

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: Becky Woodward and Avery Renshaw began their biology internships with the refuge last month.

Refuge welcomes 2019 biology interns

Two new biology interns joined the team effort at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge in April. Avery Renshaw and Becky Woodward plan to stay into mid-December 2019 as part of the refuge’s long-running internship program supported by the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS).

Renshaw, originally from Mount Airy, Md., most recently interned with Mote Marine Lab’s Coral Reef Ecological Processes Program in the Florida Keys. She graduated in 2018 with a bachelor’s degree in environmental science and studies with a biology concentration from Townson University in Townson, Md.

Surprisingly, Renshaw named no-see-ums as her favorite thing at the refuge, “with the diverse wildlife and idyllic marine setting being a close second. I’m a sucker for field work, and I especially look forward to working on seagrass monitoring.”

Woodward comes to the refuge from Katy, Tex. She graduated in 2017 from Texas Lutheran College in Seguin and will graduate from St. Edward’s University in Austin, Tex, with a master’s degree in environmental management and sustainability.

“So far, my favorite part of ‘Ding’ is the work we have been doing in the mangroves,” said Woodward. “It is important to understand how they are responding to the increased nutrient flow. I am looking forward to helping the marine lab with seagrass surveys, and I am also working on a project comparing the data collected in Cornell University’s eBird database to the data collected by our bird surveys. The goal is to determine if the eBird data is consistent with the data collected by survey efforts conducted by the trained staff at the refuge.”

DDWS provides living stipends and other benefits for about a dozen interns each year. The refuge supports interns 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 students and recent graduates an opportunity to learn hands-on about the environment and refuge operations.”

For more information about the refuge’s internship programs, contact Westland at 239-472-1100 ext. 237. To learn about supporting the refuge intern program, contact Birgie Miller, DDWS executive director, at 239-472-1100 ext. 4.

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 profits.

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

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