

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: Katy Hosokawa will be assisting the refuge with visitor services through April 2021 and its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary activities this year.

### **‘Ding’ welcomes visitor services intern**

Katy Hosokawa recently joined the team at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge as a visitor services intern. Once she completes her two-week distancing quarantine, she will be working fulltime with supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland.

“I’m kind of easing in, checking out the trails on my own, and reading up on all things ‘Ding,’” said Hosokawa, who comes to the refuge following a naturalist position at the Fort Worth Nature Center and Refuge in Texas.

A native Texan from the small town of Azle, Hosokawa graduated from Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Okla., in 2015 with a bachelor’s degree in geography. She then went on to earn a master’s degree from the University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, where she studied environmental geoscience.

“I love coastal ecology and birds, so Sanibel and the refuge are a perfect fit,” said Hosokawa, who also held a position as a naturalist on Little St. Simons Island on Georgia’s coast from 2018 to 2019.

The “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) provides living stipends and other benefits for about a dozen interns each year. The refuge supports interns with free housing.

“We welcome our new interns’ energy and enthusiasm,” said Westland. “We thank our friends group for making their internships possible. With our shrinking staff, due to federal budget cuts, this sort of partnership is crucial to keep the refuge running.”

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

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