

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: Images available upon request

‘Ding’ Darling free film series kicks off with *Bluebird Man*

The eighth annual “Ding” Darling Wednesday Film Series kicks off its free biweekly showings on Jan. 8 with *Bluebird Man* at 1 p.m. in the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge Visitor & Education Center on Sanibel Island.

Bluebird Man focuses on the efforts of 91-year-old Alfred Larson, who has been monitoring and maintaining more than 300 nest boxes for bluebirds in Idaho for 35 years in an effort to stem the bird’s decline. He was among the first citizen scientists to take up the North American Bluebird Society call to action back in 1978 as bluebirds were facing steep declines since the 1950s.

Bluebirds rely on tree cavities to build their nests. Introduced species such as European starlings and house sparrows often outcompete bluebirds for the nesting cavities. The non-profit North American Bluebird Society launched its campaign to encourage citizens from all walks of life to put up nest boxes specifically designed for bluebirds, thereby playing an instrumental role in the bluebird’s recovery.

The 30-minute Emmy Award-nominated film follows Larson’s journey as he bands more than 27,000 bluebirds and finds the secret to longevity in the process.

“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge hosts the free film showings with sponsorship from Sanibel-Captiva Beach Resorts. Seating is limited and on a first-come basis.

Below is the full schedule of the film season’s showings. All films begin at 1 p.m. A short discussion follows each film to allow visitors to gain more from their documentary-viewing experience by listening to other people's points of view and analyzing what they just watched. For full descriptions of the films, please visit dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/lecture-and-film-series.

Jan. 8: *Bluebird Man*

Jan. 22: *Queen of the Sun: What Are the Bees Telling Us?*

Feb. 5: *Water & Power: A California Heist*

Feb. 19: *BLUE*

March 4: *Ghost Bird*

March 18: *The Swamp*

April 1: *Bird of Prey*

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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