



FALL 2017

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.

Look What's New at 'Ding' Days 2017

New activities and programs add fresh excitement to the 29th annual "Ding" Darling Days birding and eco-festival the week of October 15-21, 2017. Note: Activities and programs are subject to change. Check www.dingdarlingdays.com for the latest calendar of events.

On free Family Fun Day, Sunday, October 15, the Refuge will debut its new **#LearningLav** exhibit, which has turned the Visitor & Education Center restrooms into marine life exhibits. The "toilet paper-cutting ceremony" takes place at 10 a.m., followed by a free goodie bag giveaway.

Also on Sunday, the schedule includes three new programs: Kids Animal Yoga by Ambu Yoga and Ranger Toni, and CROW live animal presentations: Birds of Prey, starring an American Kestrel and Great Horned Owl; and Do's and Don'ts of Animal Rescue, with a Gopher Tortoise and Virginia Opossum.

The Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau's Shell Love Bug seashell-covered Volkswagen will make an appearance that day for photo ops, plus fly-fishing demos and a Get the Lead

Out fishing gear exchange are planned. (Bring your toxic lead weights and jigs to exchange for environmental-friendly ones.) The Sanibel School Steel Drumming Band will perform for the first time from 1:30 to 3 p.m., plus the 97.7 Latino Hits Van returns to entertain from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In addition to the day's all-free refuge tours donated by Tarpon Bay Explorers, archery clinics, hot dogs, butterfly house, and kids' nature crafts, this year the Florida WaterVentures Traveling Lab will make an

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Bailey's Richard Johnson leads the live auction bidding at the 2017 event.

Go Wild for 'Ding'

In keeping with the February 14 date of our 2018 Go Wild for "Ding" fundraiser, we are featuring "In the Nest" as this season's theme.

This event again takes place in the Sanibel Community House. It features an island restaurants buffet and live and silent auctions. Jim Sprankle has promised us a feather pin for live auction; the winner

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Animal Olympics on Indigo Trail gets kids outdoors on Monday's "Let's Go on a Hike Day."

Teacher Grants Deadline

The “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society (DDWS) has announced its 12th annual round of teacher grants. Up to \$10,000 in grant awards are available to teachers in Lee, Charlotte, Collier, Glades, and Hendry counties this school year for conservation education-related projects.

Teachers in the five-county area 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.

All schools are invited to submit conservation-related proposals by October 31, 2017. The approved proposals will be awarded by December 2017 for projects to be completed by May 2018.

WHAT’S NEW

continued from page 1

appearance. The 53-foot traveling science center features enriching and engaging activities for a hands-on look at Florida’s diverse watersheds, water conservation, and recycling.

WaterVentures will also be open for touring the following day, Monday, October 16, when Lee County schools are off for the day. The theme is Let’s Go on a Hike Day, and free programs include a scavenger hunt at Bailey Tract, Animal Olympics on Indigo Trail, a hike and story time with Ranger Toni at the Wildlife Education Boardwalk, and a showing of the film *The Lorax*.

New free programs throughout the week include horseshoe crab clinics, a bee presentation, a Making Calusa Mounds of Midden program by archaeologist Theresa Schober, and film showings. To see the full calendar of events, visit www.dingdarlingdays.com.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS), and Tarpon Bay Explorers, the refuge’s recreation concession, co-host “Ding” Darling Days with support from the local community and businesses.

GO WILD

continued from page 1

becomes a member of the prestigious Sprinkle Feather Club, which flocks together once a year for a special event.

Stay tuned to dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/go-wild-for-ding for updates on auction items and sponsors. To become a sponsor, call Executive Director Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or email director@dingdarlingsociety.org.



Students from Pelican Elementary School in Cape Coral visited “Ding” Darling last school year as part of their granted “Celebrating Birds” project.

In the past 11 years, DDWS has granted more than \$73,000 to local schools for environmental projects. The teacher grants are funded by monies received from the DDWS Conservation Education Endowment Fund estab-

lished by Jay “Ding” Darling’s grandson, the late Kip Koss.

