

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption: Author Craig A. Koppie will discuss his role in the DC Eagle Cam Project.

‘Raptor whisperer’ to share insights from eagle, osprey nests at ‘Ding’ lecture

Just confirmed, author and bald eagle savior Craig A. Koppie will appear at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island, on Friday, April 7, following the release of his latest co-authored book *Mr. President and the First Lady: The DC Eagle Cam Project*.

As part of the 2017 “Ding” Darling Lecture Series, Koppie will present two free lectures at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. about his longtime fascination with raptor nests, his work restoring decimated bald eagle populations in the late 1970s, and his part in installing the eagle cam at the United States National Arboretum in Washington, D.C., in 2015.

A wildlife biologist with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for more than 30 years, Koppie has also written, along with Teena Ruark Gorrow, the award-winning *Inside a Bald Eagle’s Nest* and, later, *Inside an Osprey’s Nest*. He has been climbing into nests since age 16 to rescue orphaned birds, relocate chicks from Canada to the U.S. as part of the National Wildlife Federation’s successful efforts to save bald eagles from extinction, and observe the tender and parenting side of our fierce national bird.

Following his presentations – newly slated because of scheduling conflicts with the previously booked Gerrit Vyn lectures -- Koppie will be signing copies of his books. They are available for purchase in the Refuge Nature Store, proceeds from which benefit wildlife, research, and education at “Ding” Darling.

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 remaining schedule is listed below.

Seating for the lectures in the “Ding” Darling Visitor & Education Center Auditorium is limited and available on a first-come basis. 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.

April 7 – Author Craig A. Koppie, *Mr. President and the First Lady: The DC Eagle Cam Project*

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

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 dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566, 239-472-1100 ext. 4, or dingdarlingsociety@gmail.com.

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