

Highlands Center Invites You to Discover *Why Birds Matter*
*Celebrate International Migratory Bird Day and Meet Some Magnificent Birds of
Prey at Raptor Rendezvous,*
Saturday, May 10, 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM

PRESCOTT, AZ – April 23, 2014 – The Highlands Center for Natural History (HCNH) in partnership with the Prescott National Forest invites you to celebrate International Migratory Bird Day 2014, by sharing the many ways in which birds matter to the earth, to ecosystems, and to us. “*Why Birds Matter* is the theme for this year’s International Migratory Bird Day Celebration at the Highlands Center. While most of us see birds every day, we may not realize the vital role they are playing in our lives or world. From pollinating our gardens, to cleaning our natural environment, to inspiring beautiful art, birds are simply making a difference for each of us,” stated Noel Fletcher, Prescott National Forest Wildlife Biologist, who will be making the opening presentation.

Free Bird Walks 8:00 – 11:00 AM

The day begins at 8:00 AM with a free Audubon Bird Walk, led by Audubon naturalists. From 9:30 to 11:00 AM, participants are offered a choice of a free Family Bird Walk, led by Eric Moore of Jay’s Bird Barn (who will be teaching children and adults how to use their binoculars and basic birding techniques), or a Migratory Bird Count, led by Sue Arnold, an HCNH Naturalist. The walks are designed for all skill levels of birders and binoculars are recommended. Educational guides designed for children of all ages will also be available for families who would like to venture out on their own. Families are also invited to pack a picnic lunch to enjoy under the pines after their walk.

Raptor Rendezvous 12:00 – 3:00 PM

Noel Fletcher begins by presenting the spirit of Migratory Bird Day. “Not everyone is aware of the diversity of birds around the world, the amazing migrations some take, and the phenomenal range of behaviors, plumages, and songs they exhibit. International Migratory Bird Day 2014 shares the many ways in which birds matter to us all,” Fletcher added.

Then the day will close with Scottsdale-based Liberty Wildlife’s Raptor Rendezvous presentation. This wildlife rehabilitation, conservation, and education foundation will bring an array of raptors, such as a Bald Eagle, Golden Eagle, Peregrine Falcon and Great Horned Owl to the Highlands Center amphitheater to connect with and educate spectators about these amazing birds. The whole family is invited for a rare opportunity to be introduced to some of Arizona’s most magnificent birds of prey. Admission to this part of the program is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children under 13. “It is such an extraordinary opportunity to see a bird of prey up close, as you are rarely offered this vantage point in the wild,” explains Brandi Lee Cooper, the Community Education Specialist for the Highlands Center. “We had such great public interest the first two times Liberty Wildlife brought these amazing raptors, we really wanted families to have a chance at this educational experience again.”

Liberty Wildlife rehabilitates hundreds of native animals each year and over half of the animals they take in are able to be released back into the wild. Jan Miller an animal expert from Liberty Wildlife explains, “The animals in our care are permanently impaired or non-releasable, they are unable to survive any longer in the wild and have found new roles as education ambassadors.”

Jay’s Bird Barn, The Audubon Society, Prescott National Forest, and the Highlands Center will provide information and educational games for the kids. This afternoon of learning and exploration is sure to captivate all ages.

About The Highlands Center for Natural History

Formed in 1996, The Highlands Center for Natural History is a non-profit organization developed to foster an appreciation for and knowledge of the natural wonders of the Central Arizona Highlands. Operating on an 80-acre campus near Lynx Lake through a Special Use Permit with Prescott National Forest, The Highlands Center is a regional hub for lifelong learning, designed to invite discovery of the wonder of nature through on and offsite programs, supported by contributions from individuals, corporations, foundations and community partners. Visit www.highlandscenter.org

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