



**FALL 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, land acquisition, research, and 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.



Photo by Jim Berrigitt

One of the Refuge's radio-tracked Reddish Egrets

## GO WILD FOR 'DING' The Dance of the Reddish Egret

Who doesn't love the Reddish Egret? And this year, with the expansion of the first-of-its-kind Reddish Egret Study at the Refuge, we pay homage to this crazy, beautiful, and largely misunderstood wading bird at our annual fundraiser. Mark your calendars for Tuesday, February 23, 2016, and plan on joining us  
*continued on page 2*

We are adding some new twists and speakers this year, and keeping all the same family activities and outdoor fun that festivalgoers have loved for 26 years. Highlights of "Ding" Darling Days 2015 include the return of Heather Henson's Ixex Puppetry on Family Fun Day, October 18; days devoted to Eco-Innovation and the Calusa culture; and Painting with a Twist on Conservation Art Day, October 24. Have a look at more highlights below, and visit [dingdarlingdays.com](http://dingdarlingdays.com) for a complete calendar of events. See you at "Ding!"



## 'DING' DARLING DAYS

# Join us October 18-24



Live animal presentations and life-size wild-life puppets put the "pop" in Family Fun Day.

## 'DING' DARLING DAYS HIGHLIGHTS

### Sunday FAMILY FUN DAY 10:45am- 4pm

All FREE events at "Ding" Darling Education Center (EC)

- FREE Giveaways
- FREE Life-Size Wild Puppets! Presentations
- FREE Live Butterfly Presentation
- FREE Live Snakes Presentation
- FREE Live Native Wildlife Presentations

Continuous and FREE throughout the day

- Refuge Tram Tours
- Introduction to Archery Clinics
- Butterfly House
- Touch Tank
- Hands-On Nature Crafts
- Hot Dogs

Calendar of events continued on page 2



Thanks to George & Wendy's Seafood Grille for its generous contribution to "Ding" Days.

## 'DING' DAYS SPONSORS

We couldn't host "Ding" Darling Days without our generous sponsors. Please thank them and patronize their businesses.

### Roseate Spoonbill Sponsors

Doc Ford's Sanibel Rum Bar & Grille

### Great Egret Sponsors

Wayne & Linda Boyd, George & Wendy's Seafood Grille

### Great Blue Heron Sponsors

97.7 Latino & Juan Radio, Arthur Printing, Bailey's General Store, Mike & Terry Baldwin, Bank of the Islands, *Island Sun*, Jensen's on the Gulf and Marina & Cottages, Jerry's Foods, Mitchell's Sand Castles & Forty/Fifteen Resorts, Ocean's Reach Condominiums, Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, Sanibel Moorings, Spotlight Graphics, Sanibel-Captiva Beach Resorts, Jim & Patty Sprankle

### Reddish Egret Sponsors

Sarah Ashton & Jim Metzler, Big Red Q Quickprint, Casa Ybel Resort, Sally & Rich Ennis, *Florida Weekly*, Glen & Phyllis Gresham, Gulf Breeze Cottages, Painting with a Twist, Ed & Lynn Riddlehoover, Sanibel-Captiva Kiwanis Club, Stewart and Sons Insurance, Inc., West Wind Inn

### Snowy Egret Sponsors

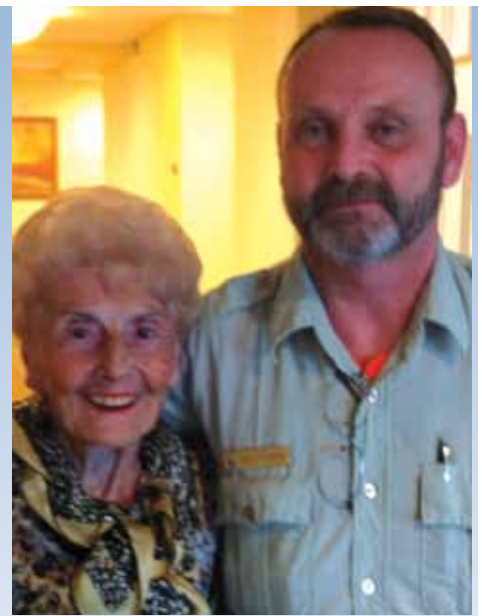
Barefoot Charley's Painting Co., John Brennan, Butterfly Estates, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP), Jerry Edelman & Maryanne Daly, Grounds by Green Ways, Dave Horton, Island Therapy Center, Over Easy Café, Sallie Rich, Sanibel Art & Frame, She Sells Sea Shells, Winston & Barbara Spurgeon, Sun-catchers' Dream, Tents 'n' Events