For further information and an application, visit tinyurl.com/dinggrants, or contact Sierra Hoisington at 472-1100 ext. 233 or shois@dingdarlingsociety.org.

Right: The Florida WaterVentures Traveling Lab will be on hand for Sunday, Family Fun Day, and the Monday following, October 16, which is a day off for Lee County public schools.



Below: Lee County VCB’s Shell Love Bug will drive added excitement to Family Fun Day.



WANT TO BE A ‘DING’ EVENT SPONSOR?

“Ding” Darling sponsors get publicized through newspaper coverage, event signage, and extensive social media channels. Your next opportunity to sponsor an event is Go Wild for “Ding” on February 14, 2018. Contact Sarah Lathrop at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org to discuss this and other event sponsorship opportunities.

FOLLOW AND LIKE US

DDWS is currently active on three social media platforms. Please “LIKE” us on **Facebook** (join our 11,000 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). Also visit our YouTube channel by searching “ding darling wildlife society.”



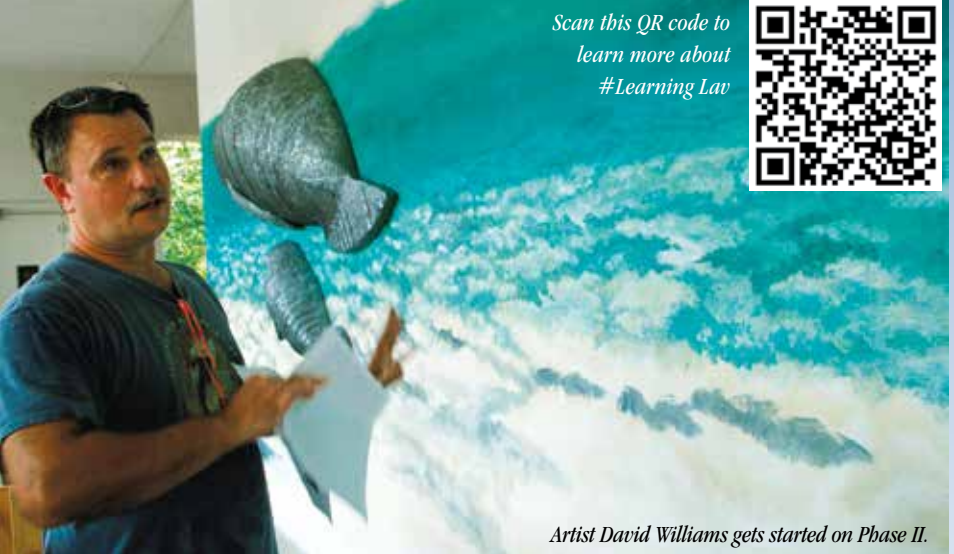
Project #LearningLav

Phase II of our new restroom interpretive exhibits was completed in September as artist David Williams finished work on the outdoor 3D mural. He mounted lightweight wildlife sculptures to depict an underwater scene. They joined the mother and baby manatee “sculptires” installed in May by local artist Andrew Corke, who fashioned them out of recycled bicycle tires.

Inside both restrooms, David also painted murals that give visitors the illusion of being underwater. Photographic tile murals feature an image of a mangrove landscape taken at the Refuge.

Funded by a grant from the West Coast Inland Navigation District (WCIND) and contributions from private donors, Project #LearningLav includes educational messaging inside the lavatories and on the outdoor wall leading to them. Simple teaser messages and artistic representations are meant to entice visitors into the Visitor & Education Center to learn more.

“We have identified a major missed opportunity for educating visitors,” said Birgie Miller, Executive Director of the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society, which is facilitating the grant and project. “Whereas we see nearly a mil-



Scan this QR code to learn more about #LearningLav



Artist David Williams gets started on Phase II.

lion visitors to the Refuge each year, only about a quarter of them enter the Center. We were finding that many come to use the restrooms without ever stepping foot inside to see all of our wonderful educational exhibits.”

Don’t miss our “toilet paper-cutting ceremony” for the #LearningLav exhibit on “Ding” Days’ Family Fun Day, October 15.

