

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

Contact: Chelle Koster Walton
239-699-4754
ChelleTrav@aol.com

Caption (Images available upon request)

‘Ding’ Darling lecture reveals perplexing relationship between monarchs, milkweed

“This is important science about an iconic and sadly declining insect, made readable by enthusiastic, personal prose,” wrote *BBC Wildlife Magazine* about *Monarchs and Milkweed: A Migrating Butterfly, a Poisonous Plant, and Their Remarkable Story of Coevolution* by Anurag Agrawal. The author presents two special programs at J.N. ‘Ding’ Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island on Friday, Feb. 22, at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. -- part of the 2019 ‘Ding’ Darling Friday Lecture series.

"Agrawal's book is a detailed exploration of just about everything about monarchs: sex lives, dining habits, internal flight guidance and, in particular, their coevolving-but-competitive relationship with milkweed," wrote the *Washington Post*. The author, the James Perkins Endowed Chair in environmental studies at Cornell University, won the 2017 National Outdoor Book Award in Nature and Environment for *Monarchs and Milkweed*, which was also named one of Forbes.com's 10 Best Biology Books of 2017.

“The book reads like a novel at times, with Agrawal acting as a storyteller and weaving together his extensive knowledge of monarchs and milkweed, as well as the people behind various related scientific discoveries,” wrote *Ecology* journal. “His style of writing is humorous, insightful, and most importantly, accessible.”

Agrawal will sign copies of his book, available in the Refuge Nature Store, following his two lectures. Profits from Nature Store sales directly benefit refuge wildlife, education, and research.

HighTower/Thomas & Swartz Wealth Management sponsors the 11-lecture series with support from the ‘Ding’ Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). The free lectures are

held twice each Friday through April 12 at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. The season's remaining schedule is listed below. Book signings follow all starred (*) lectures.

Lectures take place in the admission-free "Ding" Darling Visitor & Education Center. Seating for the lectures is limited and available on a first-come basis. Early arrivals can save their seat and one extra with personal items and then can explore the Visitor & Education Center or Indigo Trail before the lecture starts. Saved seats must be filled 15 minutes before lecture time or they will be assigned to the next people waiting in line.

As usual, Wildlife Drive closes on Friday, but visitors are welcome to enjoy the 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.

*Feb. 22 - Author Anurag Agrawal, *Monarchs and Milkweed: A Migrating Butterfly, a Poisonous Plant, and Their Remarkable Story of Coevolution*

March 1 – TBA

March 8 – Yve Morrell, "The Big Year: A First for Women"

March 15 – Jeremy Conrad, "The Biological State of the Refuge"

March 22 – Dusty "Wildman" Crum, Robbie & Geoff Roepstorff, Mike Kirkland, "Pythons: The Hunters, the Science

March 29 – Marine scientist Lauren Blickley, "Drastic Plastic - Turning the Tide on Plastic Pollution"

April 5 – Ornithologist Dr. Jerry Lorenz, "Flamingos & Spoonbills: Pink Canaries in a Coal Mine"

*April 12 – Author Denege Patterson, "Five Islands Never Flooded: A Tour of the Islands of Pine Island Sound"

*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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