

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release  
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Caption: Amanda Brooks

### **Refuge welcomes new intern**

Intern Amanda Brooks recently arrived to help J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge with manpower shortages in the coming year, thanks to funding from the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS).

Brooks graduated from St. Lawrence University in Canton, NY, in May 2017 with majors in environmental studies and English and minors in art and art history. The Westford, Mass., native worked last summer as a research technician on a plant biology experiment at the Cedar Creek Ecosystem Science Reserve in Minnesota. She serves as a shared-use intern for DDWS and the refuge.

“My grandmother used to live on Sanibel, so I've actually been visiting the island for as long as I can remember,” said Brooks. “It's one of my favorite places in the world, and the ‘Ding’ Darling National Wildlife Refuge has always been the coolest place on the island for me as I love searching for wildlife on the drive. Everyone at the refuge and the society are so friendly and helpful, so I have felt immediately welcomed. I know it's going to be a great place to work.”

DDWS provides living stipends and other benefits for about a dozen interns each year. The refuge supports interns and resident volunteers with free housing.

“Our interns bring youthful energy, enthusiasm, and creativity to the refuge team,” said supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland. “At the same time, the program gives recent graduates an opportunity to learn hands-on about the environment and refuge operations.”

“I am really looking forward to learning more about working for a nonprofit friends group that

works to support a national wildlife refuge which I grew up visiting and loving,” Brooks says. “As a child I had no idea how much places like ‘Ding’ Darling rely on private donations, so it will be great to be a part of the work that goes into promoting the refuge and helping to support it.”

For more information about the refuge’s internship programs, please contact Westland at 239-472-1100 ext. 237.

#### 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 [dingdarlingsociety.org](http://dingdarlingsociety.org) or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org).

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