



SPRING 2015

Society Pages

News from Friends of the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge

ABOUT THE SOCIETY

"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society, the nonprofit Friends of the Refuge organization, supports environmental education, services, and land conservation at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge Complex. Education and conservation efforts may extend beyond the complex's borders. We partner in these efforts where possible with like-minded conservation organizations.



Owl pellet dissection: a popular and valuable student learning experience.

SUMMER CAMP WISH LIST

DDWS and the Refuge are partnering to design a first-ever kids summer day camp, but we need your help. Please see the Wish List below to help support our efforts. **All gifts are tax deductible.** For on-line giving and more information, please visit www.dingdarling.society.org/donations-text. Or contact Birgie Miller at director@dingdarlingsociety.org or *continued on page 2*



TARPON TOURNEY IV

Anglers head out at daybreak to stalk the mighty tarpon.

A 100% purse promises to make the fourth annual "Ding" Darling & Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament on May 9, 2015, the hottest competition on the water. It pays out 100% of the entry fee (\$500 per boat of up to four) as tournament awards.

The Captain's Dinner takes place the evening prior, May 8, at Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille on Fort Myers Beach. Following the competition, the Silver King for "Ding" After-Party will be open to the public with limited tickets available at \$50 for each non-fisherman, including dinner and a silent auction.

Doc Ford's—with locations on Sanibel Island, Captiva Island, and Fort Myers Beach—has again committed

to being the title sponsor for the 2015 tournament. Proceeds will benefit wildlife and conservation education at the Refuge.

"There's not another tarpon tournament like it in the area," said Marty Harrity, Doc Ford's co-owner. "In past years we've had fishermen from all over the country."

"Doc Ford's has been a faithful supporter of our efforts at 'Ding' Darling, helping immensely to bolster Refuge programs

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Once again Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille title sponsors the fourth annual tournament



Competition is strictly catch and release at the site of the catch.

TARPON TOURNEY IV

continued from page 1

and research to balance federal budget shortfalls,” said Birgie Miller, DDWS executive director. “Last year we raised \$40,000 for the Refuge as a result of sponsorships, donations, and auction proceeds. We’re so grateful to them for this huge effort in our behalf.”

For more information on the tournament and to register to compete, please visit www.dingdarlingtarpontournament.org. Anyone interested in becoming a tournament sponsor should contact Birgie at 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

THANKS TO OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS FOR THIS YEAR’S TOURNAMENT:

Title Sponsor



Presenting Sponsor



Platinum Sponsors

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Silver Sponsors

Island Sand Paper, Must Do Visitor Guides & MustDo.com, Sanibel Island Fishing Club, Vasanta Senerat, CPA, PA, Semmer Electric

SUMMER CAMP

continued from page 1

239-292-0566 about other “Wish List” items not included here. Thank you for your valuable contribution.

- Summer Day Camp Scholarships - \$50 each
- Digital Camera for Summer Campers – 60 at \$50 each
- Bike Helmets for Summer Campers – 60 at \$20
- Fishing Rods & Reels – 30 at \$30 each
- Owl Pellets – 90 at \$5 each
- Camp Graduation T-shirts – 60 at \$5 each



Clockwise from top left: Mark Banks, Wendy Kindig, Kirstin Sawicki, and Jen McSorley

Former board director and president Jim Scott has returned to serve as Board Secretary. Mark and his wife Gretchen have owned a home on Sanibel Island for 10 years. They permanently moved here from Minnesota, where he practiced internal medicine and later worked 23 years for Blue Cross and Blue Shield, 10 of those years as CEO. Born in Tennessee, Wendy grew up in Indiana, where

Welcome New Board Members

The Board of Directors recently welcomed four new members: Mark Banks, Wendy Kindig, Jen McSorley, and Kirstin Sawicki. Former board director and president Jim Scott has returned to serve as Board Secretary.

Mark and his wife Gretchen have owned a home on Sanibel Island for 10 years. They permanently moved here from Minnesota, where he practiced internal medicine and later worked 23 years for Blue Cross and Blue Shield, 10 of those years as CEO. Born in Tennessee, Wendy grew up in Indiana, where

she studied and practiced internal medicine and nephrology. She and her husband John currently split their time between Sanibel Island and Indianapolis. She also volunteers with SCCF and Hope Hospice locally.

