

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release  
Contact: Chelle Koster Walton  
239-699-4754  
[ChelleTrav@aol.com](mailto:ChelleTrav@aol.com)

Caption: Izzy Garcia will be assisting with refuge learning programming this summer.

### **Refuge welcomes summer education intern**

On May 21, education intern Izzy Garcia joined the team at the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island to help with staffing shortages this summer, thanks to funding from the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS).

Garcia -- a native Floridian originally from Sweetwater, a Miami suburb, and a 12-year Cape Coral resident -- graduated from the University of Florida in Gainesville earlier in the month with a degree in wildlife ecology and conservation.

For her previous internship, she conducted research field work as a BioCorps shared intern at Everglades National Park last summer.

“Sanibel is a beautiful island full of amazing wildlife and wonderful people,” said Garcia. “What I love about the refuge is how welcoming the staff are and how you can get a close view of nesting birds.”

She will assist refuge conservation educator Sara Hallas with summer programming at last through August.

“I am very excited for our ‘Saniverse of Myths’ program we will be presenting at libraries this summer,” she said. “We will be debunking wildlife myths for kids, and I look forward to being a part of that impact.”

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 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 Lynnae Messina, DDWS associate director, at 239-472-1100 ext. 233.

#### 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 [dingdarlingsociety.org](http://dingdarlingsociety.org) or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org).

###