## DDWS Founding Officer Mourned

Founding officer and emeritus member of "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society, Milena Eskew, departed this world on June 10, 2015, at age 103. Milena served on the first DDWS Board of Directors as Secretary when it incorporated 33 years ago.

"I was brought up with conservationism, and I was brought up to be a useful citizen," Milena said in an interview for the Society newsletter back in September 2002. She volunteered at the Refuge for 29 years (2,798.5 hours), until 2012. Staff and volunteers mourn the loss of such a vital and generous force to the very end.

*Ranger Jeff Combs was among those who celebrated Milena's 102nd birthday with her at Shell Point Village in November 2013.*



## REDDISH EGRET

*continued from page 1*

at The Community House for tasty dishes from our local restaurants, a unique silent auction, live entertainment, and a chance to meet Dr. Ken Meyer, who is conducting the Reddish Egret Study at the Refuge for the Avian Research & Conservation Institute in Gainesville, Florida.

### 'Ding' on the Wing Archives

Did you know you can access past editions of *Society Pages* on our web site? For an archive of your newsletters, please visit [dingdarlingsociety.org/newsletter-archives](http://dingdarlingsociety.org/newsletter-archives). There's also an archive of our "Ding" on the Wing bulletins at [dingdarlingsociety.org/ding-on-the-wing-archives](http://dingdarlingsociety.org/ding-on-the-wing-archives).

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS *continued from page 1*

### MONDAY, OCT. 19 - SATURDAY, OCT. 24

Free and discounted birding, tram, biking, hiking, kayaking, and nature boat excursions through Saturday, Oct. 24.

FREE Special 2015 Federal Duck Stamp Art Exhibit

### POLLINATOR DAY

FREE Pollinators Walk

FREE Bunche Beach Birding Tram

FREE Honey Bees presentation

FREE *Vanishing of the Bees* film

### BEACH & WATER DAY

FREE Ongoing Stand-up Paddleboard Clinics

FREE Beach Walk at Perry Tract

FREE The Courtship of Great Blue Herons Presentation

FREE Refuge Reddish Egret Tracking Study Presentation

### ECO-INNOVATION DAY

FREE Let's Go Geo-Caching Tour

FREE Discover Ding Game App Motor Tour of Wildlife Drive

FREE *America's Darling* film with cake for "Ding" Darling's 139th birthday

**Thursday, Oct. 22**  
**CALUSA DAY**  
FREE Ongoing Stand-up Paddleboard Clinics  
FREE Calusa Culture Presentations

**Friday, Oct. 23**  
**TRAILS DAY**  
FREE All-Day Wildlife Drive admission for bikers and hikers  
FREE Ongoing Animal Olympics  
FREE Scat & Animal Tracks Program

**Saturday, Oct. 24**  
**CONSERVATION ART DAY**  
*All FREE events at "Ding" Darling Education Center*  
FREE Admission to Wildlife Drive & Plein Air Artists  
FREE Art Kits to the first 200 kids  
FREE Wildlife Cartoon Portraits for first 50 guests  
FREE Duck Stamp Artist Demo  
FREE Duck Stamp Winners Presentation  
FREE Paint a Sand Dollar Portrait Class  
FREE Nature Photography Tram Tour  
FREE Bird-Carving Demo

# Summer Smart: Education at the Refuge

An inaugural Nature Explorers Summer Day Camp, the first-ever Summer Family Film Series, and the Refuge's annual Summer Programs and Youth Fishing Day: 2015 was a banner year for summer conservation education at "Ding" Darling. The camp program, made possible by grants from anonymous donors to the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society, reached out to underserved communities with scholarships and free transportation. Thanks to the donors, Tarpon Bay Explorers, the Gardner Families, Refuge staff and education interns, and so many others for making this camp a lifetime memory for the campers.