A reservationist and property manager for Our Captiva, LLC, Kirstin and her husband Mike moved to Southwest Florida from Virginia in 2005 and settled with their two children on Captiva and Sanibel islands in 2008. She serves on the board of the Friends of the Captiva Library and volunteers at The Sanibel School.

A Real Estate agent with Pfeifer Realty Group, Jen grew up in Michigan and moved permanently to Florida in 1999. She lived in Naples and Fort Myers with her husband Aaron and two daughters before moving to Sanibel in 2005. School Advisory chairperson at The Sanibel School for five years, McSorley works on landscaping at the school and also coaches youth soccer.

New Emeritus Member

Former DDWS Board Member Susan Cassell became the 17th member of its Emeritus Board by unanimous vote at the recent DDWS annual meeting. Susan previously served on DDWS’ Board of Directors for nine years, since 2005. She was vice president for one year and then president of the board from 2007 to 2009. Most recently, she served as board secretary from 2012 through 2014.

While serving on the DDWS board, Susan was active on many committees including executive, personnel, marketing, membership, education, emeritus, and nominating committees.

“The most rewarding part of being on the board is

working with the Refuge staff and providing support for them and the Refuge,” said Susan. “What is better than helping at a wildlife refuge? I have learned a lot from working with the staff — they do an outstanding job in providing habitat for wildlife and in welcoming the public to a Refuge that is truly a national treasure.”

“To be an emeritus, a candidate has to have served on the board for at least six years and have made an outstanding contribution to DDWS,” said DDWS President Doris Hardy. “Susan REALLY fits the bill!”



Susan Cassell

STAFF NEWS

Welcome to New Interns

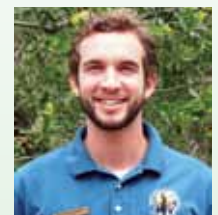
Three new interns have joined the ranks of Refuge and DDWS staff this winter for six-month work programs. “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society provides support for about a dozen interns throughout the year.

“We seriously could not operate without the help from the Society’s intern support and volunteer program,” said Toni Westland, Refuge Supervisory Ranger. “Our staff has been cut back dramatically in the past few years. If not for our intern program, we would be faced with closing the Refuge a couple of days each week.”

“This is a real opportunity to teach and train the interns with hopes that they continue their careers in helping wildlife and the environment,” said Birgie Miller, DDWS Executive Director. “It’s a win-win: The Refuge gains strength from their new, fresh, young way of looking at things.”

Madison Durley, graduate from Eckerd College in St. Petersburg, Florida, in May 2014, will be assisting DDWS staff with outreach programs and stepping in to help out the Refuge for special events and projects.

Biology interns Katie Leonard, a graduate from Southeast Missouri State University in May 2013; and Margaret Anderson, graduated from Southern Illinois University in December 2014, will assist Refuge staff with biological surveys and projects.



DDWS shared use intern Madison Durley



Biology interns Katie Leonard and Margaret Anderson

IN THE REFUGE NATURE STORE

Lecture Added To Series

Blair and Dawn Witherington will share stories from their new book, *Our Sea Turtles: A Practical Guide for the Atlantic and Gulf from Canada to Mexico*, about the mysterious lives of sea turtles. They will present two "Our Sea Turtles – Up Close and Personal" programs beginning at 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Friday, April 24, 2015, in the free "Ding" Darling Visitor & Education Center on Sanibel Island.

"Our Sea Turtles" will provide a cordial introduction to sea turtles and a deeper dive into their lives. It is a privileged, up-close, virtual encounter with sea turtles presented with unique perspectives and extraordinary images. For more information, visit www.dingdarlingsociety.org/lectures.



Sarab Adams, granddaughter of the late, great Ansel Adams, chats with attendees after her lecture in early March.

Thanks to Sanibel Captiva Trust Company for its generous sponsorship of the 2015 Lecture Series.

NEW AT THE REFUGE

Picnic Tables

To better accommodate school groups and other visitors to "Ding" Darling, the Refuge recently installed four regular and one wheel chair accessible picnic tables in the parking lot median. Funding for the tables came from the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society.



