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"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society - Friends of the Refuge

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: Intern Hollis Hatfield will be working to help DDWS support refuge education, research, and conservation this season.

'Ding' welcomes new intern

Intern Hollis Hatfield recently arrived from North Carolina to help J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge with staff shortages in the coming season, thanks to funding from the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS). She first underwent a short quarantine upon arrival before receiving a negative result to COVID-19 testing.

Hatfield received her undergraduate degree in wildlife conservation from Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Va., with a minor in leadership and social change. She subsequently studied wildlife conservation and management at University College Dublin in Ireland.

"My master's thesis is still under review, but I should graduate virtually in December," she said. "I spent this summer collecting shorebird nesting data for the thesis at Hammocks Beach State Park, which is a small, uninhabited island off the coast of North Carolina."

The Raleigh, N.C. native will be assisting DDWS in its fundraising efforts to support education, research, and conservation at the refuge. She looks forward to helping with “Ding” Darling Day, although the pandemic has forced its move to Dec. 1 and a more creative format.

“I love Sanibel because I have seen so much wildlife since arriving-- snakes, gopher tortoises, alligators, rabbits, and several unique bird species,” said Hatfield.

DDWS provides living stipends and other benefits for more than 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 DDWS executive director Birgie Miller. “At the same time, the program gives college students and recent graduates an opportunity to learn hands-on about the environment and refuge and non-profit operations.”

For more information about the refuge’s internship programs, contact supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland at 239-472-1100 ext. 237. To make a donation in support of the program, contact Lynnae Messina at 239-472-1100 ext. 233.

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 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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