Tarpon Bay Explorers' Adam Sauerland helps two fishers from Catholic Charities of Fort Myers proudly display a nice snook catch during Youth Fishing Day on July 24.



Top right: Biweekly beach walks were a popular part of the free summer programs, made possible by support from DDWS and donations. Bottom: Nature crafts were part of the summer's film series and Reading at the Refuge program.



Day campers enjoyed biking, fishing, nature photography, and other activities consistent with the mission and objectives set by the National Wildlife Refuge System.



USFWS

The 2015-16 Junior Duck Stamp by Andrew Kneeland, who will be making an appearance at "Ding" Days on October 24, Conservation Art Day at the Refuge.

## Shop Amazon to Support JDS Program

The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp is now a registered charitable organization with Amazon-Smile. If you're a customer of Amazon.com, you can now designate that 0.5% of your eligible purchases be donated to the Friends to benefit the Junior Duck Stamp program, at no cost to you. This is a great way to benefit young wildlife artists and students of conservation while you shop. To learn more about the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp, please visit [friendsofthestamp.org](http://friendsofthestamp.org).

## Society Annual Meeting Notice

"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society Members and Friends:

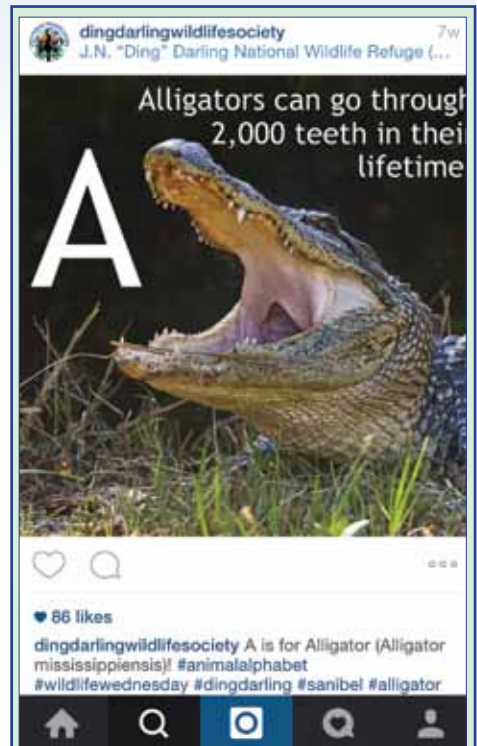
This is your formal notice of the Annual Business Meeting of the Society scheduled for Wednesday, December 2, 2015 at 1 p.m. and to be held in the auditorium of the Education Center at the J.N. "Ding" Darling Wildlife Refuge.

### AGENDA

- I Minutes of the Annual Meeting of December 3, 2014: Jim Scott
- II Treasurer's Report: Vasanta Senerat. Questions & comments from the floor.
- III President's Report: Doris Hardy. Questions & comments from the floor.
- IV Board Nominating Committee Report: Mike Baldwin
- V Emeritus Board Committee Report: Susan Cassell
- VI Open Discussion of the Business of the Society
- VII Adjournment

Your attendance at and participation in this meeting is encouraged.

Jim Scott, Secretary



## FOLLOW AND LIKE US

DDWS is currently active on three social media platforms. Please "LIKE" us on **Facebook** (join our 8,000+ fans) 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.



## STAFF NEWS

### New Biology Intern

New biology intern Becca Young joined the team effort at the Refuge on June 1, 2015. She plans to stay until December 2015 as part of the Refuge's intern program supported by the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society.

A Madison, Alabama, native, Becca most recently lived in Litchfield, Connecticut, where she worked as an aviculture and education intern for the Livingston Ripley Waterfowl Conservancy. Previously she did wildlife rehabilitation work and Black Bear research.