Refuge Website Gets Makeover

The Refuge's official website debuted a cleaner, easier to navigate look this winter. New features include a guide to Refuge wildlife by season with engaging photography. Give it a test drive at www.fws.gov/refuge/jn_ding_darling.

MEMORIAL AND HONOR GIFTS

December 1, 2014 – February 28, 2015

Memorial gifts and gifts made in honor of special occasions are a wonderful way to pay tribute to family and friends who are important to us. Throughout the year, the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society has received gifts in memory and in honor of loved ones. Thank you to everyone who supported the Refuge in this thoughtful and meaningful way.

We recently received gifts in MEMORY of the following:

- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| Erhart Becker | Arnold Hobbs |
| Jamie Block | Pete Ingham |
| Jane and Frank Bopp | Lea Johnston |
| Nancy Sinclair Simpson | John William Lavis |
| Broad | Francine Litofsky |
| Grace Cameron | Linda C. White Mays |
| Gretchen Clutterbuck | Dick McCabe |
| David K. Dalke | Gordon and Cecil |
| Dr. Randall Deming | McLelland |
| Mary Rose and Ernest | Grace M. Pertell |
| Doke | Steve Roberts |
| Tom Dunn | Alice R. C. Sharp |
| Milly Ellis | Jack Tucker |
| Carol Fautleroy | Nora Wells |
| Robert Giller | Richard Wilkerson |
| Katie Godwin | Buelah Woodburn |
| Arthur and Constance | Lin Wrigley and Joe |
| Goodman | McDevitt |
| John W. Hickey Jr. | Mr. and Mrs. Felix Yokel |

We received gifts in HONOR of:

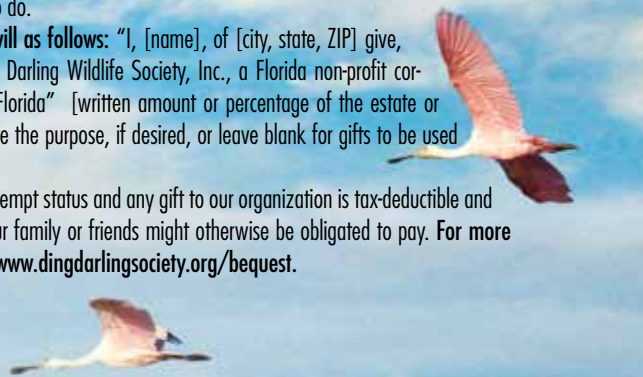
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|-------------------------|----------------------|
| Sarah Ashton | Robert G. Meeker |
| Boise and Tempie Barnes | Birgie Miller |
| Paloma and Ileana | William and Carol |
| DeLaFuente-Steeb | Redeker |
| Susan Davis Heisler | Paula Reiss |
| Doris Hardy | Chip and Nancy Roach |
| Kim Millins and Joyce | Jim Sprankle |
| Barney | Joe Stack |
| Marilyn Kloosterman | John and Martha Wolf |
| Karol Koella | John Zimmerman |
| Joan Leffel | |

Leave a Legacy and Support 'Ding' Darling in Your Estate Plans

"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society (DDWS) is proud to be mentioned in many of our departed benefactors' Last Wills and Testaments and as beneficiaries of retirement and other estate plans. It's quite simple to do.

You may name DDWS in your will as follows: "I, [name], of [city, state, ZIP] give, devise, and bequeath to the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society, Inc., a Florida non-profit corporation located on Sanibel Island, Florida" [written amount or percentage of the estate or description of property] for [designate the purpose, if desired, or leave blank for gifts to be used to address the greatest need]."

The IRS has granted DDWS tax-exempt status and any gift to our organization is tax-deductible and will help offset inheritance taxes your family or friends might otherwise be obligated to pay. For more information, visit our Web site at www.dingdarlingsociety.org/bequest.



FOLLOW AND LIKE US

DDWS is currently active on three social media platforms. Please "LIKE" us on Facebook by searching "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society. (You can also "LIKE" the Refuge by searching for its "Official" page.)

Instagram users can find us at @dingdarlingwildlifesociety. On Twitter, our handle is @DingDarlingWS.



