



www.dingdarlingsociety.org

SUMMER 2016

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 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.



Competitors in the tournament, along with other friends of "Ding" Darling, gathered at Doc Ford's Fort Myers Beach on Friday evening, May 6, for the Captain's Dinner. The event preceded a day of fishing on Saturday. Fifty teams — nearly 240 anglers — enjoyed drinks, food, and a silent auction as they received their tournament guidelines.

Tarpon Tourney Reels in \$55,000

It may have been a slim day for tarpon catches, but the Fifth Annual "Ding" Darling & Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament was a fat day for Refuge fundraising. Thanks to our generous sponsors (see page 2) and

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PHOTO BY TERRY BALDWIN

Help Save Our Island

"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society currently undergoes a campaign to acquire 8.15 acres on Sanibel Island's Wulfert Road, near the exit of Wildlife Drive, as part of a crucial wildlife corridor for the Refuge.

DDWS must raise \$2 million in private funds to purchase the parcel, which lies between SCCF land and the Refuge. Donors have already committed to more than \$600,000 of needed funds, so the goal is to raise the remaining \$1.4 million by February 2017.

If not preserved by the Refuge, the land could be developed with as many as five dwellings and one boat dock into Pine Island Sound, as already approved and permitted by the City of Sanibel. Construction of new homes and the increase in boat traffic would have significant impact on the habitat of 80 different land and marine species that live or feed on or near this property.

Species that would be seriously threatened by development of the uplands, mangrove, and estuarine habitat include the Gopher Tortoise, American Oys-



Reddish Egrets and Smalltooth Sawfish are among the crucial creatures the Wulfert acquisition will benefit.

tercatcher, Black Skimmer, Little Blue Heron, Reddish Egret, Mangrove Cuckoo, Florida Manatee, Smalltooth Sawfish, and Green and Loggerhead Sea Turtle.

In 2013 the Society successfully completed a \$1.4 million land acquisition campaign for the historic Woodring Homestead, which protects the water entrance to the Refuge on Tarpon Bay. In late 2015, we accepted a land donation of 9.1 acres near Clam Bayou. Refuge

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SAVE OUR ISLAND

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administration has earmarked the Wulfert Road parcel as a top habitat priority for protection.

"The Board feels it's important to help the Refuge preserve as much of the dwindling island habitat as it can, since federal budget cuts preclude the Refuge from government acquisitions in this area," said Doris Hardy. "We will be extremely grateful to donors who will help us meet these goals."

"Based on recent sales of waterfront property in the neighborhood, we have determined that \$2 million is a very fair market price for the Wulfert Road parcel," said DDWS board member and island real estate agent Sarah Ashton.

"With a time-sensitive fundraising deadline of February 2017 to purchase the Wulfert Road property, we will need major gift commitments to this campaign in order to be successful," said Immediate Past President John McCabe. "We look to our supportive community to help us save another environmentally crucial piece of Sanibel Island — one of the last remaining undeveloped parcels."

For more information, contact DDWS Executive Director Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.



Signage on the Wulfert Road parcel the Refuge is looking to acquire

FREE SUMMER PROGRAMS UNDERWAY



Join Refuge staff for a Family Beach Walk every Friday this summer.

Wildlife Wonders talks, weekly walks, and nature crafts highlight the Refuge's free summer programming through August 6, 2016. The programs are made possible by support from the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society. The schedule of weekly activities follows. No pre-registration is necessary.

- **Reading at the Refuge**, every Wednesday at 10 a.m. at the Visitor & Education Center classroom.
- **Indigo Trail Hike**, every Thursday at 10 a.m.; meet at the flagpole in front of the Visitor & Education Center.
- **Family Beach Walk**, every Friday at 9 a.m. at Gulfside Park; city parking fees apply.
- **Wildlife Wonders**, every other Saturday at 11 a.m. in the Visitor & Education Center auditorium.

For more information, call 239-472-1100 ext.236 or visit dingdarlingsociety.org/summer-programming.