*Becca Young*

Becca graduated from Alabama's Auburn University in 2013 with a bachelor's degree in wildlife ecology and management.

Her research project at "Ding" Darling studies Sanibel Island's gopher tortoise population.

"I love Sanibel and the Refuge," she said. "The staff and other interns are absolutely amazing, and I couldn't be happier."


"The intern program not only fulfills the Wildlife Society's mission to educate a new generation of wildlife stewards, but it also fills a government budget void by providing valuable manpower to assist the Refuge's overworked staff," said DDWS Executive Director Birgie Miller. Each year DDWS supports up to 12 intern positions in the fields of biology, education, visitor services, and non-profit support with stipends and other perks. The Refuge provides onsite housing for the interns.

### Resident Volunteers

The Refuge's Resident Volunteers program has steadily grown through the past decade. This year we welcome an off-season couple who will work at the Refuge in exchange for an RV spot.

Meet Judith and David Biery, who recently sold their home in North Carolina to hit the road. "Ding" Darling is their first refuge to work as resident volunteers — Judith in the administration building, David in maintenance.

"We've been avid travelers and nature geeks all of our lives, and have enjoyed hiking, kayaking, sailing, nature photography, and other outdoor activities," said Judith, who worked as a teacher and medical massage therapist before retiring. David was a corporate manager and marketing executive, involved in various segments of the food industry.

Also avid gardeners and former beekeepers, the Bierys love the Refuge. "The birds and animals are great, but the people are even better," said Judith. 



*Judith and David Biery*



Photo by Jerry Baldwin


## Refuge Gopher Tortoise Project Report

by Lead Biologist Jeremy Conrad and Biology Intern Becca Young

The objectives of the Gopher Tortoise project are to:

- Determine a Gopher Tortoise population estimate for the Refuge
- Improve habitat quality for Gopher Tortoise populations
- Map the location of active Gopher Tortoise populations.

The Gopher Tortoise project includes scoping and mapping each tortoise burrow on the Refuge. Using the

Gopher Tortoise scope allows us to definitively determine if each burrow is occupied by a tortoise or if it has been abandoned. Once the burrows have been scoped, we can then determine occupancy rates and population estimates for the Refuge. We are also correlating habitat quality with active burrow location to determine which locations are in need of habitat maintenance or improvements to provide the tortoises with better quality habitat. The threatened Gopher Tortoise prefers elevated sandy soil with minimal canopy cover and open patches of grass and succulent plants to forage on. 

## Stokes Tours 2016

Nationally acclaimed bird authors, TV personalities, and longtime Sanibel Island winter residents Don and Lillian Stokes will again contribute their time and expertise to lead two fundraising birders tram tours of the Refuge on the morning of Friday, February 19, 2016.

Wildlife Drive is normally closed on Fridays, meaning tour participants will have the birds and the Stokes to themselves. Lillian Stokes will speak about and demonstrate bird photography on one of the trams, while her husband, on a second tram, will focus on the principles of bird identification.

Tarpon Bay Explorers, the Refuge's official recreation concession, will be donating the use of two trams. Together, they accommodate 60 passengers, so interested persons are encouraged to make reservations as soon as possible, because the Stokes' past tram tours have filled up quickly.

The Stokes have authored more than 30 books in their Stokes Field Guides series and have hosted a birding television show for PBS.


"Don and Lillian are veteran birding experts recognized throughout the country, and they have a huge



*Don and Lillian Stokes at the Refuge*

following," said Birgie Miller, Executive Director of the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society, which is organizing the tours.

"Thanks to their generosity and our partnership with Tarpon Bay Explorers, 100 percent of the proceeds from this fundraiser will benefit wildlife and education programs at the Refuge."

Cost for tour tickets are \$75 each for a half-day tour that includes coffee and continental breakfast starting at 7:30 a.m. in the Visitor & Education Center and use of spotting scopes on the Drive. To make reservations, email [sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org) or call 239-472-1100 ext. 233. 