DDWS would like to thank members of its project committees.

Creative Team: Andrea Conners, MaryBeth Greenplate, Amy Herd, Marilyn Kloosterman, Emily Koval, Jen McSorley, Toni Ory, Monica Scroggin, Sheridan Snell, Christine Szymanczyk, and Ann-Marie Wildman;

Implementation Team: Carrie Alexander, Nate Caswell, Jeff Combs, Joann Hinman, Sierra Hoisington, Sarah Lathrop, Kathy McCabe, Birgie Miller, Paul Tritaik, Chelle Walton, and Toni Westland.



DDWS and Refuge staff pose with wildlife sculptures that will hover overhead on the ceiling and wall scenes.



Tarpon Bay Construction

Construction continues on the SCCF marine lab at the Refuge’s Tarpon Bay Recreation Area. Tarpon Bay Explorers’ recreation concession is still fully operative, but public vessel-launching from the ramp is closed because of parking issues. **Reminder:** Paddlers can still launch their vessels into the Refuge from Wildlife Drive. The marine lab is being built in a partnership between the Refuge and SCCF. The Refuge provided the property and the funds to build it, while SCCF is paying for lab and office equipment and furnishings.

STAFF NEWS

New Conservation Educator

To remedy the current shortage in education staff, “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society was able to hire a full-time conservation educator to work with Refuge staff for a period of at least one year. The funding was made possible by a dollar-for-dollar match grant from the Fleischer Family Foundation for \$20,000 and matching donations for another \$20,000 from various Refuge supporters.

Sara Hallas, who served as the Refuge’s Summer Teachers Assisting Refugees (STAR) teacher for two months this summer, has accepted the Conservation Educator position. Previously, she worked as an environmental science teacher for the Lee County School District and, before that, a second-grade teacher at River Hall Elementary in Alva, Florida.

“We welcome Sara into the fold with open arms,” said Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland. “The budget crisis has dealt a real hardship to us in trying to keep up with our mission to create future conservation stewards through student busing programs. Sara has been such an asset this summer. We are so grateful to the Wildlife Society for making it possible to keep her on.”

Sara will oversee a seasonal staff of two education interns and two resident volunteers to schedule visits for more than a thousand Lee County School District students in the coming school year. She already supervised field trip visits and free summer programs throughout the summer and was in charge of estuary

field trips for the school district last school year.

“I love being outdoors and educating students about wildlife and their habitats, sharing the passion and love for all of the organisms that make that wonderful habitat so amazing and unique,” said Sara. “I feel honored to have this opportunity to be a part of this community, learning and sharing that knowledge with all who visit.”

DDWS Staff Promotion

Christopher Galloway recently accepted a promotion for the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society from part-time Nature Store Assistant to full-time Assistant Office Manager. He began working for DDWS in December 2016 assisting Refuge Nature Store manager Jeanne Walsh. As a graduate of Florida Southwestern State College’s technology programs, he has proven invaluable in other facets of DDWS operations.

In his new position, Chris will continue to assist in the nature store and has taken on additional managerial responsibilities working with Office Manager Joann Hinman in DDWS’ downstairs offices.

“We have appreciated Chris’ hard work, smart mind, and loyalty to the mission in his part-time role,” said DDWS Executive Director Birgie Miller. “We are now looking forward to having him on full time, helping us all become even stronger at fulfilling DDWS’ mission to support the work of the ‘Ding’ Darling National Wildlife Refuge.”

Chris inherits his “Ding” Darling connection from his parents, Sanibel residents Nancy Riley and Michael Galloway, both of whom have been volunteering in the Visitor & Education Center for several years. He holds

a degree in network service technology and post-secondary vocational certificates in network security and information technology support.



Welcoming Sierra for Second Intern Term

Sierra Hoisington has re-upped her internship commitment with the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society for another year. Originally from Tega Cay, South Carolina, and a graduate of Clemson

University with a bachelor’s degree in wildlife and fisheries biology, she joined the DDWS team last fall.

“It has been exciting to watch Sierra grow and take on new responsibilities this past year,” said DDWS Executive Director Birgie Miller. “We are so happy she has decided to stay and further grow her job description in helping us support the Refuge.”

