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### **Center for Birds of Prey Opens for Public Tours Early June**

**Charleston, S.C.** – After establishing a comprehensive program of medical care, educational outreach and conservation research focused on birds, the Center for Birds of Prey, part of the Avian Conservation Center located just north of Charleston, will soon open for public tours. Visitors will have the chance to see live birds of prey in a natural setting, watch regularly scheduled flight demonstrations and learn more about the role these birds play in our environment.

Beginning June 5, the center will be open Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays between the hours of 10 a.m. and 5 p.m. Guided walking tours will be offered at 10:30 a.m. and 2:00 p.m., with flight demonstrations at 11:30 a.m. and 3:00 p.m. Staff members and volunteers will be available to answer questions for visitors who wish to explore the public portions of the facility on their own. Admission is \$12 for adults and \$10 for youth ages six through 18. Children under age six are admitted free, but must be accompanied by an adult. Tickets are available at the Center for Birds of Prey, 4872 Seewee Road in Awendaw, and online at [www.thecenterforbirdsofprey.org](http://www.thecenterforbirdsofprey.org). They may also be purchased at the Charleston Visitor Center, located at 375 Meeting Street in downtown Charleston.

“This is an exciting time for us,” noted Jim Elliott, executive director of the Avian Conservation Center, the umbrella organization for the Center for Birds of Prey and the Avian Medical and Oiled Bird Treatment Facility located in Awendaw. “We learn so much when we see and experience these beautiful birds up close. Now we’ll be able to share this opportunity with the public, right here on our new campus.”

Educators at the center will lead visitors in an exploration of some of the many birds of prey species on display. Through displays and interaction with the staff, visitors will learn about the birds’ natural history and the conservation challenges facing individual species. During flight demonstrations, visitors will witness bald eagles, falcons, owls and other birds of prey display their stunning flight characteristics and adaptations.

Since its founding, the center has expanded steadily in size and scope and now operates as the comprehensive Avian Conservation Center. Display aviaries, two flight demonstration fields and a planned education, science and conservation building offer the public a chance to better understand avian science and environmental conservation.

Located on a 152-acre campus just twenty minutes from Charleston, and adjacent to the Cape Romain Wildlife Refuge and Francis Marion National Forest, the Avian Conservation Center combines medical care, environmental education and scientific

research. A newly constructed \$1.8 million, state-of-the-art Avian Medical and Oiled Bird Treatment Facility is the only one of its kind on the East Coast. This 7,000 square foot facility is designed to provide the highest quality medical care available for injured or orphaned birds of prey and other birds. It is also equipped to provide the most efficient response possible in the event of an oil spill affecting native bird populations and their fragile breeding habitats along the Southeastern coastline.

Under the umbrella of the Avian Conservation Center, the Center for Birds of Prey and the Avian Medical and Oiled Bird Treatment Facility near Charleston, S.C., identify and address vital environmental issues through avian medicine, educational outreach and conservation initiatives. Recognizing that birds of prey provide important insight into a growing number of environmental issues, the organization combines medical care, environmental education and scientific research, and has treated thousands of injured birds since its founding in 1991. With its June 2008 opening, the center now provides visitors a rare opportunity to experience live birds of prey in a natural setting. For more information, visit [www.thecenterforbirdsofprey.org](http://www.thecenterforbirdsofprey.org).

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***Editors' Note:*** A date has been set for the media to tour and preview what the public will see on the tours. Hours will be Tuesday, May 13, 11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., with a brief guided tour at 11:30 and a flight demonstration at 12:30. Please call Allison Leggett at (843) 881-5804 or email [aleggett@eboineauandco.com](mailto:aleggett@eboineauandco.com) if you plan to attend.