

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption SNAKE: “Snakes Alive!” is one of the day’s wildlife presentations.

Caption sawickiarchery: Archery lessons put bows and arrows in the hands of older kids.

Live wildlife presentations, python talk, art activities highlights of ‘Ding’ Darling Day

As the 75th anniversary celebration at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island kicks in, staff has planned a “Ding” Darling Day for Sunday, Oct. 20, that will concentrate all the best traditions of the eco-festival into one day of family and conservation art activities, tours, and programs.

Guided tours and a 9 a.m. Girl Scouts flag-raising starts the day. The refuge will be handing out free reusable shopping bags made from recycled water bottles to the first 200 guests as it celebrates the birthday of its namesake – Jay Norwood “Ding” Darling – with birthday cookies.

Wildlife presentations outside under the “big top” showcase snakes and animal ambassadors from the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW). Celebrity Burmese python hunter Dusty “Wildman” Crum and biologist Mike Kirkland will talk about the havoc the species is wreaking on the Everglades. (There will be no live snakes at this presentation in the Visitor & Education Center Auditorium.)

Other Sunday highlights include all-free narrated TBE tram tours of Wildlife Drive (based on availability), archery skills clinics (for ages 10 and older), a butterfly house, chalk drawing, wildlife origami, nature sketching, hot dogs, and live music by the

Americana Community Music Association.

"We estimate the value of this free event to be up to \$75 for a family of four," said "Ding" Days Committee chair, Ranger Toni Westland. "But the value of family- and nature-bonding? You just can't put a price tag on that."

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

The entire day's schedule is included below. For more information, visit www.dingdarlingdays.com.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, DDWS, and TBE co-present "Ding" Darling Days with generous support from the local community and businesses.

Sunday, Oct. 20, 2019

FREE 'DING' DARLING DAY

J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR

A FREE day valued at \$75 per family of four

(EC= "Ding" Darling Visitor & Education Center)

(TBE= Tarpon Bay Explorers)

8 a.m. – Birding Tour with Senior Refuge Biologist Jeremy Conrad, meet at EC flagpole

9 a.m. – Flag-Raising at EC flagpole, followed by "Ding" Birthday Celebration in the Event Tent

9 a.m. – noon – Free Stand-up Paddleboard clinic, TBE

9:30 a.m. – Guided Bike the Refuge Tour (4 miles), meet at EC flagpole

10 a.m. - Guided Nature Hike on Indigo Trail in Spanish, meet at EC flagpole

10 a.m. – "Ding" Darling Day Amateur Photo Contest Awards, EC auditorium

10 a.m. – Live Animals Presentation by CROW, Event Tent

10 a.m. – Nature Sketching on Indigo Trail (limited to 40), meet at EC flagpole

10 a.m. – Wildlife Yoga by Ambu Yoga, EC classroom

10 a.m. – 25% off Guided Commodore Creek Paddle, TBE (reserve at 239-472-8900)

11 a.m. – Python Talk, EC auditorium

11 a.m. – Puppet Show by Littleton Elementary, EC classroom

11 a.m. – Guided Nature Hike on Indigo Trail in English, meet at EC flagpole

11 a.m. – 25% off Nature & Sealife Cruise, TBE (reserve at 239-472-8900)

12 noon – Kids Canvas Painting (limited to 20), EC classroom
1 p.m. – Federal & Junior Duck Stamp Presentation, EC auditorium
1 p.m. – Wildlife Origami, EC classroom
1 p.m. – 25% off Guided Commodore Creek Paddle, TBE (reserve at 239-472-8900)
1:30 p.m. – 25 % off Nature & Sealife Cruise, TBE (reserve at 239-472-8900)
2 p.m. – Snakes Alive! Presentation, Event Tent
2 p.m. - Puppet Show by Littleton Elementary, EC classroom
3 p.m. - Live Animals Presentation by CROW, Event Tent
5 p.m. - 25% off Evening Cruise, TBE (reserve at 239-472-8900)
5 p.m. – 25% off Sunset Rookery Paddle, TBE (reserve at 239-472-8900)

FREE & CONTINUOUS THROUGHOUT THE DAY:

- Parking at Special Events Parking site (look for signs) and Tarpon Bay Explorers
- Shuttle service
- Hourly Wildlife Drive Tram Tours, check in at Tram Booth
- Naturalist-narrated, 60-minute tram tours (check in at tram booth upon arrival)
- Plein-air artists on Wildlife Drive
- Face painting
- Chalk drawing
- Butterfly House
- Live music
- Hot dogs
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service emergency response vehicles & demos
- Archery demos, adjacent to overflow parking lot
- Fly-fishing demos
- Fishing workshop
- Hands-on nature crafts
- Informational booths with giveaways

The following sponsors make “Ding” Darling Days possible this year: **ROSEATE SPOONBILL SPONSORS:** Doc’s Ford Sanibel Rum Bar & Grille; **GREAT EGRET SPONSORS:** Mitchell’s Sand Castles, Feather Jim & Patty Sprankle; **GREAT BLUE HERON SPONSORS:** Bailey’s General Store, Mike & Terry Baldwin, Bank of the Islands, Casa Ybel Resort, The Cedar Chest Fine Jewelry, Island Sun/River Weekly, Just Water, Matzaluna The Italian Kitchen, Rotary Club of Sanibel-Captiva, Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, Sanibel-Captiva Kiwanis Club, Sanibel Moorings, Sunny Day Guide; **REDDISH EGRET SPONSORS:** Sarah Ashton - Realtor, RE/MAX of the Islands, The Gresham Family, Island Inn, Jensen’s on the Gulf and Marina & Cottages, Tiffani Kaliko and John Silvia, Dick & Emily Muench, Palm Printing, Stewart & Sons Insurance; **SNOWY EGRET SPONSORS:** Ambu Yoga, Big Red Q Quickprint, John Brennan, Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership, Colony Inn, Kevin & Diane Husk, Island Therapy Center, Panther Printing, Santiva Chronicle, George & Wendy Schnapp, Winston & Gretchen Spurgeon, Nancy Tome, WTLQ, 97.7 Latino and Maxima 97.3 & 95.7.

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 dingdarlingsociety@gmail.com.

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