

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

Contact: Chelle Koster Walton

239-699-4754

ChelleTrav@aol.com

Caption (Images available upon request)

‘Ding’ Darling lecture aims to turn tide on plastic pollution

“Five trillion plastic pieces are currently floating in the ocean,” says marine scientist Lauren Blickely. “Scientists estimate that plastics will outweigh fish in the next 30 years.” The Hawaii-based researcher presents two "Drastic Plastic - Turning the Tide on Plastic Pollution" programs at J.N. ‘Ding’ Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island on Friday, March 29, at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. -- part of the 2019 “Ding” Darling Friday Lecture series.

“Recent research indicates that plastic is present in bottled water, sea salt, and even beer!” says Blickely. “Though the negative environmental impacts of plastic have been studied since the 1980s, the global consumption of plastic goods continues to increase each year.”

Blickely’s lecture explores the impact of plastic on our lives and actionable steps we can take to decrease our personal plastic footprints. She combines science with advocacy, which helped lead the passage of local policies to outlaw plastic bags and Styrofoam take-out containers on Maui. Her current research is aimed at evaluating the effectiveness of single-use plastic policies such as bans against plastic bags and straws.

Published in Marine Pollution Bulletin, Blickely has led to a better understanding of environmental factors that influence plastic pollution on Maui coastlines. She is a member of the Hawaii Marine Debris Action Plan committee and chaired sessions at the sixth International Marine Debris Conference.

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.

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 people waiting next 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.

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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