# New Refuge Rice Rat Study

Sanibel Island is home to a sub-species of rice rat found nowhere else in the world: the Sanibel Island Rice Rat (*Oryzomys palustris sanibeli*). Because of habitat loss and fragmentation, predation by feral house cats, and competition from the nonnative Black Rat (*Rattus rattus*), the state of Florida has designated the Sanibel Island Rice Rat (SIRR) as a state threatened species.

Its rarity has led the Refuge to partner with Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) for a special study being conducted by the University of Florida (UF) Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation in Gainesville, Florida, and funded by the Florida Fish & Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC).

Support for the study comes also from the Refuge and DDWS, who jointly provide on-site housing for two full-time UF researchers.

"This study is important to the Refuge because we have caught very few Sanibel Rice Rats during our survey and monitoring efforts, and we don't know much about this subspecies that is exclusive to Sanibel," said Deputy Refuge Manager Joyce Palmer. "We are indebted to the various agencies that support this study at a time when federal budget cuts have severely slashed our staff — from 20 in 2011 to 12 today. We are fortunate to have partners who are able to help us achieve our research goals."

Native to the island, the elusive Sanibel Island Rice Rat, one of four known rice rat subspecies in Florida, plays an important role in the ecosystem — from eating seeds and snails to providing food for predators such as hawks and bobcats.

The Refuge has been monitoring the threatened population of Rice Rats through small-mammal surveys conducted each spring and fall in the Refuge's cordgrass marshes at the Bailey Tract, at the Botanical Site, and along Sanibel-Captiva Road near the American Legion. Staff and interns use live traps, general

body size metrics, and tagging methods to obtain data on the SIRR population location, population size, and habitat requirements.

Biologists safely release the rats after taking measurements and attaching small numbered tags to their ears to identify individuals that might be recaptured. Little is known about their population numbers on the island.

The team from UF includes field researchers PhD student Wesley Boone and exchange student intern Daniel Filho from Brazil, plus assistant professor Robert McCleery. Their study will be conducted during wet and dry seasons over a three-year period. They worked this summer from mid-June through August.

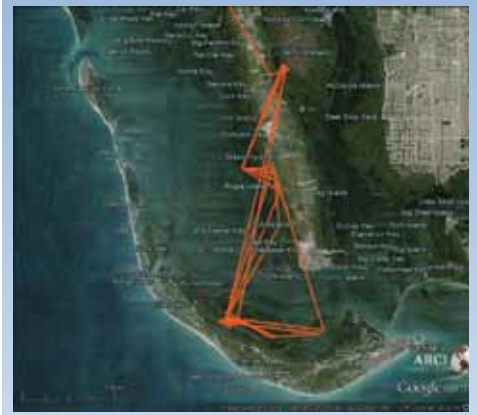
The \$89,000 study will lead to an additional estimated \$351,000 restoration follow-up that will be research-driven, said Alyssa Jordan, FWC biologist. Matching funding from the Refuge and DDWS will pay for signage and possibly enhancements to Bailey Tract on Tarpon Bay Road.

The research conducted by UF expands upon the Refuge's monitoring program by including additional habitat types and trapping on all conservation lands on Sanibel, including SCCF and city lands. This summer, the researchers live trapped 54 different areas and came up with nine captures and taggings.

"My researchers were trapping in the freshwater marshes, but also mangrove and transitional zones," said Robert McCleery. "Other rice rats elsewhere are found in various habitats. More intensive monitoring will tie in with the restoration to help us make recommendations."

Rice Rat habitat restoration efforts would eliminate some of the hardwood and brush growth from the marshes and ultimately restore water flow on Bailey Tract and SCCF lands, said Alyssa.

"The crisis of our generation is human-caused extinction of species," said Robert. "We have the Refuge here on Sanibel, it would be a shame to lose a species on conservation lands."



