

## PRESS RELEASE

Contact: Chelle Koster Walton  
239-699-4754  
[ChelleKWalton@gmail.com](mailto:ChelleKWalton@gmail.com)

### *Captions:*

First Place: Ben Vanos' "Green Heron Raising its Crest"

Second Place: Paul Brook's "Mangrove Cuckoo with iO Moth Caterpillar"

Third Place: Linda Kruleski's "Hawk with Snake"

PHOTOJUDGES: Contest coordinating intern Sierra Hoisington, refuge law enforcement officer David Moore, DDWS emeritus board member Millie Ford, professional photographer Janet Kirk, contest coordinator Terry Baldwin, and Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik.

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

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

On Oct. 21, 2017, "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) announced the winners of its annual "Ding" Darling Days Amateur Nature Photography Contest at a special Conservation Art Day presentation in the Refuge Visitor & Education Center, part of the weeklong "Ding" Darling Days celebration on Sanibel Island.

Earlier, on Sept. 17, judges had selected three winners and 10 honorable mentions out of 90 entries from 19 states and one foreign country. All photograph entries were shot at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge complex on Sanibel Island.

First place went to Ben Vanos of Traverse City, Mich., for his green heron portrait titled "Green Heron Raising its Crest." Contest judge Janet Kirk, a local professional photographer, commented: "It's not an unusual bird, but they have such personalities. I love how it's perched on that stump. And the focal point is perfect."

Paul Brooke from Ames, Iowa, took second place with his photo of a mangrove cuckoo munching a worm. Judge David Moore, a "Ding" Darling law enforcement officer, liked "the colors, the lighting, just the intimacy of the shot. Obviously it was a difficult shot to get."

In third place was Linda Kruleski from Beverly Hills, Fla., with her hawk and snake shot. “The timing was perfect!” said Millie Ford, the third judge and a DDWS emeritus board member. “If it were shot a second earlier or later, he’s not going to get that snake.”

“We always choose three judges for the contest,” said Terry Baldwin, contest coordinator. “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 Saturday -- \$200 for first place, \$150 for second, and \$100 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).

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

Frank Brinker, Oberageri, Switzerland - roseate spoonbills  
Ronald Clarke, Millburn, NJ - roseate spoonbill  
Rebecca Clemens, Sanibel, Fla. - black-crowned night-heron  
Beverly Henson, Sanibel, Fla. - black-necked stilt  
James Lotstein, Canton, Conn. - reddish egret  
Douglas McRae, Pierrepont Manor, NY - reddish egret  
Liz Noffsinger, Fort Myers, Fla. - reddish egret and white ibis  
Ellen Maas Pratt, White Bear Lake, Minn. - double-crested cormorant and sheephead  
Allen Sparks, Cordova, Tenn. - reddish egret  
Charles Woodrich, Glen Allen, Va. – green heron

“Ding” Darling Days 2017 sponsors included: **ROSEATE SPOONBILL SPONSORS:** Doc’s Ford Sanibel Rum Bar & Grille; **GREAT EGRET SPONSORS:** Blue Giraffe Island Dining, Wayne & Linda Boyd, Gardner Families, Jim & Patty Sprankle; **GREAT BLUE HERON SPONSORS:** 97.7 Latino & Juan Radio, Andrew Thompson Company, Bailey’s General Store, Mike & Terry Baldwin, Bank of the Islands, Cape Coral Kiwanis Club, Island Condo Maintenance, Island Sun, Panther Printing, Sanibel Captiva Beach Resorts, Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, Sanibel Captiva Rotary Club, Sanibel Moorings, Santiva Chronicle, Sunny Day Guide; **REDDISH EGRET SPONSORS:** Sarah Ashton & Jim Metzler, In Memory of Roger Bell, Blu Site Solutions, Casa Ybel Resort, Art & Susan Cassell, Cedar Chest Fine

Jewelry, Jerry Edelman & Maryanne Daly, Sally & Rich Ennis, Florida Weekly, Phyllis Gresham, Grounds by Green Ways, Intech Printing & Direct Mail, Island Inn, Jensen's on the Gulf and Marina & Cottages, Mitchell's Sand Castles, Muench Families & Periwinkle Park, Painting With a Twist, Sanibel-Captiva Kiwanis Club, Roberta and Realtor David Schuldenfrei, Stewart and Sons Insurance, Inc., TopBirdingTours.com; **SNOWY EGRET SPONSORS:** Ambu Yoga, Barefoot Charley's Painting Co., Big Red Q Quickprint, John Brennan, The Butterfly Estates, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP), Colony Inn, Henderson Franklin Attorneys at Law, Island Therapy Center, Marina Customer Service Training, Sanibel Art & Frame, Sanibel School Steel Drumming Band, George & Wendy Schnapp, Jim & Anne Scott, Seashells.com, Vasanta Senerat, Winston & Barbara Spurgeon, Tents 'n' Events, Chelle Koster Walton.

#### 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).

###