



## CATALINA ISLAND CONSERVANCY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 27, 2015

Contact: Laura Mecoy  
310.546.5860  
[laura@lauramecoy.com](mailto:laura@lauramecoy.com)

### **Catalina Island Conservancy Celebrates the Banding of the 100<sup>th</sup> Bald Eagle** *Chick Enters into History as Potent Symbol of Restoration Partnerships*

AVALON – The Catalina Island Conservancy on Wednesday joined with the National Park Service, the Institute for Wildlife Studies (IWS) and many other partners and supporters of the Channel Island’s Bald Eagle Restoration Program in celebrating the banding of what is expected to be the 100<sup>th</sup> bald eagle to fledge on the Channel Islands since the now-banned pesticide, DDT, caused the birds of prey to disappear from the islands more than 50 years ago.

Peter Sharpe, who leads the Bald Eagle Restoration Program on Catalina Island, will be putting a marker on a chick in a nest on the west end of Santa Catalina Island. This chick is expected to be the 100<sup>th</sup> bald eagle to naturally hatch and fledge on the Channel Islands. Viewers can watch the banding live at 10 a.m. Thursday on the [West End Bald Eagle Webcam](#).

“This is an important milestone in a very successful recovery program that returned breeding populations of the Bald Eagles to Catalina and the other Channel Islands after decades where this keystone predator was missing from the island ecosystems,” said John Mack, Catalina Island Conservancy chief conservation and education officer. “The Conservancy has supported the Bald Eagle Restoration Program’s lead agency on Catalina, IWS, and we share a common purpose of restoring the raptors’ population and the critical habitat needed to support the eagles and the many other rare and endemic species on Catalina.”

The IWS reintroduced the eagles to Catalina after DDT poisoning had decimated the raptors. The pesticide was outlawed in 1972 but continued to be in the environment. It caused the eagles to lay eggs with weak shells that cracked under the adults’ weight during incubation. The restoration started on Catalina, where some of the earliest protocols were developed.

Initially, biologists removed the eagles’ eggs from the nests, incubated them elsewhere and then returned the chicks to the nests. As the DDT in environment abated, the eagles were able to incubate their own eggs.

The first bald eagle to hatch unaided by humans in more than 50 years on the Channel Islands occurred in March 2006 on Santa Cruz Island. Since then, bald eagle recovery has been steady. Today, there are about 50 bald eagles living on the Channel Islands as a result of multi-agency restoration actions including intensive efforts on the northern Channel Islands from 2002 to 2006 during which 61 eagles were released.

The first chick to hatch this season was at the Malva Real nest on Santa Cruz Island. It set a record during the last week of February for the earliest known hatching on the islands. Another island record was set this year with the oldest confirmed breeding Bald Eagle female, K-17 at Twin Rocks on Catalina Island. She is 30 years old and has been breeding at this site for 18 years. She is with her second mate.

### **About the Conservancy**

Formed in 1972, the Catalina Island Conservancy is one of California's oldest land trusts. Its mission is to be a responsible steward of its lands through a balance of conservation, education and recreation. Through its ongoing efforts, the Conservancy protects the magnificent natural and cultural heritage of Santa Catalina Island, stewarding approximately 42,000 acres of land and more than 60 miles of rugged shoreline. It provides an airport and 50 miles of biking and nearly 150 miles of hiking opportunities within its road and trail system. The Conservancy conducts educational outreach through two nature centers, its Wrigley Memorial & Botanic Garden and guided experiences in the Island's rugged interior. Twenty miles from the mainland, the Island is a treasure trove of historical and archaeological sites. It also contains numerous rare and endangered animals and plants. The Island is home to 60 species – and counting – that are found only on Catalina. For additional information, please visit [www.catalinaconservancy.org](http://www.catalinaconservancy.org).

### **Partners in Restoration**

Montrose Settlements Restoration Program is overseen by representatives from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California State Lands Commission, and California Department of Parks and Recreation. For further information, please visit: [montroserestoration.noaa.gov](http://montroserestoration.noaa.gov)

IWS, a non-profit organization dedicated to the conservation of wildlife species, is involved in conservation projects around the world. For more information, please visit: [iws.org](http://iws.org)

Land owners that support restoration efforts include the National Park Service (NPS) as the manager on five of the eight California Channel Islands, The Nature Conservancy, which jointly owns and manages Santa Cruz Island with the NPS, and the U.S. Navy on San Clemente Island.