

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption (Images available upon request)

‘Ding’ Darling lecture follows a year of owls

Award-winning author and wildlife photographer Paul Bannick will present a program featuring video, sound, stories from the field, and dozens of new images from his new book: *Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls* at special presentations at J.N. “Ding’ Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island. Two free programs on Friday, Feb. 15, take place at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., part of the 2019 “Ding” Darling Friday Lecture series.

Coupling his love of the outdoors with his skill as a photographer, Bannick creates images that foster the intimacy between viewer and subject, inspiring education and conservation. *Owl: A Year* received a Gold Medal in the 2017 Independent Publisher Book Awards “Animals/Pets” category. Bannick also authored *The Owl and The Woodpecker, Encounters with North America’s Most Iconic Birds*.

His work has been featured prominently in bird guides from Audubon, Peterson, The Smithsonian, Stokes, The National Wildlife Federation, and *Birds of the World*; and has appeared in a variety of publications from *The New York Times* and *Birds and Blooms* to *American Way* and the *Seattle Times*. Bannick has appeared on NBC Nightly News, Evening Magazine, and dozens of NPR stations and programs, including *Travels with Rick Steves* and *BirdNote*.

The author-photographer will sign copies of his books, available in the Refuge Nature Store, following the 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, Bailey Tract, 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. 15 - Author Paul Bannick, *Owl: A Year in the Lives of North American Owls*,

*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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