



## **“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society Statement on Racism**

A critical component of the support the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society – Friends of the Refuge provides to the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge is to ensure that the wonders of its wildlife and habitat are available for people from all walks of life to enjoy. Our commitment to provide that opportunity to the youth of our area has resulted in several thousand local schoolchildren visiting the Refuge each year, many from Black and Hispanic communities. But this commitment is simply not enough.

Far too many children and adults across our country don’t have that same opportunity – the opportunity to explore and appreciate our natural world and its wonders. The unfortunate reality is that many people of color still face a barrier, not only to visit our wild spaces, but in so many other aspects of their daily lives – a barrier rooted in unjust treatment and bigotry. Recent events in Minneapolis, and echoed in so many other communities across our nation, emphasize that reality.

The conservation movement got its start with those seeking to do what was right during a time of need. At the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society, we are similarly rededicating ourselves to address a here-and-now critical need – the elimination of racism in our country. Today we make a promise – a promise to listen, learn, and act; a promise to do more in making the outdoors accessible to all; and a promise to acknowledge our responsibility. Please join us in standing with Black Americans and other discriminated minorities to reinforce our Society’s conviction that their lives truly matter. It’s only when all of us live that ethic in what we say, what we do, and how we do it that justice will indeed be served.

“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society – Friends of the Refuge  
PO Box 565; Sanibel, FL 33957  
[www.dingdarlingsociety.org](http://www.dingdarlingsociety.org)