

From: The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes Official Website: [www.barronprize.org](http://www.barronprize.org)

## ***Olivia Bouler: At 12, A Pioneer in Environmental Action***

NYMetroParents by Kaitlin Ahern  
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Olivia Bouler of Long Island was awarded the 2011 Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes for her work with the National Audubon Society to protect and restore the Gulf Coast.



When she heard of the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico last April, 11-year-old Olivia Bouler of Islip, NY was heartbroken. An avid birder who had spent summers exploring the Gulf Coast while visiting her grandparents, Bouler immediately sat down and wrote a letter to the National Audubon Society asking how she could help. The Audubon Society enlisted Bouler's artistic talent, and she has since created and donated 500 original drawings of birds and thousands of limited edition prints, which have raised more than \$200,000 for the Audubon Society and other groups working on the BP oil spill recovery efforts.

For her innovative and inspiring work, Bouler was awarded The Gloria Barron Prize for Young Heroes in September. The annual prize, created a decade ago by children's author T. A. Barron in memory of his mother, honors 25 outstanding young people from across the U.S. who have carried out a significant project to help others and/or the environment. Winners each receive \$2,500 to be applied to their service project or higher education.

Bouler, now 12, has more than 30,000 fans on her Facebook page, *Save the Gulf: Olivia's Bird Illustrations*. She has lobbied on Capitol Hill to support clean energy legislation and recently published a book, *Olivia's Birds: Saving the Gulf*, a collection of bird watercolors and tips on how to live a green and animal-friendly lifestyle (part of the proceeds benefit the Audubon Society). Bouler has been honored with several other youth awards but says she was thrilled to win the Barron Prize: "I feel like a member of the bird nerd family of heroes."

As for her future plans, Bouler hopes to study ornithology at Cornell University. "If I can spend my life helping birds, that would be a dream come true," Bouler says. She also hopes to inspire other young people to make a difference. "From cancer to caterpillars, everyone can make a difference, no matter what talents, no matter what age. In some ways, it's easier as a kid—you believe anything is possible."

More information is available at [www.barronprize.org](http://www.barronprize.org).