Despite high winds, Team Chasin' Poon booked the first tarpon on tournament day, May 7, and took home a check for \$12,037.50. Pictured here: DDWS' Sarah Latbrop; Tournament Chair Don Wildman; team members Gary Biltgen, Matt Mitchell, Mary Laser, and Wade Roberts; and Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik. Below: Team Teaser came in second place by reeling in the second tarpon catch of the day.

TARPON TOURNEY

continued from page 1

silent auction donors, "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society raised \$55,000 for education and research programs at the Refuge. In its five years of existence, the tourney has raised nearly \$250,000.

Mark your calendar for next year's sixth annual tournament the weekend of May 20.



Thanks to Our Tarpon Tourney Sponsors!



Title Sponsor: Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille;

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gress Jewelers, Florida Weekly, Hogy Lures, Lee County

Sports Development, Raiser's Edge, Sanibel Gear,

Santiva Chronicle, Suncoast Beverage; **Gold Spon-**

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Shoreline Lumber, Don Wildman.



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SanCap Solar Connect

March 15 marked the deadline to sign up for the groundbreaking SanCap Solar Connect initiative that “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society spearheaded — the first community solar initiative in Florida.

“We are very pleased with the success of our campaign,” said Committee Chair John McCabe. “We are looking forward to upcoming installations at the ‘Ding’ Darling Visitor & Education Center, administration building, and maintenance operation. We plan also to add an interpretive exhibit about solar power.”

Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF)



was another island organization to take advantage of the program at its new Bailey Homestead project.

“From the start, solar energy was part of the plan for the sustainable restoration and operation of the SCCF

Bailey Homestead Preserve and the Native Landscapes & Garden Center located there,” said SCCF Executive

Director Erick Lindblad. “We are

happy we could go forward with those plans through the Wildlife Society’s SanCap Solar initiative.”

Funding to help make SanCap Solar Connect possible came from Fred and Alice Stanback, who also had solar panels installed on their island home.



Recently, members from the League of Women Voters of Florida met with SanCap Solar Connect to learn how to take similar solar programs to other communities. The league is working with Central Florida Solar Advocates on uniting communities all over Florida.

Federal Junior Duck Stamp Judging at Refuge



Current Federal Duck Stamp winner Joe Hautman and DDWS Emeritus Board Member Jim Sprankle, also an artist, were among the judges. Below: Judge Joe Hautman announces the top three winners.

For the first time ever, “Ding” Darling hosted a Junior Duck Stamp judging at the federal level on April 22. Five judges picked three top entries from 50 states and two territories during the three-hour judging. U.S. Fish & Wildlife staff from Washington, D.C., was on hand for the event. Winner was a Snow Geese portrait by Stacy Shen of Fremont, California. Her artwork will grace the 2016-2017 Junior Duck Stamp.



Don and Lillian Stokes

6th Annual Stokes Tours

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 “Ding” Darling Refuge on the morning of Friday, February 10, 2017.

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 66 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.

“The Stokes are veteran birding experts recognized throughout the country, and they have a huge following,” said Birgie Miller, Executive Director of “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 is \$100 each for a half-day tour that includes coffee and continental breakfast in the Visitor & Education Center and use of spotting scopes on the Drive. Reservations are required for these tours, which sell out quickly. Please email sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org or call 239-472-1100 ext. 233.



FOLLOW AND LIKE US

DDWS is currently active on three social media platforms. Please “LIKE” us on **Facebook** (join our 9,500+ fans!) by searching for “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society. (You can also “LIKE” the Refuge by searching for its “Official” page.)

Instagram users can find us at [@dingdarlingwildlifesociety](https://www.instagram.com/dingdarlingwildlifesociety).



Student Scholarships

At a special after-hours gathering at the Refuge on June 7, 2016, "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society awarded \$15,500 in Conservation Education Scholarships to 14 students from the surrounding five-county area. The awards total was the highest ever in the 10-year history of DDWS' Environmental Scholarship Program.

