

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption: Kids love the live animal presentations at the refuge's free Family Fun Day.

Live bird presentations, games, crafts highlights of free 'Ding' Family Fun Day 2016

Sunday Family Fun Day kicks off weeklong "Ding" Darling Days at J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Sanibel Island, on Oct. 16, 2016. The refuge and "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) have planned a free day packed with activities for all ages from 9:45 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Following the 9:45 a.m. flag-raising ceremony presented by local boy scouts, the refuge will debut its new eight-minute orientation film in the Visitor & Education Center auditorium followed by a free reusable goodie bag giveaway for kids, while supplies last.

New this year, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty between the U.S. and Canada, there will be a historical reenactment of saving the birds in the Everglades by Big Cypress National Preserve staff and concurrent storytelling with a take-home craft relating to the book *She's Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head*.

The Conservancy of Southwest Florida presents a program with a live red-tailed hawk, and CROW, along with refuge staff, will do a live American kestrel program. Throughout the day, bird games and crafts continue the theme.

Other Sunday highlights include all-free narrated Tarpon Bay Explorers (TBE) tram tours of Wildlife Drive, archery skills clinics (for ages 10 and older), a butterfly house, face-painting, a touch tank at TBE, bird-carving demonstrations by master sculptor Jim Sprankle, music, and hot dogs.

"We estimate the value of this free event to be up to \$75 per family of four," said "Ding" Days Committee co-chair, Ranger Toni Westland. "But the value of family- and nature-bonding? Priceless."

Continuous free shuttle service will run from the refuge's Tram Parking Lot on Sanibel-Captiva Road and from TBE's parking lot (look for signs).

The entire day's schedule is included below. For more information on other events during the upcoming "Ding" Darling Days week, Oct. 16-22, visit www.dingdarlingdays.com or call 239-472-1100, ext. 221.

(EC= "Ding" Darling Visitor & Education Center)
(TBE= Tarpon Bay Explorers)

Sunday, Oct. 16, 2016
FREE FAMILY FUN DAY
J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR
A FREE day valued at \$75 per family of four

ALL DAY: 10% off all select bird gifts in the Refuge Nature Store

9:45am Flag-raising ceremony, EC entrance

10am **FREE Premiere of *Welcome to "Ding" Darling* orientation film**, followed by giveaway of free reusable goody bags giveaway to the first 500 kids, EC Auditorium

10am-12noon **97.7 Latino Hits Van**

11am **FREE Saving the Birds in the Everglades: A Living History** by Big Cypress National Preserve, EC parking lot

11am **FREE *She's Wearing a Dead Bird on Her Head!* Story & Craft**, with Ranger Toni, EC Auditorium

12noon **FREE Live Red-tailed Hawk Presentation**, Conservancy of SW FL, EC parking lot

12noon-3pm **Shade Tree Pickers live bluegrass music**

1pm **FREE Kids Bird Time**. Contests & prizes: Bird calling & Reddish Egret dancing, EC parking

2pm **FREE Live American Kestrel**, with Ranger Becky & CROW, EC parking lot

FREE & continuous throughout the day

- **FREE** naturalist-narrated 60-minute tram tours (check in at tram booth upon arrival)
- **FREE** archery demos and clinics, adjacent to overflow parking lot
- **FREE** bird face painting, EC
- **FREE** hot dogs
- **FREE** Jim Sprankle bird-carving demo
- **FREE** Bird Dress-Up Photo Station, EC
- **FREE** parking at Special Events Parking site (look for signs)
- **FREE** shuttle service
- **FREE** Butterfly House
- **FREE** touch tank presentations at TBE
- **FREE** hands-on bird crafts
- **FREE** Water/Ways Flow Exhibit, EC
- **FREE** environmental displays and informational booths with giveaways
- **FREE** Special 2016 Federal Duck Stamp Art Exhibit, EC Auditorium

The following sponsors make “Ding” Darling Days possible: **ROSEATE SPOONBILL SPONSORS:** Doc’s Ford Sanibel Rum Bar & Grille; **GREAT EGRET SPONSORS:** George & Wendy’s Seafood Grille; **GREAT BLUE HERON SPONSORS:** 97.7 Latino & Juan Radio, Andrew Thompson Company, Bailey’s General Store, Mike & Terry Baldwin, Bank of the Islands, Wayne & Linda Boyd, Cedar Chest Fine Jewelry, Island Sun, Jerry’s Foods of Sanibel, John & Beth Newland, Sanibel-Captiva Beach Resorts, Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, Sanibel Captiva Rotary Club, Sanibel Moorings, Santiva Chronicle, Spotlight Graphics, Jim & Patty Sprankle; **REDDISH EGRET SPONSORS:** Sarah Ashton & Jim Metzler, Karen Bell, Big Red Q Quickprint, Casa Ybel Resort, Jerry Edelman & Maryanne Daly, Sally & Rich Ennis, Florida Weekly, Phyllis Gresham, Island Inn, Jensen’s on the Gulf and Marina & Cottages, Mitchell’s Sand Castles & Forty/Fifteen Resorts, Painting With a Twist, Ed & Lynn Ridlehoover, Sanibel-Captiva Kiwanis Club, Stewart and Sons Insurance, Inc., Suncatchers’ Dream, West Wind Inn, Don & Ann-Marie Wildman; **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, Intech Printing, Island Cinema, Island Management, Island Therapy Center, Marina Customer Service Training, Over Easy Café, Panther Printing, Sanibel Art & Frame, George & Wendy Schnapp, Select Vacation Properties, Winston & Barbara Spurgeon, Tents ‘n’ Events.

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 proceeds.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit www.dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566, 239-472-1100 ext. 4, or dingdarlingsociety@gmail.com.

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