

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption

Refuge, DDWS announce COVID-19 impacts

The J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island remains fully operational as of Monday, March 15, staff reports. Tarpon Bay Explorers continues to run all scheduled tours and the refuge is still operating its full itinerary of daily free programs.

“We encourage people to get out on Wildlife Drive and get some exercise and fresh air if they have not tested positive for the COVID-19 virus,” said supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland. “The refuge has compounded efforts to keep surfaces and hands sanitized in the Visitor & Education Center, on the tour trams, and in all facilities and rental equipment.”

The refuge has only discontinued its loaner binocular program and a service where volunteers allow the public to look through spotting scopes on Wildlife Drive.

“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) has canceled its remaining three Friday lectures. TK about films. As of Monday, the free Global Recycling Day is still on for Wednesday, March 18.

“Refuge staff will continue to plan for future disruptions in normal operations and mitigate risks of exposure to staff, volunteers, and visitors where we can,” said Westland. “Decisions to close facilities will be made in consultation with local health officials and recommendations of the CDC.”

Those planning to visit the refuge should check the current status by TK what? [I can put up a web page?]

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 or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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