

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

Contact: Chelle Koster Walton

239-699-4754

ChelleTrav@aol.com

‘Ding’ Darling lecturer pays homage to Gulf of Mexico

The collision between civilization and nature in the Gulf of Mexico becomes a uniquely American story in the environmental epic *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea* by Jack E. Davis. On Friday, Jan. 26, the author will be presenting two free programs at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., part of the 2018 “Ding” Darling Lecture Series at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island.

The New York Times Book Review called *The Gulf* a “beautiful homage to a neglected sea.” It won the 2017 Kirkus Prize and is a semi-finalist for an Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence. The book views the gulf’s history, culture, and environmental value through the art and words of Winslow Homer, Ernest Hemingway, John MacDonal, and other artists and writers.

Before joining the University of Florida in 2003, Davis taught at the University of Alabama at Birmingham and Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Fla., specializing in U.S. environmental history. In 2002, he was a Fulbright scholar at the University of Jordan in Amman.

His *Race Against Time: Culture and Separation in Natchez Since 1930* won the Charles S. Sydnor Prize for the best book in southern history published in 2001. His next book, *An Everglades Providence: Marjory Stoneman Douglas and the American Environmental Century*, received a gold medal from the Florida Book Awards.

HighTower/Thomas & Swartz Wealth Management sponsors the 12-lecture series with support from the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). The free lectures are held twice each Friday (except on Feb. 9), at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. The season’s remaining schedule is listed below. Book signings follow all starred (*) lectures.

Seating for the lectures 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 free Visitor & Education 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. 26 - Author Jack E. Davis, *The Gulf: The Making of an American Sea*

*Feb. 2 – Author James McClintock, *Lost Antarctica: Adventures in a Disappearing Land*

Feb. 9 – NO LECTURE

Feb. 16 – Impersonator Joe Weigand, “Theodore Roosevelt Speaks out on Conservation”

*Feb. 23 – Author Stephen W. Kress, *Puffin Project: The Improbable Quest to Bring a Beloved Sea Bird Back to Egg Rock*

*March 2 – Author Larry Nielsen, *Nature's Allies: Eight Conservationists Who Changed Our World*

*March 9 – Author Kevin Karlson, *Birds of Prey: Hawks, Eagles, Falcons, and Vultures of North America*

*March 16 – Author Tom Butler, *Wildlands Philanthropy: The Great American Tradition*

*March 23 – Photographer-sound recordist Gerrit Vyn, *The Living Bird: 100 Years of Listening to Nature*

*March 30 – Artist and author Dawn and Blair Witherington, *Florida's Living Beaches: A Guide for the Curious Beachcomber*

April 6 – Mote Marine Researcher Dr. Erinn Muller, “Coral Restoration”

April 13 – Avian researcher Dr. Kenneth Meyer, “Swallow-tailed Kites: 10,000 Miles to Survival”

*starred lecture indicates 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 dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4, or dingdarlingsociety@gmail.com.

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