“I’m very excited to extend my experience and increase my knowledge with a variety of new projects such as the film series and photography contests,” said Sierra.



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 6, 2017, at 1 p.m. to be held in the auditorium of the Visitor & Education Center at the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge.

AGENDA

- I. Minutes of the Annual Meeting of December 7, 2016: Wendy Kindig
- II. Treasurer’s Report: Sarah Ashton. 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. Refuge Manager Remarks: Paul Tritaik
- VII. Open Discussion of the Business of the Society.
- VIII. Society Founders Award: Doris Hardy
- IX. Adjournment

Your attendance and participation are encouraged.

Wendy Kindig, Secretary



Project leader Wesley Boone tags a Sanibel Island Rice Rat, a species found only on the island. The Refuge and DDWS support housing for this project.

University, on September 23, 2017. Their research investigates how non-native black rats and native cotton rats influence the distribution of the Sanibel Island rice rat. Their exciting research could help inform future management at “Ding” Darling NWR.

Sanibel Island Rice Rat Study

by Wesley Boone, Department of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation, University of Florida

With five research field seasons under its belt, the Sanibel Island rice rat research team has just one field season left, scheduled for December 2017 through February 2018. During its most recent field season, which spanned June and July 2017, the team caught and released 15 individual rice rats, the second largest seasonal total since the project began.

A majority of the animals were from properties protected by “Ding” Darling NWR. This field season was atypical, as many of the rice rats captured had been tagged in the previous field season (winter 2016-2017), indicating that recent environmental conditions may have been favorable for rice rat survival.

Two interns with the project, Tre’Nard Morgan and Joelle Carbonell of the University of Florida, presented their individual research projects at the Southeastern Ecology and Evolution Conference, hosted by Florida Gulf Coast

Year-End Giving

Help Wildlife and Conservation with a Tax-Deductible Year-End Donation

‘Tis the season of giving: Gifts, time, parties and celebrations, and donations to non-profit charities. Nationwide, more than 40% of all individual charitable donations are made in December by people wanting to make a difference. It is also an opportunity, through giving, to generate income tax deductions that may help reduce your tax bill for 2017.

Now’s the time – up to December 31 – to make a deductible gift.

As 2017 draws to a close, please consider the value of donating to the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society to support the conservation and education efforts at the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge. Your tax-deductible gift helps support the Refuge in areas such as conservation education, water quality and wildlife research, internships, walkways and trails, interpretive exhibits, land acquisition, and so many other ways to preserve and protect this vital land and educate future conservation stewards. With so many wonderful charities around the world doing work that makes a difference, please know how much we appreciate that you choose to support the work taking place here at the Refuge.

Your gift, regardless of its size, will be appreciated and put to good use.

Ways to support conservation through the Society:

Online with a Credit Card

On our website (dingdarlingsociety.org), it’s easy to make a secure, online, year-end gift to the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society. Options include Visa, Mastercard, American Express, and Discover. Tax-deductible gifts for 2017 can be made anytime before 11:59 p.m. (Central Standard) on December 31, 2017.

Checks

Those wishing to receive year-end tax credit need to have a postmark and check date on or before December 31, 2017. Gifts can be mailed to: “Ding” Darling Society, P.O. Box 565, Sanibel, FL 33957.

Gifts of Appreciated Stock

Donated appreciated stock (if owned for more than one year) may help you gain a deduction on the fair market value and avoid capital gains tax that might be due if sold outright. Stock transfers should be initiated and received on or before the close of the market on December 31, 2017. To ensure appropriate credit, it is important that you contact the DDWS office when you are ready to make your stock transfer gift.

IRA Charitable Rollovers

Congress permanently extended the Qualified Charitable Distribution provision which allows people over age 70 ½ to transfer money from their IRA assets to qualified charitable organizations and have it count as their required minimum distribution without increasing their gross income.

