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"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society - Friends of the Refuge

PRESS RELEASE

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Captions:

- 1: First Place: Doug Meurer's "Roseate Spoonbill & Reddish Egret"
2. Kathleen Colligan's "Tri-colored Heron with its Reflection"
- 3: Donald Howe's "Blowin' Bubbles"

Judges: Contest judges show the top three winning photos: Kevin Godsea, Karen Watson, and Susan Beittel.

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

DDWS announces 'Ding' Day photo contest winners

On Nov. 16, 2021, "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) announced the winners of its 29th annual "Ding" Darling Day Amateur Nature Photography Contest with a special presentation on its Facebook page and emails sent to participants, along with a short video showcasing the winners.

On Nov. 8, judges had selected three winners and eight honorable mentions out of 118 entries from 18 states and two countries. All photograph entries were shot at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge complex.

"As this year comes to an end, we start to reflect on what we are thankful for. For us here at 'Ding,' nature always seems to be at the top of that list," said Sierra Hoisington, DDWS development officer and contest

coordinator. “This photo contest is a reminder to all of us as to how gentle, constant, and gracious our wildlife and wild spaces are. We acknowledge that the peace and solitude we feel at the refuge is shared by many and has the power to bring us all together.”

First place went to Doug Meurer of Fort Myers, Fla., for his portrait titled “Roseate Spoonbill & Reddish Egret.” Contest judge and Refuge Manager Kevin Godsea commented: “I love the colorful and playful nature of this photograph, as well as the variety of subject matter and the action it portrays.”

In second place was Kathleen Colligan from Bokeelia, Fla., with her photograph titled “Tri-colored Heron with its Reflection.” “I particularly am drawn to the dark and light contrast in this photo, the composition, the framing of the mangrove branches, and the reflections on the water.,” said Karen Watson, a parttime Sanibel resident and interior designer.

Donald Howe from Savannah, Ga., took third place with a photo of snowy egret drinking water, titled “Blowin’ Bubbles.” “I like the contrast between the dark water and the white feathers of the snowy egret as well as the photograph’s composition,” said judge Susan Beittel, a refuge volunteer who subbed for local photojournalist Kinfay Moroti when he had to cancel that day for medical reasons.

“We always choose three judges for the contest,” said Terry Baldwin, a DDWS emeritus board member who coordinates the contest along with Hoisington. “They include a refuge staff member, a professional photographer, and a member of the Sanibel community.”

The three winners received cash awards from DDWS – \$300 for first place, \$225 for second, and \$175 for third. Each honorable mention winner, listed below, received a \$25 award, which reflects a refund of the contest entry fee. Due to three ties, only eight honorable mentions were chosen after eliminating second entries by the same photographer to break the ties.

The winning photographs and honorable mention award entries will be on display in the Refuge Visitor & Education Center throughout the year, once it reopens.

To view the other top-ranking entries, visit dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/photo-contests. That page also contains information for entering the photo contest in 2022. The deadline for submissions will be Sept. 15, 2022.



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HONORABLE MENTIONS (in alphabetical order):

Frank Brinker, Oberägeri, Switzerland – “Formation Flight”

Rebecca Clemens, Sanibel, Fla. – “A Simple Touch”

William (Bill) Fischer, Sanibel, Fla. – “Mangrove Cuckoo”

Stephen Hilger, Sanibel, Fla. – “Great Blue”

Scott Joffe, Highland Beach, Fla. – “I Better Tell Her”

Gail Markham, Fort Myers, Fla. – “Roseate Spoonbill”

Barry Nagle, South Barrington, Ill. – “White Morph Joins the Fun”

Frank Wickstrom, Bonita Springs, Fla. – “Eye to Eye”

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 profits.

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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