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"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society - Friends of the Refuge

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

Contact: Chelle Koster Walton

239-699-4754

ChelleTrav@aol.com

PATRICK caption: Intern Patrick Carney says he'll never tire of seeing anhingas, ibises, and herons constantly flying overhead on Sanibel.

moth caption: Carney photographed this indigenous moth his first night at the refuge.

Refuge welcomes education intern

On Aug. 3, after a two-week quarantine, education intern Patrick Carney will join the team at the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island to help with staffing shortages this season, thanks to funding from the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS).

Carney, a native of Tver, Russia, was adopted at seven months old and raised in River Edge, New Jersey. He graduated from the University of Delaware, Newark, in May 2020 with a double-major in wildlife and insect ecology/conservation.

For the past two summers Carney worked as an undergraduate researcher focused on photographing and identifying moths caught in traps at different field sites one year and

evaluating insect recolonization in newly reforested areas the second. While in school, he also served as president of birding and entomology clubs with a strong emphasis on public and environmental education.

“My family vacationed here when I was 11, so I've been spending my quarantine refamiliarizing myself with the refuge properties and the island as a whole,” Carney said. “I also set up an area behind my trailer to watch for nocturnal insect diversity and was super excited to have *Polygrammodes eleuata*, a moth species endemic to southern Florida, show up on the first night.”

Carney has also been spending quarantine brainstorming ideas for educational programs, videos, and resources based on his island explorations.

“One of the things that I'm most excited about with this position is that I have a lot of creative license and opportunities to brainstorm educational programs, and I'm looking forward to helping expand the already excellent array of educational programs and materials offered at the refuge.,” he said. “So far, I also know that I'll be able to help with monofilament removal at the refuge, so I'm also excited for that because it's very important and also means I get to be out on the water every week. Lastly, I remain hopeful that the situation with COVID-19 clears up soon so that we're able to begin visiting classrooms for programs and having groups of students again visit the refuge.”

DDWS provides living stipends and other benefits for about a dozen interns each year. The refuge supports interns 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



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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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