Winter Comes in with a Flap of Wings



Just in time for Christmas, Refuge and CROW staff set free two white pelicans from Wildlife Drive. Both had recovered from red tide poisoning.

Winter Season 2014-2015 kicked off with Holiday Happy Hour Shopping, our annual Volunteers Holiday Luncheon, and a Refuge-DDWS presentation at the Sanibel & Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce Holiday Business Lunch.



...and Goes on

More than 250 Refuge supporters turned out for the event, featuring Dr. Stephen Kress, founder of Maine's Project Puffin, and other goodies from local restaurants. A Puffin Decoy carving by sculptor Jim Sprankle sold for \$100, with proceeds going to education and wildlife conservation.



In December, DDWS awarded more than \$8,000 in grants to 12 conservation education-related projects at 11 different schools in a five-county area. In the nine years that the Society has been awarding the grants, schools have received more than \$48,000.

KEN KOPPERL



Left: Refuge and Society staff and board members attended the 30th annual Everglades Coalition Conference in Key Largo in January. DDWS sponsored a luncheon on January 9 with speaker Assistant Secretary of the Army (Civil Works) Jo-Ellen Darcy. Pictured here are Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik with U.S. Secretary of Interior Sally Jewell.



DDWS Executive Director Birgie Miller introduces Don and Lillian Stokes prior to their presentation and benefit Refuge tour.



DDWS Executive Director Birgie Miller demonstrates the economic impact on island businesses at the December Chamber luncheon.



For the fifth consecutive year, celebrity birders Don and Lillian Stokes filled two trams during their annual Wildlife Drive Tram Tours. The two lead separate identification and photographer tours each year to benefit DDWS. Tarpon Bay Explorers donates the use of two trams for the annual fundraiser. To inquire about the 2016 Stokes Tram Tours, email director@dingdarlingsociety.org or call 239-292-0566.

Left: An osprey obligingly confronted two bald eagles for super photo ops during the Stokes annual tours.

Auctioneer Richard Johnson of Bailey's General Store and sculptor Jim Sprankle tell the crowd about Jim's Puffin Decoy during the live auction.

Act Like a Puffin

Third annual Trailgate Party: Dinner & Puffins in Maine, star Puffin. Guests enjoyed lobster rolls, shrimp, crab cakes, ice ridding on live and silent auctions was robust. The signature ,000. In all, the benefit raised nearly \$90,000 for Refuge



Dr. Stephen Kress talked about seabird population restoration in the rocky, piney setting of Maine.



Event sponsor Peter Bentinck-Smith, guest lecturer Dr. Kress, and auction donor Jim Sprankle

Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars, and join us! Visit www.dingdarlingsociety.org for details.

- Friday Lecture Series — Through April 10, 2015
- Winter Tours & Programs — Through April 12, 2015
- Wednesday Bi-Weekly Film Series — Through April 15, 2015
- Second Annual Upcycle! Art Fest - April 1-2, 2015
- Earth Day at the Refuge - April 18, 2015
- Fourth Annual "Ding" Darling & Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament - May 9, 2015
- "Ding" Darling Days — October 18-24, 2015



DDWS Executive Director shows some volunteer love to Mary Lou Schadt, Jim Sprankle, and Marilyn Kloosterman.

Refuge, DDWS Honor Volunteers

“Ding” Darling Refuge and “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society celebrated their annual Volunteer Awards Luncheon on February 20, 2015, at the Sanibel Community House.

“There is no way we could conduct the visitor services that we do without the volunteers,” says Ranger Jeff Combs, who oversees the Refuge’s visitor services. “They interact with the visiting public — giving directions, leading tours, delivering interpretive programs, and pointing out the wildlife and environment along the trails. We are grateful to the Wildlife Society for providing support through funding uniforms, tolls, recognition lunches, and equipment needed to conduct the volunteer program.”

Jeff reports that in fiscal year 2014, some 270 volunteers worked more than 27,574 hours at the Refuge, representing a labor savings of more than 13 staff

members and \$682,107.

“We have the best volunteer group in the country.” Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik told the roomful of volunteers. “And we are blessed to have the best friends group in the country.”

DDWS formed in 1982 specifically to support a volunteer corps after the opening of the Refuge’s first visitor center that year. More than 11,000 people visited in the first month after the center opened, overwhelming a staff unaccustomed to dealing with the inquisitive public.

