

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

Contact: Chelle Koster Walton

239-699-4754

[ChelleTrav@aol.com](mailto:ChelleTrav@aol.com)

Caption: Images available upon request

### **‘Ding’ Darling lecture series takes flight with birds of Alaska**

Author of 12 children’s and three adult nature books and contributor to *Arctic Wings: Birds of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge*, Debbie S. Miller will kick off the 2019 “Ding” Darling Friday Lecture series on Jan. 25 with two special presentations of “Birds of Alaska -- from the Arctic to Prince William Sound” at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. at the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island.

Miller’s latest book, *A Wild Promise: Prince Island Sound*, explores a priceless natural gem: south central Alaska’s Nellie Juan-College Fiord Wilderness Study Area. This wild expanse of more than two million acres, home to a broad array of wildlife that thrives in and around the nutrient-rich sound, has remained static as a designated wilderness study area for more than three decades.

A lover of wild places, Miller has explored and written about Alaska’s wilderness and wildlife for more than four decades. She is also the author of *Midnight Wilderness: Journeys in Alaska’s Arctic National Wildlife Refuge* and *On Arctic Ground: Tracking Time through Alaska’s National Petroleum Reserve*.

“I will try to connect people to some of Alaska’s birds, such as the rufous hummingbird, that is on record migrating from Prince William Sound to Tallahassee,” said Miller. “What a flight for a little fluff of life that weighs less than a penny.”

The author will sign copies of her 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](http://dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/lecture-and-film-series).

\*Jan. 25 – Author Debbie S. Miller, “Birds of Alaska – from the Arctic to Prince William Sound”

\*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 – Author Warner Shedd, *Owls Aren't Wise and Bats Aren't Blind: A Naturalist Debunks Our Favorite Fallacies about Wildlife*

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](http://dingdarlingsociety.org) or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4, or [dingdarlingsociety@gmail.com](mailto:dingdarlingsociety@gmail.com).

###