If you are age 70 ½ or older, you can request your financial advisor to make a direct transfer from your IRA in any amount up to \$100,000 to a charity without reporting it as taxable income. Contact your account administrator to write a check to the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society and deliver to the address below. For a year-end tax deduction, envelopes must be postmarked no later than December 31, 2017.

With any charitable gift, we encourage you to check with your professional advisors to see if this type of giving makes sense for you.

“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society, Inc.
Tax Identification #59-2240895
Attn: Birgie Miller
PO Box 565, Sanibel, FL 33957



45/82 Society

Together we can continue the education and conservation efforts at the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge through planned giving.

“Having a glimpse of the world as God really made it is a gift we can give our next generation.”



This is one of the reasons I have planned for the future and named the DDWS as a beneficiary in my estate plans. To preserve and protect the Refuge as we know it and to continue to educate and inspire our next conservation stewards. As a volunteer for many years and now serving as board president of the DDWS, I have seen and continue to see the importance of the work taking place at the Refuge. I have also seen how vital the additional private philanthropic support is to the Refuge to continue this important conservation work.

With this planning, I am assured that my hard-earned assets will be distributed according to my wishes and I will not have to worry about the government making the decisions for me. It is important to me to have my plans and wishes in place before my death, and while I hope to live many more years, it’s never too early to begin the process. I am excited to know that my support will continue to be put to work in making a difference in conservation for the future.”

- **Doris D. Hardy**, DDWS Board President

Make Your Plans Now

Many of our members help shape the future of the Refuge by designating the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society as a beneficiary in their estate plans. They become members of the 45/82 Society (signifying the year of the Refuge’s establishment in 1945 and the year of the Society’s founding in 1982), which recognizes those friends who have chosen to honor the Refuge with a planned or deferred gift. A combination of large and small planned gifts received throughout the years has enabled the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society to continue its support of the Refuge in areas of land acquisition, education, research, and other important conservation efforts. **Supporting these efforts through your estate is easier than you might think.**

We are proud of all that the Refuge has accomplished in the past 35 years thanks to the support from people who love and value the Refuge. And although the world is an uncertain place, we look forward to the future with confidence that we will continue our mission of education and preservation.



Charitable Bequests

While there are many ways to plan for the future of your assets, charitable bequests are one of the easiest ways you can leave a lasting impact on the Refuge. A bequest gift may be made in your will or trust directing a specific dollar amount, a percentage of your estate, or a piece of property to the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society. All charitable bequests to our organization are deducted in full from the value of your estate in the calculation of estate taxes, which can significantly lessen the burden of estate taxes on your family. The “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society uses charitable gifts to support conservation and education priorities at the time the gift is realized unless otherwise specified by the donor. If you would like your gift to be used to support a specific program, please contact us to ensure your wishes will be met.

Sample Language for Your Plan

If you wish to name the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society in your estate plans or name us as a beneficiary of your retirement accounts or life insurance, please name us 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].”
Our tax identification number is: 59-2240895

Thank You for Your Commitment to Conservation

The 45/82 Society recognizes those friends who have chosen to honor the Refuge with a planned or deferred gift. By creating a personal legacy, you also create a lasting legacy for the Refuge. Your gift through your estate plan, large or small, is critical to the Refuge’s future survival. We would like to recognize you as a member the 45/82 Society, unless you prefer anonymity. **If you have already remembered the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society in your estate plans, please let us know so we can thank you and make a plan to fulfill your wishes at the time the gift is realized.**

For more information on how to leave a lasting gift for conservation, please contact Executive Director Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org, or visit our website at dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/leave-a-legacy.



J.N. Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge "DING" DARLING DAYS October 15-21, 2017

Thanks to the following sponsors who are making this year's event possible:



Roseate Spoonbill Sponsor:



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Great Blue Heron Sponsors:



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Jerry Edelman &
Maryann Daly

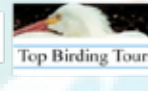
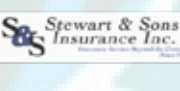
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DINGDARLINGDAYS.COM



WILDLIFE SPOTLIGHT

Here we showcase the best of wildlife shots taken recently at the Refuge by photographers, volunteers, staff, and others. Thanks to visitor Sylvia Guarino for this fun capture of a Soft-shelled Turtle at Bailey Tract. Tarpon Bay Explorers' Captain Dan Bridgers snapped the mother-child manatee portrait in Tarpon Bay recently. The jumping tarpon shot was also taken in Tarpon Bay, where the first tarpon caught on rod-and-reel is honored each spring by the "Ding" Darling & Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament. If you have a wildlife picture to share, please contact Sarah Lathrop at sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org.