"The Society is committed to educating today's youth as conservation stewards of the future," said DDWS Education Chair Wendy Kindig. "We work with businesses and individuals to provide annual scholarships to award to outstanding students pursuing degrees related to conservation, wildlife biology, and the environment. A big thank you to our scholarship sponsors for helping us in our mission."

Nine donors sponsored the 14 scholarships this year, including two permanently endowed scholarships. The Jane Werner Memorial Scholarship was the first of these, and this year the family of H. Randell Deming made a gift of \$50,000 to establish a second, the H. Randell Deming Scholarship for Conservation & Environmental Studies.

Other named scholarships for 2016 include:



Scholarship winners 2016

- Two Richard Bailey Scholarships
- Mike & Terry Baldwin Scholarship
- Dr. Andrew and Laura Dahlem Scholarship
- Leslie & Hans Fleischner Scholarship
- Mary Elaine Jacobson Scholarship
- Francine Litofsky Scholarship

- Five Tarpon Bay Explorers Scholarships

To read more about the donors and recipients, please visit dingdarlingsociety.org/student-scholarships. To become a scholarship donor, contact DDWS Executive Director Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

STAFF NEWS

Fond Farewells

Refuge staff and volunteers and Society staff and board members gathered on the causeway to bid farewell to two well-loved Refuge staff members.

Deputy Refuge Manager Joyce Palmer, a long-time employee and respected administrator, departed on May 27 to take the position of Refuge Manager and Project Leader at Crystal River National Wildlife Refuge. Located north of Tampa in Florida, the refuge is known for its population of Florida Manatees. We will miss her dearly.



Joyce and Ken

Administrative Assistant Ken Petrie retired on May 13. He assures us we will see him volunteering around the Refuge. The best of luck to both of you.

Congratulations Larkins!

Welcome little "Ranger Isaac Wayne Larkins" into the Refuge family. Ranger Becky with husband Keith delivered a 7-pound 3-ounce baby boy on May 29.



The Larkin family

Summer Staffing

With recent staff cuts, departures, and leaves, the Refuge is happy to welcome temporary staffers through funding from the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society and other programs.

Recently, two summer interns joined the Refuge Environmental Education team. STAR (Summer Teachers Assisting Refugees) teacher Vanessa Clarke from Tanglewood Elementary and three YCC (Youth Conservation Corps) high school students are also on hand to assist Refuge and DDWS staff.

Visitor Services Intern Leigh Gay transitions to Refuge staff as a short-term employee. In addition, the Refuge will receive much-needed manpower from staff members on detail from four other refuges, one each month June through September.

Intern Phoebe Clark, a



Leigh Gay

junior at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville majoring in environment sciences and English, joins the environmental education staff and is helping out with this summer's second annual Nature Explorers day camp.



Phoebe Clark

Originally from Wellesley, Massachusetts, Phoebe previously worked with Massachusetts Audubon as an ecological management intern and the New England Aquarium as a lobster lab intern.

"Sanibel is such a beautiful island filled with kind, caring people who are genuinely invested in the island that they call home, its protection, and the preservation of its natural environments," said Phoebe. "Working specifically in education, one of my favorite things is seeing the children interact with the Refuge. I can see lasting impressions made, memories created that will always be cherished, and experiences formed that will continue to stay with and influence these children for the rest of their lives."

Johnny Hong Chen hails from Marietta, Georgia, and is currently a senior at the University of Georgia majoring in biological sciences. He too will assist with day camp as an environmental education intern.



Johnny Hong Chen

"So far, my favorite parts about Sanibel are the scenery and the proximity of the island to everything I love," Johnny said. "I can go see the beach or watch baby herons within a short bike ride of intern housing."

Photo Contest Time!

July 15 marks the opening of the 29th Annual "Ding" Darling Days Amateur Nature Photography Contest. Deadline for submission is September 15, 2016.

The contest, sponsored by the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society, is held in conjunction with "Ding" Darling Days, October 16-22, 2016 (www.dingdarlingdays.com).

