

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption

First woman Big Year winner to present ‘Ding’ Darling lecture

In 2017, Naples resident Yve Morrell became the first woman to win the American Birding Association’s North American Big Year with a count of 817 species. The devoted birder presents two special programs at J.N. “Ding’ Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island on Friday, March 8, at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. -- part of the 2019 “Ding” Darling Friday Lecture series.

An annual, informal competition, the North American Big Year typically sees check how many contestants each year. The highest record count to date was in check with check species recorded.

From Florida to Arizona, Hawaii, and the Aleutian Islands, Morrell covered more than 127,000 miles by air and another 30,000 by car, not to mention how many she hiked. She also spent 20 days at sea to capture pelagic species, despite bouts of seasickness. She recorded her sightings on her blog thedancingbirder.com

HighTower/Thomas & Swartz Wealth Management sponsors the 11-lecture series with support from the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). The free lectures are held twice each Friday through April 12 at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. The season’s remaining schedule is listed below. Book signings follow all starred (*) lectures.

Lectures take place in the admission-free “Ding” Darling Visitor & Education Center. Seating for the lectures is limited and available on a first-come basis. Early arrivals can save their seat and one extra with personal items and then can explore the Visitor & Education Center or Indigo Trail before the lecture starts. Saved seats must be filled 15 minutes before lecture time or they will be given to the next people waiting in line.

As usual, Wildlife Drive closes on Friday, but visitors are welcome to enjoy the 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 8 – Yve Morrell, “The Big Year: A First for Women”

March 15 – Jeremy Conrad, “Sea Level Rise: Globally & Locally”

March 22 – Dusty “Wildman” Crum, Robbie & Geoff Roepstorff, Mike Kirkland, “Pythons: The Hunters, the Science

March 29 – Marine scientist Lauren Blickley, “Drastic Plastic - Turning the Tide on Plastic Pollution”

April 5 – Ornithologist Dr. Jerry Lorenz, “Flamingos & Spoonbills: Pink Canaries in a Coal Mine”

*April 12 – Author Denege Patterson, “Five Islands Never Flooded: A Tour of the Islands of Pine Island Sound”

*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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