*Ding 1's local motion.*

## Refuge Reddish Gets Around

The latest news on the Reddish Egret study that the Avian Research and Conservation Institute is conducting at "Ding," supported by DDWS: "In early May, [tagged egret] Ding 1 started to make day trips to Pine Island and, within a week, moved into the shallows of Little Pine Island to the northeast. On 15 May, Ding 1 started heading north, way north - an overnight on Anna Maria Island, then up the Gulf coast in two days to settle into the Big Bend Wildlife Management Area (WMA), just south of Steinhatchee in Dixie County. For nearly four weeks now, Ding 1 has been using remote tidal flats of the Tide Swamp Unit of the Big Bend WMA. Each night, she/he flies 5 miles to the south to roost on an off shore island. . . . This is the first documented long-distance seasonal movement (over 30 miles) of any Reddish Egret tracked in Florida."

## Upcoming Events

Mark your calendars, and join us! Visit [dingdarlingsociety.org](http://dingdarlingsociety.org) for details.

"Ding" Darling Days — October 18-24, 2015

Kids Fishing Derby — November 28, 2015

Happy Hour Holiday Shopping — December 3, 2015

Friday Winter Lecture Series — January 8-April 15, 2016

Biweekly Winter Film Series — January 13-April 6, 2016

Stokes Refuge Tours — February 19, 2016

Go Wild with "Ding": Dance of the Reddish Egrets — February 23, 2016

Federal Junior Duck Stamp Judging at the Refuge/Earth Day — April 22, 2016

Fifth Annual "Ding" Darling & Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament — May 6-7, 2016



*On July 6, researchers trapped one Sanibel Island rice rat (right) and one hispid cotton rat. Both rats were released alive. Photo by Wesley Boone*



"Linesiders" by Matthew Boutelle of Fort Myers High took first place in the 2015 judging.

## High School Photo Contest

The third annual "Ding" Darling-Theodore Cross High School Photography Contest kicked off September 1, 2015, with a deadline of January 1, 2016. It invites high school students in Lee, Collier, Charlotte, Glades, and Hendry counties to enter for prizes. For more info, visit [dingdarlingsociety.org/photo-contests](http://dingdarlingsociety.org/photo-contests) or call 239-472-1100 ext. 233.



## Tarpon Bay Explorers Award

Tarpon Bay Explorers, the Refuge's official recreation concession, is proud to announce that it has joined an elite group: TripAdvisor's 2015 Hall of Fame. TBE has earned a Certificate of Excellence for its fifth year in a row. Certificates of Excellence are awarded to tourism entities that consistently receive high reviews on the world's largest travel site. By earning its fifth certificate, TBE has been inducted into TripAdvisor's newly created Hall of Fame.

### TARPON BAY EXPLORERS SCHEDULE

([tarponbayexplorers.com](http://tarponbayexplorers.com); call ahead to 239-472-8900 to confirm schedule and make reservations)

**Tram Tours of Wildlife Drive:** Oct 1-Nov 15 Sat-Thurs 10am 1pm and 4 pm; Nov 16-Dec 31 Mon-Thurs 10am 11:30am 1pm 2:30pm and 4pm Sat-Sun 10am 1pm and 4pm

**Kayak Trail Tour:** Oct 1-Nov 15 Mon-Sun 8:30am or 10am; Nov 16-Dec 31 Mon-Fri 8:30am or 10am and 1pm, Sat-Sun 10am (tide permitting)

**Sunset Rookery Paddle:** Oct 1-Nov 15 Mon, Wed, Fri and Sat two hours before sunset; Nov 16-Dec 31 every evening.

**Standup Paddleboard Tour:** Tues Thurs Sat 9am

**Breakfast Cruise:** Oct 1-Nov 15 Wed 8:30am; Nov 16-Dec 31 Mon Wed Fri 8:30am

**Nature and Sea Life Cruise:** Daily at 11am and 1:30pm

**Evening Cruise:** Daily two hours before sunset

**Aquarium & Touch Tank:** Daily at 11am, 1:30pm and 3pm

**Rentals and fishing charters:** Daily 8am - 6pm

**Deck Talks:** Mon-Fri 12:45pm

## IN THE REFUGE NATURE STORE

### Holiday Shopping Happy Hour

Forget Black Monday. Think instead Happy Thursday, Dec. 3, the date of the Refuge Nature Store's third annual Happy Hour Holiday Shopping event in the Visitor & Education Center.

