

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption: Richard Crossley returns as one of the refuge's most popular speakers.

Caption: Crossley co-authored *Ornithotherapy*, a book about the connection between nature and good health. Co-author Holly Merkel speaks the following week on Feb. 11.

### **'Ding' to host celebrity birder Richard Crossley for opening of lecture series**

As an internationally acclaimed birder, photographer, and prolific award-winning author of The Crossley ID Guide series, Richard Crossley is highly qualified to speak about "The Past, Present and Future of Conservation through Birding." That is the topic of his upcoming free lecture on Friday, Feb. 4, for the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge. It will take place at The Community House at 2173 Periwinkle Way on Sanibel Island starting at 10 a.m.

Born in Yorkshire, England, Crossley also lived in Japan and birded worldwide before settling down in his current home in Cape May, N.J. Sometimes called crazy (his badge of honor), wildly passionate, and driven, Crossley's focus is youth birding and connecting people to a fuller appreciation and understanding of nature and its benefits to well-being.

One of Crossley's latest books, *Ornithotherapy: For Your Mind, Body, and Soul* (co-authored with Sophie Crossley and Holly Merker – who speaks on Feb. 11) connects us all to nature with a stronger appreciation and understanding of our common ground and its many health benefits.

Crossley also co-founded the global birding initiatives Pledge to Fledge, Race4Birds, and the Cape May Young Birders Club. He served on the board of directors at Hawk Mountain Sanctuary and has contributed to most major birding publications. A highly sought-after speaker, he frequently also talks on radio shows.

The upcoming season's "Ding" Darling Lecture Series evolves with the times and persisting distance protocols by presenting at a larger off-refuge venue with seven scheduled lectures through March 25.

DDWS hosts the 18th annual lecture series, and HighTower/Thomas & Swartz Wealth Management and an anonymous donor sponsor Crossley's lecture.

The complete schedule is listed below; book signings follow all lectures.

Socially distanced seating for the free lectures is limited and available on a first-come basis. Staff will be taking temperatures and distributing a limited number of entry wristbands to attendees beginning at 9 a.m. that day. Guests must be wearing wristbands and facemasks to enter the lecture room. Early arrivals may save their seat and one other with personal items. Saved seats must be filled by 9:45.

Note: Opinions expressed in guest lectures do not necessarily reflect the views of refuge and DDWS management, staff, and board of directors.

Lectures start at 10 a.m. on Fridays at The Community House, unless otherwise indicated.

- Feb. 4 – Author Richard Crossley, “The Past, Present and Future of Conservation through Birding” (co-sponsors: Anonymous, HighTower/Thomas & Swartz Wealth Management)
- Feb. 11 – Author Holly Merker, “Ornithotherapy: How a Deeper Experience with Nature Can Enrich Your Mind, Body, and Soul” (co-sponsors: Anonymous, Joseph & Michelle Blanda)
- Thursday, Feb. 24 – Amy Urich, “The Captivating Art and Times of My Father, Ikki Matsumoto” (sponsors: Bill and Laurie Harkey)
- Time and place TBD March 4 – Author Doug Chadwick, *Four Fifths a Grizzly: A New Perspective on Nature that Just Might Save Us All* (co-sponsors: Diane Esslinger, The Jenni & Kyle Foundation)
- Time and place TBD March 11 – Author David Allen Sibley, *What It's Like to Be a Bird: From Flying to Nesting, Eating to Singing—What Birds Are Doing, and Why* (co-sponsors: Stan & Connie Grayson, HighTower/Thomas & Swartz Wealth Management, Drs. John & Wendy Kindig)
- March 18 – Author Jack Davis, *The Bald Eagle: The Improbable Journey of America's Bird* (co-sponsors: Pat Appino, Sonya Keene & John Moy, In Appreciation of the DDWS Staff Donor, In Memory of Roddy West)

- March 25 – Author Stan Tekiela, *Bird Nests: Amazingly Ingenious and Intricate*  
(Sponsors: Vortex Optics, A Fellow Minnesotan, The Jenni & Kyle Foundation)

To become a lecture sponsor call Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566. For more information about the 18th annual “Ding” Darling Lecture Series, visit [dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/lecture-and-film-series](http://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 profits.

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).

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