

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption:

‘Ding’ Darling lecture takes ‘twisted’ look at the wilds

Fort Myers native Mark Renz recently released the first of three new books featuring off-beat, ecology-based photography and prose. Based on the book, *Naturally Twisted: A Wild Look At The Wild* is the subject of Renz's two free photographic presentations on Friday, Jan. 20, at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., part of the 2017 “Ding” Darling Lecture Series at J.N. “Ding’ Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island.

Renz is founding president of the Paleontological Society of Lee County. He operates Fossil Expeditions guide service in Southwest Florida with his artist wife Marisa. The author has written many books, including *Fossilizing in Florida*, *MEGALODON: Hunting the Hunter*, *Giants in the Storm*, and *Desert Sharks*.

"Renz's gift is helping us to see Florida for the first time, as if it were conceived in the realms of fantasy, intimacy, mysticism and exhilaration," wrote *Sarasota Herald-Tribune* reporter Billy Cox in the foreword to *Naturally Twisted*. The author will sign copies of his book following both lectures. It is available for purchase in the Refuge Nature Store, proceeds from which benefit refuge education and research programs.

HighTower/Thomas & Swartz Wealth Management sponsors the free 12-lecture series with support from the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). The season’s complete schedule is listed below. Book signings follow all except the one starred (*) lecture.

Seating for the lectures in the “Ding” Darling Visitor & Education Center Auditorium is limited and available on a first-come basis. Arrive one hour early to assure a place to sit. Early arrivals can save one seat each and then may explore the Visitor & Education Center or

Indigo Trail before the lecture starts. Saved seats must be filled 15 minutes before lecture time.

As usual, Wildlife Drive closes on Friday, but visitors are welcome to enjoy the center, Indigo Trail, and recreational opportunities at Tarpon Bay Explorers, the refuge's official recreation concession located at its Tarpon Bay Recreation Area.

Note: Opinions expressed in guest lectures do not necessarily reflect the views of refuge and DDWS management, staff, and board of directors.

For more information, call 239-472-1100 ext. 241 or log on to dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/lecture-and-film-series.

Jan. 20 – Author-photographer Mark Renz, *Naturally Twisted: A Look at the Wild*

Jan. 27 – Photographer Clyde Butcher, *Big Cypress Swamp: The Western Everglades*

Feb. 3 – Author Dr. James McClintock, *A Naturalist Goes Fishing: Casting in Fragile Waters from the Gulf of Mexico to New Zealand's South Island*

Feb. 10 - NO LECTURE

Feb. 17 – Author Dr. John Marzluff, *Welcome to Suburdia: Sharing Our Neighborhoods with Wrens, Robins, Woodpeckers, and Other Wildlife*

Feb. 24 – Author Will Harlan, *Untamed: The Biography of Carol Ruckdeschel*

March 3 – Author Dr. Laurel Neme, *Animal Investigators: How the World's First Forensic Lab Is Solving Crimes & Saving Endangered Species*

*March 10 – Researchers Dr. Jennifer McCabe & Dr. Brian Olsen, “Migratory Birds in a Climate Changing World”

March 17 – Author-artist Julie Zickefoose, *Baby Birds: An Artist Looks into the Nest*

March 24 – Author Denege Patterson, *A Tour of the Islands of Pine Island Sound: A Geological, Archaeological, and Historical Perspective*

March 31 – Author Will Stolzenburg, *Heart of a Lion: A Lone Cat's Walk Across America*

April 7 – Photographer-sound recordist Gerrit Vyn, *The Living Bird: 100 Years of Listening to Nature*

April 14 – Author Charles Sobczak, *Alligators, Sharks, & Panthers: Deadly Encounters with Florida's Top Predator — Man*

*starred lecture indicates no book-signing to follow

ABOUT DDWS

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, DDWS works to support J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s mission of conservation, wildlife and habitat protection, research, and public education through charitable donations and Refuge Nature Shop proceeds.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit www.dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566, 239-472-1100 ext. 4, or dingdarlingsociety@gmail.com.

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