

PRESS RELEASE

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Caption: Images available upon request

‘Ding’ Days celebrates 2016 Migratory Bird Treaty centennial #birdyear

In addition to celebrating Jay N. “Ding” Darling’s 140th birthday and National Wildlife Refuge Week, this year’s “Ding” Darling Days, Oct. 16-22, celebrates the centennial of the convention between the United States and Great Britain (for Canada) for the protection of migratory birds. Also called the Migratory Bird Treaty, it was signed on Aug. 16, 1916.

The 27th annual “Ding” Days at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island, Fla., will focus on all things “birds.”

“That’s not at all difficult, since the refuge is known worldwide for its more than 250 bird species,” said Toni Westland, supervisory refuge ranger and committee co-chair for “Ding” Days.

Family Fun Day, which traditionally kicks off the week with free activities, will feature live bird presentations on Sunday, Oct. 16. Other highlights include all-free refuge tours, archery clinics, hot dogs, a touch tank and butterfly house, Jim Sprankle bird-carving demos, and kids’ nature crafts and bird games.

Free programs throughout the week will address topics such as the refuge’s reddish egret study and the history of “feather wars” plume trade. On Thursday, Oct. 20, an International Bird Film Festival will air throughout the day. The refuge and Tarpon Bay Explorers, the refuge’s recreation concession, will be conducting birding tours and other free and discounted excursions weeklong.

On Friday, Oct. 21, Darling's official birthday, the refuge invites the public for free birthday cake and the showing of the "America's Darling" documentary film starting at 11 a.m.

Conservation Art Day winds up the celebration on Saturday, Oct. 22, with visits from four-time Federal Duck Stamp winner Joe Hautman and Junior Duck Stamp winners, plus nature art workshops.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS), and Tarpon Bay Explorers cosponsor "Ding" Darling Days with generous support from the local community and businesses.

Watch www.dingdarlingdays.com for updates on events, information on sponsoring "Ding" Days, or to sign up for e-mail update bulletins. Contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org to become a sponsor.

The following 2016 sponsors make "Ding" Darling Days a fun and educational event for kids, adults, residents, and visitors. More than 6,000 people attend the eco-festival each year.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL SPONSORS: Doc's Ford Sanibel Rum Bar & Grille; **GREAT EGRET SPONSORS:** George & Wendy's Seafood Grille; **GREAT BLUE HERON SPONSORS:** Andrew Thompson Company, Bailey's General Store, Mike & Terry Baldwin, Wayne & Linda Boyd, Cedar Chest Fine Jewelry, Island Sun, Jerry's Foods, John & Beth Newland, Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, Sanibel-Captiva Beach Resorts, Jim & Patty Sprankle; **REDDISH EGRET SPONSORS:** Karen Bell, Big Red Q Quickprint, Casa Ybel Resort, Jerry Edelman & Maryanne Daly, Sally & Rich Ennis, Phyllis Gresham, Jensen's on the Gulf and Marina & Cottages, Island Inn, Mitchell's Sand Castles & Forty/Fifteen Resorts, Stewart and Sons Insurance, Inc., Suncatchers' Dream, Sharon Tucker, West Wind Inn; **SNOWY EGRET SPONSORS:** Barefoot Charley's Painting Co., John Brennan, The Butterfly Estates, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP), Colony Inn, Grounds by Green Ways, Island Management, Over Easy Café, Sanibel Art & Frame, Santiva Chronicle, George & Wendy Schnapp, Winston & Barbara Spurgeon, Tents and Events.

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 proceeds.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit www.dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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