

Born 2B Wild ~ Benefit for Liberty Wildlife

The Born 2B Wild benefit for the Liberty Wildlife Foundation took place on Saturday March 24, 2012. This facility has saved over 67,000 animals since 1981.

Sign-in was at Connolly's, located at 2605 W Carefree Hwy. in Phoenix. There were 296 riders.

The Ride-in Bike Show at American Legion Post 58 in Fountain Hills was among the stops for this fundraiser. Liberty Wildlife had an impressive & fascinating collection of birds on display, and their handlers were interesting to speak with. For one reason or another, these birds aren't able to be released into the wild; so they are now ambassadors of the Liberty Wildlife Educational Program.

We saw an American Kestrel [1], which is the smallest of the falcon family, a 10-year old female Great Horned Owl [2], a female Harris Hawk [3] named 'Salsa', and a 26-year old Turkey Vulture [4] named 'Bailey'. There was a Red Tail Hawk [5] named 'Duncan', estimated at 9 years old. He was found in Duncan AZ with a broken wing. The damage was such

that he could not be re-introduced into the wild. There was also a young Bald Eagle [6] named 'Sonora'. We learned that it takes 15 weeks for them to grow from egg to full size, but their distinctive white head & tail feathers do not develop until their 5th year.

Some of these creatures are victims of good intentions. If an egg 'rescued' from an 'abandoned' nest hatches and first imprints on people rather than its fellow birds, it can be very difficult to acclimate it & return it to the wild. Others are injured by accident or traps; and the degree of those injuries prevents a full recovery and re-introduction to its home habitat. Ideally, if you are out somewhere and see an injured bird or other animal, call the Liberty Wildlife rescue hotline at 480-998-5550 before attempting a rescue on your own.

Last stop on this ride was at Chester's Harley-Davidson, 922 S Country Club in Mesa, for their Backstage Biker Bash Party. Before the concert by southern rock legends Blackfoot and Molly Hatchet started, it was time to draw the winning

ticket for the 2011 Softail Deluxe raffle to benefit Arizona's Native Wildlife. Congratulations to winner Peter Harris of Dewey, AZ.

Melissa Hughes is the driving force behind Born 2B Wild. She has now resigned from Liberty Wildlife, to follow another path. Unfortunately, the Board will not continue this fundraiser. She commented that, "It was the 5th and final year and it has been a true blessing for me to have one of my favorite charities involved with one of my passions of riding."

It was a beautiful day to ride, with no accidents in this group reported; the birds on display at the American Legion were amazing; and the concert had a great turnout. More than \$7000 was collected to benefit Liberty Wildlife from this event. All in all, it was an excellent day ~ and if this event is destined to end, it has done so on a high note.

Learn more about Liberty Wildlife from their website at

www.libertywildlife.org/

Betsy

