

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption: The 20th Annual “Ding” Darling Days kicks off with Sunday Family Fun Day on Oct. 18 and culminates with Conservation Through Art Day, Oct. 24.

Family Fun Day, birding tours, art day highlight ‘Ding’ Days 2009

“Ding” Darling Days birding and eco-festival celebrates the birthday of J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s namesake, father of the federal duck stamp program, the week of Oct. 18-24, 2009.

This year’s 20th annual event kicks off at the refuge on Sunday, Oct. 18, with Family Fun Day, featuring free activities such as narrated refuge tram tours, live wildlife presentations, hot dogs, kids nature crafts, a touch tank and butterfly house, and more.

The Duck Stamp Artist presentation this year moves to Saturday’s Conservation Through Art Day, which also includes kids nature art and writing activities with free nature journals.

Throughout the week, festival-goers can hook up to free biking and birding tours, take advantage of discounted kayaking and nature boat excursions, and sit in on free nature deck talks at Tarpon Bay Explorers, the refuge’s official recreation concession. Below is a schedule of highlights for the week.

“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge sponsors “Ding” Darling Days with support from Tarpon Bay Explorers, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and other private and business partners. To become a friend of the refuge, visit www.dingdarlingsociety.org.

For a full “Ding” Darling Days schedule, visit www.dingdarlingdays.com, or call 239-472-1100, ext. 226.

Sunday, Oct. 18 FAMILY FUN DAY 11am- 4pm

All FREE events at “Ding” Darling Education Center

10:30am Refuge will hand out FREE Explorer Packs to the first 100 kids

11:30am Native Wildlife Encounters by the Everglades Wildlife Sanctuary at Flamingo Gardens

12:30pm Fabulous Florida Reptile Show by the Calusa Herpetological Society

2pm Exotic Reptiles: Keep Them Out of the Wild by the Calusa Herpetological

Society

3pm Native Wildlife Encounters by the Everglades Wildlife Sanctuary at
Flamingo Gardens

Continuous throughout the day

- FREE Butterfly House
- FREE hands-on nature crafts
- FREE Mote Marine aquarium and touch tank
- FREE naturalist-narrated Refuge tram tours
- FREE hot dogs and soft drinks

Monday, Oct. 19-Thursday, Oct. 22

Various birding, biking, kayaking, and nature boat excursions

Friday, Oct. 23

7:30am-6:30pm Wildlife Drive open FREE to hikers/bikers, closed to vehicular
traffic

10am-1pm FREE Bunche Beach Birding Tram

10am, 1 and 4 pm Special 90-minute Friday Refuge Tram Tours

Saturday, Oct. 24 CONSERVATION THROUGH ART DAY 12:30-4pm

All FREE events at "Ding" Darling Education Center

12:30-2pm Wildlife cartoonist draws caricatures for first 50 guests

12:30-2pm Naturalist-narrated refuge tram tour

1-4pm Break-Out Activities:

- ◆ Florida Junior Duck Stamp Award Ceremony
- ◆ How To Create a Nature Book with children's author Marianne Berkes
- ◆ Nature Sketching on Indigo Trail
- ◆ Wildlife Art Workshop

3-4:30 Naturalist-narrated refuge tram tour

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