

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption:

Book cover art attached

‘Ding’ Darling lecture series kicks off with blue jay redemption tale

Popular bird author-illustrator Julie Zickefoose kicks off the 16th annual “Ding” Darling Friday Lecture Series with her story about an orphaned blue jay named Jemima. On Jan. 17, she will deliver two free lectures about her latest book, *Saving Jemima: Life and Love With a Hard-luck Jay* at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island.

Zickefoose spent a year healing, raising, and studying the foundling before she released it. She began writing and illustrating her book immediately upon adopting the bird, which opened the door to the world of jays, says the author.

“More than a wildlife rehab story, it’s the story of life, love, and dealing with great loss; of finding grace and redemption in bonding with a wild bird,” said Zickefoose, contributing editor to *Bird Watcher’s Digest*. Other works by the author include *Natural Gardening for Birds*, *Letters from Eden*, *The Bluebird Effect*, and *Baby Birds: An Artist Looks Into the Nest*.

HighTower/Thomas & Swartz Wealth Management and Sanibel Carts co-sponsor the free 12-lecture series with support from the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). The free lectures take place every Friday at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. in the admission-free “Ding” Darling Visitor & Education Center Auditorium.

Note the lecture series seating policy: Seating 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 risk being reassigned. This year, DDWS will be filming most lectures and broadcasting them on Facebook Live at www.facebook.com/dingdarling.

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.

The season's complete schedule is listed below. Book signings follow all starred (*) lectures. For more information, call 239-472-1100 ext. 241 or log on to dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/lecture-and-film-series.

*Jan. 17 – Author Julie Zickefoose, *Saving Jemima: Life & Love with a Hard-Luck Jay*

*Jan. 24 – Nature Photographer Clyde Butcher, *America's Everglades: Through the Lens of Clyde Butcher*

*Jan. 31 – Author & Honey Sommelier C. Marina Marchese, *Honeybee: Lessons from an Accidental Beekeeper*

Feb. 7 – Zoo Miami Ambassador Ron Magill, “From Butterflies to Lions: A Walk on the Wild Side”

*Feb. 14 – Author Cynthia Barnett, *Rain: A Natural and Cultural History*

*Feb. 21 - Author Jeff Klinkenberg, *Alligator in B Flat: Improbable Tales from the Files of Real Florida*

*Feb 28 – Author Craig Pittman, *Cat Tale: The Wild, Weird Battle to Save the Endangered Florida Panther*

*March 6 – Author & Photographer Paul Bannick, *The Owl and the Woodpecker: Encounters with North America's Most Iconic Birds*

March 13 – Upcycle Designer Nancy Judd, RecycleRunway.com

*March 20 – Author Eliot Kleinberg, *Black Cloud: The Great Hurricane of 1928*

*March 27 – Author Jack Davis, “All About Eagles and Other Florida Eco-Topics”

*April 3 – Jeri Magg, *Remarkable Women of Sanibel & Captiva*

*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 profits.

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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