You can find complete contest rules and entry form at dingdarlingsociety.org/photo-contests. Or contact DDWS at sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org or 239-472-1100, ext. 233.

DDWS will announce winners and award prizes at Conservation Art Day on Saturday, October 22, during "Ding" Darling Days.



Kent Jager of Sanibel Island took first place in 2015's contest with "Bath Time."



New Orientation Film in Progress

Thanks to a generous grant from a private foundation, "Ding" Darling will debut a new orientation film as part of this year's "Ding" Darling Days celebration on Sunday, October 16. Here, videographer Mark Meyers captures Refuge Biologist Jeremy Conrad during a recent survey at the Refuge. The film will replace a dated video that plays throughout the day in the Refuge Visitor & Education Center to introduce visitors to what they can do on a visit and inspire them to learn more and become good conservation stewards.



WILDLIFE SPOTLIGHT

Here we showcase the best of wildlife shots taken recently at the Refuge by photographers, volunteers, staff, and others. These bobcat and river otter pictures come from one of the motion-sensing infrared cameras the Refuge has set up on trails. The cameras are made possible by member donations. If you have a wildlife picture to share, please contact Sarah Lathrop at sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org.

'DING' DAYS

October 16-22

"Ding" Darling Days' Family Fun Day on Sunday, October 16, kicks off a week of eco-festivities with all-free refuge tram tours, live wildlife presentations, hot dogs, kids crafts, and other family activities. Birding, boating, tram, paddleboarding, and kayaking fill the week.

This year, "Ding" Days celebrates the 100th Anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Centennial 1916-2016 with special bird-themed games and

presentations. #birdyear

The 27th annual celebration ends on Saturday, October 22, with Conservation Art Day, where Federal Duck Stamp Winners, other artists, cartooning, and a Refuge Photography Tram tour will highlight a day devoted to Jay Norwood Darling's legacy as the first duck stamp artist and Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist. Watch www.dingdarlingdays.com for more exciting news about the annual festival.



Archery lessons are once again on the agenda for Family Fun Day.

UPCOMING EVENTS

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

FREE SUMMER PROGRAMS

Through August 6, 2016

27th ANNUAL "DING" DARLING DAYS

October 16-22, 2016

SMITHSONIAN WATER/WAYS EXHIBIT

October 29- December 9, 2016

KIDS FISHING DERBY

November 26, 2016

GO WILD FOR "DING"

February 8, 2017

STOKES BIRDING TOURS

February 10, 2017

SIXTH ANNUAL "DING" DARLING & DOC FORD'S TARPON TOURNAMENT

Weekend of May 20, 2017



Here's one bird you can't miss at "Ding" Darling Days – the Blue Goose, mascot of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

IN THE REFUGE NATURE STORE

Limited Edition Ornament

Dolphins! What could be a more joyous creature to celebrate the 2016 holidays? This year's Lucas Century etched holiday ornament is here, so hurry and pick up or order yours while supplies last. These collectible, limited-edition glass ornaments go fast. Cost is \$45 each. To order email [bookstore@dingdarlingsociety.org] or call 239-472-1100 ext. 241.



Remember, all proceeds from Nature Store sales go directly to Refuge education and wildlife research projects.



Sign of the Crocodile

New to our sign collection, "Crocodile Crossing" pays homage to the resident croc who lived at the Refuge for 24 years starting in the mid-80s and passed in 2010. Former refuge ranger Charles LeBuff and his wife Jean created the crocodile sign to add to their collection of clever "Do not feed" and various other "crossing" signs." Cost is \$24.95 each.

Glowing Manatees

Check out this adorable new glow-in-the-dark Mana-tee for kids! It comes in sizes XS to L and has the J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR logo on the sleeve – a great souvenir of your family's Sanibel stay and visit to the Refuge. Get it in baby blue or light pink for only \$14.95 each.