A little wine and cheese certainly can't hurt your shopping decision-making. "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society has planned the free shopping happy hour for after-hours from 4:30 to 6 p.m.

The Refuge Nature Store has stocked holiday gift items specially for the event, and it will have gift consultants ready with suggestions and free recycled paper gift-wrapping. Local artists will also be on hand for meet-and-greet. Shoppers who spend more than \$20 get a free gift.



A holiday shopper is thrilled to meet glass artisan Luc Century at last year's Happy Hour.

"All proceeds from Nature Store purchases go directly to benefiting wildlife and conservation," said Store Manager Lise Bryant. "So we thought it would be a fun way to get everyone in the holiday spirit with an altruistic twist."

The Refuge Nature Store carries a complete line of birding and nature books for adults and kids, wildlife toys and games, holiday ornaments, gifts made from recycled materials, nature-themed jewelry and home décor, logo T-shirts and hats, and a wide variety of stocking stuffers and other gifts for men and women.

For more information on the Refuge Shopping Happy Hour call 239-472-1100 ext. 241.

### 2015 Luc Century Ornament

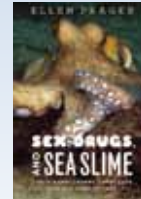
This year's Luc Century etched glass ornament features a Green Heron. The limited edition collec-



tor's item costs \$42. Come in today or call (239-472-1100 ext. 241) to order for everyone on your list. Remember, all proceeds from Nature Store sales directly benefit wildlife and education at "Ding" Darling.

### Lecture Series Preview

*Sex, Drugs, and Sea Slime; Ditch of Dreams; The Plant World of the Calusa;* and *Rain*: The book titles



featured in the 2016 "Ding" Darling Nature Store Friday Lecture Series are as intriguing as varied. The series takes place in the Visitors & Education Center Auditorium starting Friday, January 8, and ending April 15.

\*January 8 – Cindy Bear & Martha Kendall – *The Plant World of the Calusa: A View from Pineland*

January 15 – No Lecture – Volunteer Training

\*January 22 – Cynthia Barnett – *Rain*

January 29 – Dr. Ken Meyer – The Dance of the Reddish Egret - From "Ding" to North Florida

\*February 5 – Ellen Prager – *Sex, Drugs and Sea Slime*

\*February 12 – Don & Lillian Stokes – Better Birding

February 19- No Lecture – Volunteer Luncheon

February 26 – Jerry Lorenz – Roseate Spoonbills in Florida Bay: Pink Canaries in a Coal Mine

\*March 4 – Steve Noll – *Ditch of Dreams*

\*March 11 – Leslie Kemp Poole – *Saving Florida*

March 18 – Ellie Splain – Invasion of the Lionfish

March 25 – Ian Bartoszek – Pythons in Paradise

April 1 – Teddy Roosevelt Reprisal by Joe Wiegand

\*April 8 – John H. Hartig, *Bringing Conservation to Cities*

\*April 15 - Sandra Friend and John Keatley, *The Florida Trail Guide*

\*Indicates that book signings will follow the lectures.



A special thanks to Sanibel Captiva Trust Company for sponsoring this year's series.

## Teacher Grants

Our ninth annual teacher grants provide up to \$10,000 in grant awards for teachers in Lee, Charlotte, Collier, Glades, and Hendry counties for conservation education-related projects. Teachers may apply for grants up to \$1,000 each to purchase teaching aids, books, and classroom materials; fund new classroom science projects; take field trips; or

conduct work projects in the community.

In the past eight years, the Society has granted more than \$47,000 to local schools for environmental projects. The teacher grants are funded by DDWS monies received from the DDWS Conservation Education Endowment Fund earmarked specifically for education.

For further information and an application, visit [dingdarlingsociety.org/grants](http://dingdarlingsociety.org/grants); or contact Sarah Lathrop at 239-472-1100 ext. 233 or [sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org).



