

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Chelle Koster Walton

239-699-4754

ChelleTrav@aol.com

Caption

Mangrove cuckoo studies resume at ‘Ding’

The smallest-ever satellite transmitter is the new key to tracking the seasonal movements of the elusive mangrove cuckoo at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island.

The “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) contributed \$8,000 in funding to underwrite the research, thanks to donors Judy Samelson and Bill Schwabel. A portion also came from the annual Go Wild for “Ding” fundraiser.

The Avian Research and Conservation Institute (ARCI) of Gainesville, Fla., will be tracking three individual cuckoos tagged at the refuge, using the same technology deployed for ARCI’s ongoing reddish egret tracking study based here.

“This exciting opportunity would bring long-term, long-distance tracking technology to a bird that is too small to be tracked in virtual real time by any other method,” said Dr. Kenneth D. Meyer, ARCI executive director. Meyer will be speaking at the refuge during “Ding” Darling Days on Monday, Oct. 17, at 1 p.m. about both his reddish egret and mangrove cuckoo tracking studies.

“There is so little known about this secretive bird to help us understand management and species survival,” said DDWS president Doris Hardy. “This new study will take up where a previous one using more traditional technology left off at the refuge a couple of years ago. We are pleased to have Dr. Meyer and his competent team on task.”

Wildlife Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik agrees: "Dr. Meyer and his team at ARCI have access to the very latest technology that will finally help us get answers to those basic nesting and migration questions that

have proved as elusive as the mangrove cuckoo itself." The refuge provides housing for researchers during their refuge visits.

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 www.dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

###