

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

Contact: Chelle Koster Walton

239-472-3499

ChelleTrav@aol.com

Caption: Don and Lillian Stokes

Celebrity birders Don & Lillian Stokes return for private refuge birding tours

Nationally acclaimed bird authors, TV personalities, and longtime Sanibel Island winter residents Don and Lillian Stokes will again contribute their time and expertise to lead two fundraising birders tram tours of “Ding” Darling Refuge on the morning of Friday, Feb. 10, 2017.

Wildlife Drive is normally closed on Fridays, meaning tour participants will have the birds and the Stokes to themselves. Lillian Stokes will speak about and demonstrate bird photography on one of the trams, while her husband, on a second tram, will focus on the principles of bird identification.

Tarpon Bay Explorers, the refuge’s official recreation concession, will be donating the use of two trams. Together, they accommodate 66 passengers, so interested persons are encouraged to make reservations as soon as possible, because the Stokes’ past tram tours have filled up quickly.

The Stokes have authored more than 30 books in their Stokes Field Guides series and once hosted a birding television show for PBS.

“The Stokes are veteran birding experts recognized throughout the country, and they have a huge following,” said Birgie Miller, executive director of the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge, which is organizing the tours.

“Thanks to their generosity and our partnership with Tarpon Bay Explorers, 100 percent of the proceeds from this fundraiser will benefit wildlife and education programs at the refuge.”

Cost for tour tickets are \$100 each for a half-day tour that includes coffee and continental breakfast starting at 8 a.m. in the Visitor & Education Center and use of spotting scopes on the drive. To make reservations, email sarah@dingdarlingsociety.org or call 239-472-1100 ext. 233.

Below is a schedule of special events planned by DDWS and the refuge for the upcoming season.

For details visit dingdarlingsociety.org.

27th Annual “Ding” Darling Days – October 16-22, 2016 [www.dingdarlingdays.com]

Free Smithsonian Water/Ways Exhibit – October 28-December 8, 2016

Free Kids Fishing Derby – November 28, 2016

Happy Hour Holiday Shopping – November 30, 2016

DDWS Annual Meeting – December 7, 2016

Free Biweekly Wednesday Film Series – January 4-April 14

Free Weekly Friday Lecture Series – January 20-April 14, 2017

Go Wild for “Ding” – February 8, 2017

Sixth Annual “Ding” Darling & Doc Ford’s Tarpon Tournament -- May 19-20, 2017

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 proceeds.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit www.dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

###