

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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‘Ding’ Darling lecture goes to the beach

Professional naturalists and Florida natives Blair and Dawn Witherington have authored five books on natural history topics. On Friday, March 30, the husband-wife team will be presenting two free programs 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.

The Witherington’s recently released second edition of *Florida’s Living Beaches: A Guide for the Curious Beachcomber* updates the first edition, which was widely praised by those who enjoy exploring the nature of beaches. The second edition of the comprehensive guide has even more to satisfy the curious beachcomber, including expanded content and additional accounts with more than 1,800 full-color photographs, maps, and illustrations. The expanded *Florida’s Living Beaches* now identifies and explains more than 1,400 curiosities with lavishly illustrated accounts.

Blair Witherington, a conservation programs manager for Disney’s animal programs, holds a master’s degree in biology from the University of Central Florida and a doctorate in zoology from the University of Florida. Dawn is a graphic design artist and scientific illustrator trained at the Art Institutes of Colorado and Ft. Lauderdale. Her art and design appear in natural history books, posters, exhibits, and a line of sea-themed greeting cards.

They will sign copies of their books, available in the Refuge Nature Store, following the two lectures. Proceeds from Nature Store sales directly benefit refuge wildlife, education, and research.

HighTower/Thomas & Swartz Wealth Management sponsors the 12-lecture series with support from the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). The free lectures are

held twice each Friday (except on Feb. 9), at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. The season's remaining schedule is listed below. Book signings follow all starred (*) lectures.

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.

*March 30 – Artist and author Dawn and Blair Witherington, *Florida's Living Beaches: A Guide for the Curious Beachcomber*

April 6 – Mote Marine Researcher Dr. Erinn Muller, “Coral Restoration”

April 13 – Avian researcher Dr. Kenneth Meyer, “Swallow-tailed Kites: 10,000 Miles to Survival”

*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 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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