“The volunteers stepped in then to fill in the gaps left by inadequate federal funding, and they continue to do so even more today,” said DDWS president and active volunteer Doris Hardy.

Below is a list of volunteers who won awards for reaching hour and year achievement levels.

YEARS AWARDS

20 years: Betsy Doonan, Carolyn Johns,

10 years: Robert Blacklow, Ed Combs, Cecy FASTER, Alan Gast, Mary Hackett, Doris Hardy, Ben Klaus, Mary Klaus, Walt McNairy, Robert Roth, John Thornton, Richard Willis



Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik and Deputy Refuge Manager Joyce Palmer congratulate Betsy Doonan and Carolyn Johns on their 20-Year Awards. Not pictured: Sherry Myatt

HOURS AWARDS

7,500 hours: Bill Rankin

5,000 hours: Dan Davis, Norm Honest

4,500 hours: Doris Hardy, Is Cloak, John Masuka

4,000 hours: Doris Hardy

2,500 hours: Jack Wettstein, Patty Wettstein

2,000 hours: Joanne Heroy-Giller, John McCabe, Jim Scott

1,500 hours: Susan Cassell, Patsy Dicken, Bob Dicken, Jean Kramer, Alan Markus, Alan Parker, Linda Parker, Anne Scott, Denny Souers

1,000 hours: Joyce Krivenko, Walt McNairy, Georgia Nef, Sally Divenere, Elaine Swank

500 hours: Karitha Charoensri, William Gibney, Ken Kopperl, Virginia Kopperl, John MacLennan, Greg Scherer, Ed Sessa, David Sharpe, Karl Werner

250 hours: Richard Boehning, Lyndon Borrer, Sue Danford, Bart Guidotti, Tracy Hanson, James Jackson, Kevin Kloesz, Ken Kopperl, Virginia Kopperl, Marcia Legru, Jane Sharpe

150 hours: Mike Baldwin, Judy Barbieri, Carolyn Bergen, Jan Cohen, Lee Ann Emerson, Marion Evans, Andrew Jacob, Barb Kennedy, Ilona Menzel, Nancy Riley, Gerri Sylliaasen

Hail To Mother Earth

Talk trash, meet Bagzilla, bike Wildlife Drive for free, and create earth-friendly crafts at this year’s Earth Day at the Refuge, Sanibel Island, on Saturday, April 18, 2015.

The Refuge will celebrate the 45th anniversary of Earth Day in partnership with Ding” Darling Wildlife Society and Tarpon Bay Explorers, who is providing free use of rental bikes. Throughout the day, meet and greet “trashy” refuge educator Bagzilla, costumed in a year’s worth of an average person’s disposable bag consumption.

Other free activities will include upcycle crafts in the Visitor & Education Center Classroom, guided hikes along Indigo Trail and the Wildlife Education Boardwalk, a “trashy” contest for kids, plein-air artists along Wildlife Drive, family story-times, free admission to Wildlife Drive for hikers and bikers, and a guided bike tour of Wildlife Drive. For more information, please visit dingdarlingsociety.org/earth-day.



Free bike rentals and Wildlife Drive admission for bikers and bikers encourage visitors to get outdoors and get active.

Brush of Excellence

On February 19, 2015, Sam Koltinsky, filmmaker for *America’s Darling* documentary about the life of Jay Darling, presented the Refuge and DDWS with a Brush of Excellence Award. Sam is awarding the framed paintbrushes used by artist and political cartoonist Darling to deserving organizations that demonstrate a commitment, as did Darling, to stewardship of the land and culture.

He made the presentations, also with awards to SCCF and the Robert Rauschenberg Foundation, at the historic fish house on Captiva Island that Darling used as a studio during visits to the island. It is now part of the Rauschenberg Estate, once the home to a different Captiva artist.

DDWS made possible nearly \$80,000 in support for *America’s Darling* — the largest portion of gifts received.



Sam Koltinsky presents Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik and DDWS President Doris Hardy with a Brush of Excellence Award.



