Birders’ alert: Annual Winter Eagle Festival coming

Bird lovers in the area will again be on the lookout for the magnificent South Jersey eagle and some of his “raptor” friends such as the hawk, owl, and falcon that populate the South Jersey woodlands—all at the Cumberland County Winter Eagle Festival on Saturday, Feb. 8, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Sub-titled “Celebrating Raptors of South Jersey,” the Festival is based at the Mauricetown Fire Hall on Noble Street where participants register and then plan their itinerary. Activities may be varied with lectures at the fire hall and guided walks at five different sites, available throughout the day.

New this year are programs and activities at the Bayshore Center at Bivalve. Bayshore Educational Coordinator Steve Gates said activities will include a migration game and craft workshops such as building bird houses, suet holders and bird feeders, from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on a walk-up basis.

The Center also will offer an education station on understanding the DDT crisis and how it affects eagles and ospreys. Guided birding walks will be held hourly from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. “for those interested in exploring the marshes across the street,” he added.

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Guided walks and lectures highlight Eagle Festival

(Continued from page one)

Other Festival activities are:
• Sunrise Walk at Turkey Point, 7 a.m., led by Karen Johnson;
• Tat Starr Trail Walk, 10 a.m., Brian Johnson;
• Commercial Township Wetland Restoration Walk, 12 noon, Nature Conservancy;
• Bald Eagle Trail Walk, 1:30 p.m., Steve Eisenhauer;
• Owl Watch at Turkey Point, 5 p.m., Mike Crewe.

A map and detailed directions to each site is available at registration.

The speaker schedule includes the following:

10 a.m. - Eagle Adventures in the Garden State and Beyond, Kathy Clark, Endangered & Non-game Species Program, NJ Division of Fish and Wildlife

11 a.m. - About Barred Owls, Rob Bierregaard, Visiting Research Professor, UNC Charlotte

1 p.m. - Breaking into Birding, Pete Dunne, Author and Director of Cape May Bird Observatory, NJ Audubon Society

2 p.m. - 25+ Years of Avian Surveys on the Maurice River, Clay Sutton, Author, Tour Leader and Field Biologist

3 p.m. - The Raptors of Southern New Jersey: An ID Forum With the Experts, Kevin T. Karlson, Wildlife Photographer, Author and Tour Leader...along with Pete, Clay, and veteran Cape May Hawkwatch Counter, Tom Reed.

All presentations will be at the Mauricetown Fire Hall. Admission for the day is $10 for adults and $5 for children 12 and under.

Arts and History grant awards announced

The Cumberland County Cultural & Heritage Commission is pleased to announce the arts and history re-grant awards for 2014.

Thirty-one recipients from around the county received awards ranging from $500 to $11,000 to support dance and ballet, heritage events, sculptural exhibits, on-going gallery programming, ethnic festivals, historic preservation workshops, theater performances, and many more cultural activities.

Funded by grants from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts and the New Jersey Historical Commission, the Commission and Board of Chosen Freeholders were able to re-grant $95,000 in arts funding and $12,000 in history awards.

To learn more about the grant opportunities available from the Commission, visit the “Grant Opportunities” page on the Commission’s website at www.ccculturalheritage.org. Grant funding from the State Council on the Arts and the Historical Commission is provided through the State’s Hotel and Motel Occupancy Tax.

When you enjoy some of the many cultural or history events and sites throughout the county, take the opportunity to thank your state legislative representatives for providing the grant funds to make them possible.