IN THE REFUGE NATURE STORE

Store Highlights

Fun new items arrive every month in the Refuge Nature Store. Here's a quick snapshot of some of our latest and greatest.



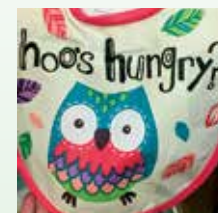
Holiday Cards

They're here! 2017's whimsical wildlife holiday cards have arrived. One set features three each of five different designs for \$14.99. The inside mes-

sage reads: "May the beauty and wonder of nature bring you hope and joy this holiday season and in the new year."

To order items by mail, email manager Jeanne Walsh at naturestore@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.



Happy Hour Holiday Shopping

Mark your calendars for Wednesday, November 29, the date of the Refuge Nature Store's fifth annual Happy Hour Holiday Shopping event in the Visitor & Educa-



tion Center. The "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society will keep the store open two extra hours after the center closes, from 5 to 7 p.m.

The Refuge Nature Store has stocked special holiday present items for men, women, and children. It will have gift consultants ready with suggestions and free recycled paper gift-wrapping. Local artisans will also be on hand for meet-and-greet. The store will serve wine and cheese for the event. Shoppers who spend more than \$20 receive a free gift.

"All proceeds from Nature Store purchases go directly to benefiting wildlife and conservation," said Store Manager Jeanne Walsh. "In past years, this has been a really fun way to get everyone into 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, wildlife 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 more information on the Refuge Happy Hour Shopping, call 239-472-1100 ext. 241.



Summer Education

Due to staffing shortages, the Refuge was unable to offer its summer day camp program, designed to reach underserved communities. Instead, the grant money for the camp that comes each year from an anonymous donor was put toward hosting camp groups from communities such as Immokalee and Tice.

New at Bailey Tract

Ongoing habitat restoration and trail improvement projects have been giving the Refuge’s satellite Bailey Tract campus a facelift. The crowning touch was installed in July: two new kiosks at the entrance and seven interpretive panels along the more than 3-1/2 miles of trails.

Welcome panels let visitors know how to budget their time visiting the greater Refuge areas and what kind of wildlife they might expect to see at the Bailey Tract. Along the 100-acre freshwater tract’s trails, signage educates about specific site features such as the endangered Sanibel Island rice rat, birds, pollinators, and the history of the Bailey Tract. Other tract wildlife includes alligators, river otters, gopher tortoises, bobcats, marsh rabbits, pileated woodpeckers, and nesting colonies of black-necked stilts.

Admission to Bailey Tract is free and open to hikers and cyclists daily sunrise to sunset. Access is available from Tarpon Bay Road and Island Inn Road.

“The Bailey Tract is something of a hidden secret on Sanibel,” said Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland. “Just steps off busy Tarpon Bay Road, you feel as though you are miles away from civilization. We hope the improved signage gives visitors a new understanding of this sanctuary for some of the island’s most charismatic wildlife.”

Hurricane Irma Strikes Refuge

With winds of up to 80 mph, Hurricane Irma struck a lighter blow than expected to Sanibel Island on September 10. Extensive vegetation damage in Wildlife Drive and Calusa Shell Mound Trail closed the Ref-



Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland on Wildlife Drive the day after Irma hit

SUMMER HAPPENINGS

uge until further notice. “It will take days with our limited staff, but it will make us stronger,” said Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland.

She added that the storm seems to have had little impact on Refuge wildlife. “Hurricanes are a natural phenomenon, and wildlife has adapted,” Toni said. “Habitat and animals typically rebound quickly, and nature reconstructs in a hurricane’s aftermath. However, research is showing that as storms continue to increase in intensity, it affects wildlife’s ability to bounce back.”