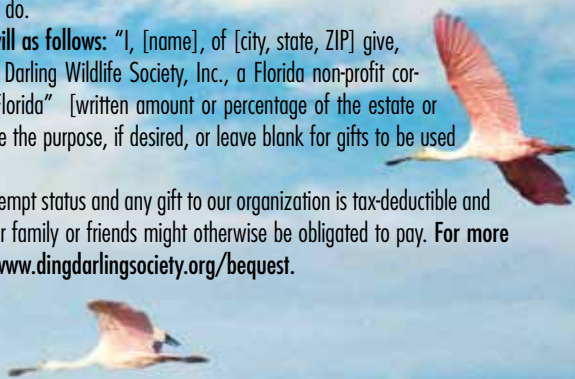


Leave a Legacy and Support 'Ding' Darling in Your Estate Plans

"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.**



TARPON BAY EXPLORERS SCHEDULE

(tarponbayexplorers.com; call ahead to 239-472-8900 to confirm schedule and make reservations)

Tram Tours of Wildlife Drive: Jul 1-Aug 30 Mon-Thurs 10am 11:30am 1pm 2:30pm 4 pm; Sat-Sun 10am 1pm 4pm; Sep 1-30 Tue Thurs Sat 10 am 1 pm 4 pm

Kayak Trail Tour: Daily 8:30am 10am 11:30 am and/or 1pm (tide permitting)

Sunset Rookery Paddle: Mon Wed Fri and Sat or Sun 6pm

Standup Paddleboard Tour: Tues Thurs Sat 9 am

Breakfast Cruise: July 1-Aug 30 Mon Wed Fri 8:30am; Sept 1-30 Wed 8:30am

Nature and Sea Life Cruise: July 1-Aug 30 Daily at 11am and 1:30pm; Sept 1-30 Mon Wed Fri Sun 11am and 1:30pm

Evening Cruise: July 1-Aug 30 Daily 6pm; Sept 1-30 Mon Wed Fri Sun 6pm

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

Rentals and fishing charters: Daily 8am - 6pm

Deck Talks: Mon-Fri 12:45pm

MEMORIAL AND HONOR GIFTS

March 1 – May 31, 2016

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:

Roger Alton Bell
Richard Bailey
Ted Bates, Sr.
Karen Combs
Harry Boynton
Diane Gibson Cushman
Mary Dow
Bill Dunford
Ruth and Charlie Gerecke
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Al Manda
Jess Prewitt Mendes
Marian Oleson
Chuck Raber
Lynne Rieger
Richard Ross
William and Betty Seddon
Bill Wollschlager
Anna Zimmerman

We received gifts in **HONOR** of the following:

Taylor Collins
Dr. and Mrs. Andrew Dahlem
Peter and Sue Danford
Becky Larkin
Avis Linda
Christine MacKenzie
Bill and Marcia Martin

Clay McClure Mead Treadwell
Jim Sprankle
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Smithsonian Exhibit Coming to 'Ding'



Mark your calendars for October 29 through December 9, 2016, for a first-of-its-kind Water/Ways travel exhibit in partnership with the Museum on Main Street (MoMS) program supported by The Smithsonian and Florida Humanities Council.

Water/Ways will take a global look at water relative to the environment, culture, and history. In collaboration with other local nature and art organizations, it will also examine the issues and context facing our liquid assets here at home.

"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society, host of the exhibit, will be showing a film series, sponsored by LCEC and focused on water issues. Other special family programs, giveaways, a Kids Fishing Derby, an interactive water table, and other activities are in the planning stages.

The Southwest Florida Fine Craft Guild is planning an artful water and nature exhibition titled "Engulfed" during the event. Partners along Sanibel's "Wild Mile" Sanibel-Captiva Road corridor will be participating with programs and discounts, including Tarpon Bay Explorers, the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum, CROW, and Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation.

Through a highly competitive bidding process, "Ding" Darling was chosen as only one of only six Florida locations to host Water/Ways.

"It's an amazing exhibit," said Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland. "We love how it brings to light the growing problem of water scarcity worldwide and the overall high Smithsonian-level quality. It certainly lives up to the Smithsonian name and promises to inspire all who experience it."



Smithsonian

