zoology has been coordinating a project to monitor and research garden bird health, including study of the infectious diseases that cause mortality in British garden birds. This research has largely been based on extensive surveillance data provided by the BTO and gathered on a continuous basis by around a thousand of its Garden BirdWatch participants, along with reports from members of the public reported to the RSPB Wildlife Enquiries Unit. Other speakers also highlighted the invaluable input of data from members of the public monitoring their feeding stations and garden nests. “With garden bird feeding now so popular, this field of scientific investigation is probably unique in successfully involving crucial input from very large numbers of the public.” said UFAW’s Chief Executive and Scientific Director, James Kirkwood.

If you would like further information about UFAW’s Garden Bird Health Initiative, or to contribute towards the ongoing research, visit www.ufaw.org.uk or contact UFAW on 01582 831818, email ufaw@ufaw.org.uk.

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SCIENCE IN THE SERVICE OF ANIMAL WELFARE

Chief Executive and Scientific Director: James K Kirkwood BVSc PhD CBiol FIBiol MRCVS

Secretary: Donald C Davidson

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Note to Editors:

The Universities Federation for Animal Welfare (UFAW) is an internationally recognised, independent scientific and educational animal welfare charity. It works to improve knowledge and understanding of animals' needs in order to achieve high standards of welfare for farm, companion, research, captive wild animals and those with which we interact in the wild.

UFAW improves animal welfare worldwide through its programme of awards, grants and scholarships; by educational initiatives, especially at university and college level; by providing information in books, videos, reports and in its scientific journal *Animal Welfare*; by providing expert advice to governments and others, including for legislation and 'best practice' guidelines and codes; and by working with animal keepers, scientists, vets, lawyers and all those who care about animals.

This work relies on the support of members, subscribers and donors.

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