If the Refuge has not yet reopened by the time you read this, please monitor the official Refuge Facebook page for updates.

Refuge Gavin Site Commemorated

On August 11, the Refuge and the City of Sanibel unveiled an interpretive sign on the shared-use path at the Refuge’s Gavin Site as the first installment of the city’s forthcoming Heritage Trail.

The island’s first pioneer African-American family, the Gavins played an integral role in settling Sanibel once they arrived in 1917. Edmund Gavin, Jr., in fact, worked with Tommy Wood, the Refuge’s first Refuge Manager, back when it was known as the Sanibel National Wildlife Refuge. The Gavins occupied a hut on the site for more than 50 years. They enlarged it numerous times to accommodate the growing family, which still lives on Sanibel Island.



Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik, City Historical Preservation Committee member Yvonne Hill, Eugene Gavin, and Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland

Make-A-Wish Visit

“Ding” Darling welcomed its first-ever Make-a-Wish family on Friday, June 23. Ayana Rusian had requested an animal experience visit to Sanibel and Captiva Islands, which began at the Refuge. Staff arranged a full day of activities for her family from Delaware, which included a tour to the Wildlife Education Boardwalk with Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland, story time with the appearance of a live American Kestrel from CROW, and a boat trip and touch tank experience with Tarpon Bay Explorers. Top right, Toni and Refuge Manager Paul Tritaik greet Ayana, her brother, and her father.



Minnesota Outreach

“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society staffers took outreach efforts “on the wing” during a trip to Minnesota Valley National Wildlife Refuge in Bloomington. They hosted an event for local friends on July 27 and later visited four other refuges and public lands in the area. Thanks to Mark and Gretchen Banks for making the trip possible.



Nearly 80 people came to learn about “Ding” Darling at the outreach function.

Match Grant Challenge Met!

Due to the federal budget crisis, “Ding” Darling was unable to fill its current vacancy for an education specialist. However, “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society received a grant this summer from the Fleischner Family Foundation that offered to match funds raised to support the salary of an experienced, full-time wildlife educator who will work with Refuge staff for a period of at least one year.

For every dollar DDWS raised for the effort, the grant matched it with \$1. We needed to raise \$20,000 to receive the match. And thanks to our generous donors, we did it! The funds will ensure that the Refuge is able to once again



Donations and a grant will continue our mission of making future conservation stewards.

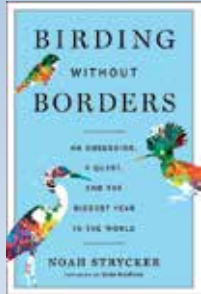
educate thousands of students visiting the Refuge in 2017-2018. Anyone interested in supporting education efforts at the Refuge can make a gift by visiting dingdarlingsociety.org/donation or contacting Executive Director Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

Read more about our new Conservation Educator on page 4.

SNEAK PEEK: Lecture & Film Series 2018

January unfolds with kickoffs to our two popular seasonal series in the Visitor & Education Center.

“Bird Nerd” Noah Stryker starts out the Friday Lecture Series, which runs January 19 through April 13. He set a world Big Year record in 2015, and his book about the experience, *Birding Without Borders: An Obsession, A Quest, and the Biggest Year in the World*, releases this month. Noted bird activist, Dr. Stephen Kress, also



“Bird Nerd” Noah Stryker, the first human to see more than half of the planet’s bird species in a single, year-long, round-the-world birding trip

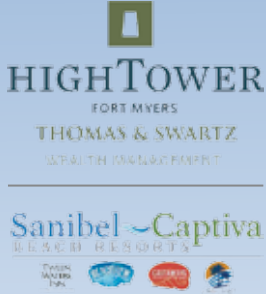


Audubon puffin activist Dr. Stephen Kress

joins the lineup to talk about his book *The Puffin Project: An Improbable Quest to Bring a Beloved Sea Bird Back to Egg Rock*. HighTower/Thomas & Swartz Wealth Management again sponsors the 12-lecture series.

