



# Protect. Educate. Inspire.

"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society - Friends of the Refuge

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: Jim and Liz Birmingham are supporting refuge conservation education programs with an internship fund.

### **'Ding' receives second internship fund**

Jim and Liz Birmingham of Sanibel Island and Colorado recently made a donation in support of an annual internship for the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge. The Birminghams have been coming to Sanibel for many years and believe in the importance of supporting the communities they live in.

The 2021-2022 Birmingham Internship Fund will underwrite one of the three conservation education interns coming to work at the Refuge.

The Birminghams, who are regular visitors to "Ding Darling, were influenced to make their contribution after reading about the Annual Suzanne M. Dubuc Education Internship, which supported the cost of a bilingual education intern this season to facilitate the rollout and continuing educational efforts of the refuge's Wildlife on Wheels (WoW) mobile urban classroom.

"After meeting some of the interns and WoW team, the Birminghams were so impressed by how an intern can make such a huge difference in the educational outreach to students and hard-to-reach communities," said Birgie Miller, executive director of the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS), which supports WoW, interns, land acquisition, and other refuge efforts through philanthropic

fundraising. “They contacted us about how they could make a similar impact on the refuge’s mission and underwrite the cost of a year for an internship.”

DDWS provides living stipends and other benefits for about a dozen interns each year. The refuge supports interns with free housing. For more information about the refuge’s internship programs and supporting them, contact Lynnae Messina, DDWS associate director, at 239-472-1100 ext. 233. DDWS is now accepting donations for future named internships at \$12,500 a year, which is the cost for supporting one intern including living stipends, travel, tolls, Sanibel Rec Center membership, and other expenses.

Donors are able to also establish other named, permanently endowed funds for \$10,000 or more and work with staff to restrict them to their areas of interest. Income from the endowments can fund individual projects or ongoing education, intern, programming, research, or other specific needs.

#### 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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