Here we showcase the best shots of wildlife taken at the Refuge recently by photographers, volunteers, staff, and others. This bobcat capture comes from the motion-sensing infrared camera the Refuge staff has set up at the Refuge. It was taken at 1:54 p.m. on February 15, 2015. If you have a wildlife picture to share, please contact Sarah Lathrop at sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org.

Message from Refuge Rangers: Ethical Wildlife Watching

At the J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR, we encourage visitors to respectfully enjoy wildlife at a safe distance. However, occasionally some visitors go to extra lengths to enhance their experience without regard to the health and safety of wildlife. This can result in the disturbance or harassment of wildlife. Disturbance or harassment of wildlife is defined as any activity that alters or changes the natural behavior of wildlife, which can be detrimental to the animal's health, safety, or productivity. Types of activities that can cause disturbance or harassment are: getting too close to or chasing wildlife; using flash photography in close proximity to wildlife; playing recorded bird calls; cutting vegetation near a nest; feeding wildlife; or throwing objects at wildlife. Any action that results in the disturbance or harassment of wildlife on a national wildlife refuge is unethical and illegal, and can result in hefty fines or arrest. Witnesses to any of these types of violations are encouraged to report them immediately to Refuge Management at (239) 472-1100. Remember to



Do not purposely ruffle feathers when taking pictures of wildlife. (All photos used by DDWS abide by the guidelines of ethical birding.)

exercise caution when viewing, photographing, or filming wildlife for the welfare of the wildlife and for the respect of other visitors.

BIG Thanks To This Year's Trailgate Sponsors & Auction Donors

SPONSORS

Champion Sponsors: Mark & Gretchen Banks, Peter & Paula Bentinck-Smith, Wayne & Linda Boyd, Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille, John & Kathy McCabe, Sanibel Catering/Bailey's General Store.

Protector Level: Mike & Terry Baldwin, Jay & Cindy Brown, Cip's Place, Amanda Cross, Bob & Darlene Duvin, George & Wendy's Seafood Grill, The Jacaranda, Queenie's Homemade Ice Cream, Royal Shell Realtor Sarah Ashton & Jim Metzler, Shaker Investments, Traders Café & Store, Don & Ann-Marie Wildman.

Defender Level: Big Red Q Quickprint, Tim & Suzanne Devitt, Melissa & Tom Gauntlett, Half-crackerphoto.com, John Grey Painting, Suncatcher's Dream.

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50% Off Framing, Authentic Maine Lobster Bakes, Terry Baldwin, Mark and Gretchen Banks, Barbara's Cereal, Beach Piez, Paula and Peter Bentinck-Smith, Cheryl Black, Vera Bradley, Cedar Chest, Luc Century, Cip's Place, Zoe Cohen, Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille, East End Deli/Sanibel Oasis, Jerry Edelman, Fresh Taqueria, George and Wendy's Seafood Grille, Doris Hardy, Judy Hicks, Al Hoffacker (Half-Crackerphoto.com), Hog Island Audubon Camp, Island Inn, Island Paws, Island Therapy Center, Jacaranda, Jerry's of Sanibel, Stephen Kress, Sarah Lathrop, Laughing Pelican, Lazy Flamingo, Lighthouse Café, John McCabe, John McLenne, Birgie Miller, Over Easy Café, Pinnocchio's Italian Ice Cream, Carol Rothman, Sandbar Restaurant, Sanibel Day Spa, Sanibel Grill, Sanibel Seashell Industries, Sanibel Sprout, Sanybel's Finest, Jim Sprankle, Don and Lillian Stokes, Suncoast Beverage, Sweet Melissa's Cafe, Tarpon Bay Explorers, The Timbers, Traders Café, University of Sanibel, Vortex Optics, Wilford & Lee

YOUTH FISHING EVENT



Tarpon Bay Explorers and the Refuge co-sponsored their semi-annual Youth Fishing Day in January. They hosted youth from My Autism Connection for lessons on fishing skills and pontoon excursions to put to use what they learned.



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Youth Photo Contest



“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society and Bank of the Islands sponsor an annual photo workshop tram and contest with both The Sanibel School and Cypress Lake Middle School in Fort Myers. At Sanibel School, Ben Arensman took first place with his Tri-color Heron portrait. Above, Sanibel School winners received their awards in a special ceremony.