The 2018 Biweekly Wednesday Film Series features seven documentaries, sponsored by Sanibel Captiva Beach Resorts, and runs January 10 through April 4. First up, *Wings of Life*, narrated by Meryl Streep and produced by Disneynature, celebrates butterflies, hummingbirds, bees, bats, and flowers. One of the season’s highlights, *Chasing Coral*, explores the beauty of coral and its fragility and future in a changing climate.

Stay tuned to dingdarlingsociety.org and “Ding” on the Wing bulletins for upcoming news about the two series.



The film Chasing Coral examines the coral bleaching blight. Image courtesy of The Ocean Agency - XL Catlin Seaview Survey - Richard Vevers

Farewell to a Longtime Friend

Mary Ruth Stegman passed away in March, leaving behind a legacy as an expert birder and loyal friend of the Refuge. She volunteered from 1984 to 2003, clocking in a total of more than 3,600 hours. During that time, Mary Ruth served on the Board of the Directors for 12 years and wrote the *Society Pages* newsletter. She also authored the book *Refuge in a Shrinking World: Reflections on Sanibel Island*.

“Mary Ruth was an avid birder,” remembers Emeritus Board Member Marilyn Kloosterman. “She was very knowledgeable about them and was a great asset as a volunteer.”



Mary Ruth Stegman (forefront in blue) at a reception following the Crossdike Pavilion dedication in 1996

TARPON BAY EXPLORERS SCHEDULE*

(tarponbayexplorers.com; call ahead to 239-472-8900 to confirm schedule and make reservations)
*Extra times for all tours added the week between Christmas and New Year’s.

Tram Tours of Wildlife Drive: Mon-Thurs 10am, 11:30am, 1pm, 2:30pm, and 4pm; Sat-Sun 10am, 1pm, and 4pm

Kayak Trail Tour: Daily 8:30am or 10am plus Mon-Fri 1pm

Sunset Rookery Paddle: Mon, Wed, Fri and Sat or Sun. All 2 hours prior to sunset.

Breakfast Cruise: Mon, Wed, Fri 8:30am

Standup Paddleboard Tour: Tues, Thurs, Sat. All 9am

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

Evening Cruise: Daily. All 2 hours prior to sunset.

Aquarium & Touch Tank: Daily at 3pm

Rentals and fishing charters: Daily 8am-6pm

MEMORIAL AND HONOR GIFTS

June 1 – August 31, 2017

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:

Anthony Bahas	Francine Litofsky
Richard Bailey	Dr. George Naren
Dr. Christina Barkley	Carole Park
Janet Bergemann	Ramona Peyton
Roger Bell	Judith Steger &
Dr. H. Randall Deming	Gene Rodriguez
Dr. David Drachman	Bill & Jane Saunders
Doris Fletcher	Whitman Smith
Frances Fleisher	Judy Vollom
Christine Glancy	Dr. & Mrs. Thomas Walker
Phil Hart	Joe Walzer
Mary Elaine Jacobson	Jane Werner
James E. Kowalski	Mark Westall
Theodore Kucera	Bill Wallschlager

We received gifts in HONOR of the following:

Mark & Gretchen Banks	Ann Harris
Barbara Bazzone	Marilyn Kloosterman
Bruce Boswell	Andrew Plankenhorn
Howard Buhse, Jr.	Jim Sprankle
Bob & Kathy Cappelli	Arthur Weissbach
Mary Darling	Judy Wright
Lance & Margaret Eggleston	



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Upcoming Events



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

29th Annual "Ding" Darling Days – October 15-22, 2017
Veteran's Day Weekend (fee-free days on Wildlife Drive) -- November 11-12, 2017
Happy Hour Holiday Shopping – November 29, 2017
DDWS Annual Meeting – December 6, 2017
Free Winter Programs – January 8 – April 8, 2018
Biweekly Wednesday Film Series – January 10–April 4, 2018
Friday Lecture Series – January 19–April 13, 2018
Sixth Annual Go Wild for "Ding" Fundraiser – February 14, 2018
Seventh Annual "Ding" Darling & Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament – May 11, 2018