## Chamber After Hours

More than 100 Sanibel & Captiva Islands Chamber of Commerce members and other friends attended an After Hours gathering hosted by the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society in the Visitor & Education Center on July 20, 2015. The monthly Chamber event allows an opportunity for members to network in a social setting. “We loved welcoming our fellow Chamber members, especially those who have never been inside our Center before,” said DDWS Executive Director Birgie Miller.



## WILDLIFE SPOTLIGHT



Here we showcase the best of wildlife shots taken recently at the Refuge by photographers, volunteers, staff, and others. The coyote picture below comes from one of the motion-sensing infrared cameras the Refuge has set up on trails, made possible by member donations. The other, submitted by visitor Carla R. Black, captures an American Flamingo that visited one day in July and a Roseate Spoonbill, whom many confuse for a flamingo.

If you have a wildlife picture to share, please contact Sarah Lathrop at [sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org).



Saturday, November 28, 2015, marks the fifth annual Kids Fishing Derby on the Sanibel Causeway. Youngsters up to age 15 can participate for free. Based upon total inches of fish caught, the Refuge will award first, second, and third place prizes, plus awards for the largest and smallest fish hooked, in two age categories. Thanks to “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society, Tarpon Bay Explorers, and other sponsors who help with this annual event. For more information, visit [dingdarlingsociety.org/derby](http://dingdarlingsociety.org/derby). Or contact Becky Larkins at 239-472-1100 ext. 236 or [rebecca\\_larkins@fws.gov](mailto:rebecca_larkins@fws.gov).

## MEMORIAL AND HONOR GIFTS JUNE 1, 2015 – AUGUST 31, 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:

- |                         |                        |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Herb Allender, Jr.      | James Kowalski         |
| Vernon and Clara Baltus | Karen Lord             |
| Derek L Barter          | Charles and Marsha     |
| Wally Faster            | Mlakar                 |
| Virginia Bates          | Joe Pastore            |
| Milena Eskew            | Col. Richard Patterson |
| Roni Freer              | Sue Ann Petersen       |
| Barbara Hillesheim      | Florence Savage        |
| Elaine Jacobson         | Nora Wells             |
| Benton F. Kauffman      |                        |

We received gifts in HONOR of the following:

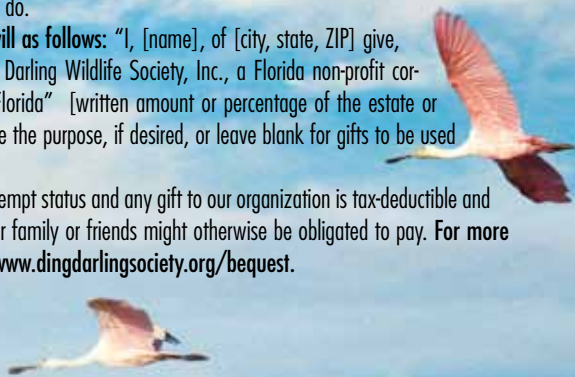
- |                     |             |
|---------------------|-------------|
| Howard E. Buhse Jr. | Irene Raber |
| John McEllen        |             |

## 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](http://www.dingdarlingsociety.org/bequest).



Recycled Paper



One Wildlife Drive  
P.O. Box 565  
Sanibel, FL 33957

Forwarding Service Requested

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Fax: (239) 472-7803

WEBSITE  
dingdarlingsociety.org

E-MAIL  
dingdarlingoffice@yahoo.com

**2015 BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

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**Vice President** Mike Baldwin  
**Secretary** Jim Scott  
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**NEWSLETTER TEAM**

**Editor** Chelle Koster Walton  
**Photography** Chelle Koster Walton,  
Refuge & DDWS Staff, USFWS  
**Design and Production** Susan Holly,  
Lynne Egensteiner



Save the Date



Al Hoffacker, Hoffackerphoto.com

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A 100 percent purse promises to make the fifth annual "Ding" Darling & Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament on May 7, 2016, the hottest competition on the water. It pays out 100 percent of the entry fee (\$500 per boat of up to four) as tournament awards. The Captain's Dinner takes place the evening prior, May 6, at Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille on Fort Myers Beach. Following the catch, and release 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.

