

## PRESS RELEASE

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*Captions:*

- 1: First Place: Kent Jager's "White-eyed Vireo"
- 2: Martha Huard's "Flight"
- 3: Larry Brophy's "Keep Your Distance"

PHOTOJUDGES: Contest judges pore over 191 entries: photographer David Meardon, DDWS past president Doris Hardy, and supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland.

*Note to Editors: Please contact me if you wish to receive images of any Honorable Mention winners.*

### **DDWS announces 'Ding' Day photo contest winners**

On Oct. 20, 2019, "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) announced the winners of its annual "Ding" Darling Day Amateur Nature Photography Contest at a special presentation in the Refuge Visitor & Education Center, part of the "Ding" Day celebration on Sanibel Island.

Earlier, on Oct. 8, judges had selected three winners and 11 honorable mentions out of 191 entries from 20 states and Switzerland – one of the highest number of entries in the contest's 27 years. All photograph entries were shot at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge complex.

First place went to Kent Jager of Sanibel, Fla., for his white-eyed vireo portrait. Contest judge and professional photographer David Meardon remarked on the bird's rare appearances at the refuge and the photographer's exacting technique.

"The lighting is even, the bird is sharp and separated well from the soft green background," he said. "And the bird is expressive."

Martha Huard from Bokeelia, Fla., took second place with a photo of a yellow-crowned night heron titled "Flight."

“I like the simplicity of the pattern,” said DDWS past president Doris Hardy, an avid birder and refuge volunteer who also judged the contest. “I like the colors, and I think it will reproduce quite well. And I like this bird; I see it a lot when we are out removing monofilament from the refuge.”

In third place was Larry Brophy from Fort Myers, Fla., with an American alligator shot titled “Keep Your Distance.”

“We usually see a lot of birds in the contest, but the alligator is also an iconic refuge animal,” said supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland, the third judge. “Reptiles are so often misrepresented; we need to give them some love.”

“We always choose three judges for the contest,” said Terry Baldwin, a DDWS emeritus board member who coordinates the contest along with DDWS development officer Sierra Hoisington. “They include a refuge staff member, a professional photographer, and a member of the Sanibel community.”

The three winners received cash awards from DDWS at the presentation on Sunday -- \$300 for first place, \$225 for second, and \$175 for third. Each honorable mention winner, listed below, received a \$25 award, which reflects a refund of the contest entry fee.

The winning photographs and honorable mention award entries will be on display in the Refuge Education Center throughout the year.

To view the other top-ranking entries, visit [dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/photo-contests](http://dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/photo-contests). That page also contains information for entering the Refuge’s 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration photo contest in 2020. The deadline for submissions will be Sept. 15, 2020.

#### HONORABLE MENTIONS (in alphabetical order):

Virginia Bayne, Fort Myers, Fla. -- "Stance of the Yellow-Crowned Night Heron"

Frank Brinker, Switzerland – “Refreshing Bath”

Thomas Brott, Cape Coral, Fla. – “Reddish Preening”

Bill Fischer, Sanibel, Fla. – “Mangrove Cuckoo Flying”

Chris Gutierrez, Holbrook, N.Y. – “Shells on Shells”

Haoyu Li, Lake Placid, Fla. – “Bullying”

Karen Lund, Fort Myers, Fla. – “Grab and Catch”

David Mintz, Lehigh Acres, Fla. – “Breakfast”

Liz Noffsinger, Fort Myers, Fla. – “Waiting for Food”  
Sharon Peace, Center, Tex. – “Mr. Roseate”  
Marletta Short, Sanibel, Fla. – “Learning to Fly”

“Ding” Darling Days 2019 sponsors included: **ROSEATE SPOONBILL SPONSORS:** Doc’s Ford Sanibel Rum Bar & Grille; **GREAT EGRET SPONSORS:** Mitchell’s Sand Castles; **GREAT BLUE HERON SPONSORS:** Bailey’s General Store, Mike & Terry Baldwin, Bank of the Islands, Casa Ybel Resort, The Cedar Chest Fine Jewelry, Island Sun/River Weekly, Just Water, Matzaluna The Italian Kitchen, Rotary Club of Sanibel-Captiva, Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, Sanibel-Captiva Kiwanis Club, Sanibel Moorings, Feather Jim & Patty Sprinkle, Sunny Day Guide; **REDDISH EGRET SPONSORS:** Sarah Ashton - Realtor, RE/MAX of the Islands, The Gresham Family, Island Inn, Jensen’s on the Gulf and Marina & Cottages, Tiffani Kaliko and John Silvia, Dick & Emily Muench, Palm Printing, Stewart & Sons Insurance; **SNOWY EGRET SPONSORS:** Ambu Yoga, Big Red Q Quickprint, John Brennan, Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership, Colony Inn, Kevin & Diane Husk, Island Therapy Center, Panther Printing, Santiva Chronicle, George & Wendy Schnapp, Winston & Gretchen Spurgeon, Nancy Tome, WTLQ, 97.7 Latino and Maxima 97.3 & 95.7.

#### 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 profits.

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).

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