

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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‘Ding’ Darling lecture takes flight with swallow-tailed kites

Dr. Kenneth Meyer has twice received a Partners in Flight National Research Award for studying the conservation biology of species at risk, and also a National Wildlife Stewardship Award from the Sustainable Forestry Initiative for studies of swallow-tailed kites. On Friday, April 13, he will be presenting two free programs titled “Swallow-tailed Kites: 10,000 Miles to Survival” at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m., part of the 2018 “Ding” Darling Lecture Series at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island.

Prior to the 1900s, swallow-tailed kites nested in 21 states, but a decline from 1880 to 1940 resulted in the current scattered population mainly in six southeastern states, including Florida. Since 1996, Meyer, executive director of the Avian Research and Conservation Institute (ARCI), with his staff in Gainesville, Fla., has used satellite telemetry to describe the 10,000-mile round-trip migration of swallow-tailed kites and to identify impacts on survival and reproduction.

Meyer co-founded ARCI in 1997. He and his team have studied the behavior and ecology of 16 species of birds of conservation concern from eastern Canada to Puerto Rico. He is currently conducting satellite telemetry studies on mangrove cuckoos and reddish egrets at “Ding” Darling Refuge, funded by the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS).

HighTower/Thomas & Swartz Wealth Management sponsors the refuge’s 12-lecture series with support from DDWS. The free lectures are held twice each Friday (except on Feb. 9), at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Seating for the lectures is limited and available on a first-come basis. Early arrivals can save one seat each and then may explore the Visitor & Education Center or Indigo Trail before the lecture starts. Saved seats must be filled 15 minutes before lecture time.

As usual, Wildlife Drive closes on Friday, but visitors are welcome to enjoy the free Visitor & Education Center, Indigo Trail, 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.

For more information, call 239-472-1100 ext. 241 or log on to dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/lecture-and-film-series.

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 or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4, or dingdarlingsociety@gmail.com.

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