

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption: The Florida WaterVentures Traveling Lab will be on hand for Sunday, Family Fun Day, and the Monday following, Oct. 16.

Refuge reveals new activities for ‘Ding’ Darling Days 2017

New activities and programs add excitement to the 29th annual “Ding” Darling Days birding and eco-festival at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island, Florida, the week of Oct. 15-21, 2017.

On Family Fun Day, Sunday, Oct. 15, the refuge will debut its new #LearningLav exhibit, which is turning the Visitor & Education Center restrooms into marine life exhibits. The “toilet paper-cutting” ceremony takes place at 10 a.m., followed by a free goodie bag giveaway.

Also on Sunday, the schedule includes new programs such as Kids Animal Yoga by Ambu Yoga and CROW live animal presentations. The Sanibel School Steel Drumming Band will perform from 1:30 to 3 p.m., plus the 97.7 Latino Hits Van returns to entertain from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

In addition to the day’s all-free refuge tours, archery clinics, hot dogs, butterfly house, and kids’ nature crafts, this year the Florida WaterVentures Traveling Lab will make an appearance. The 53-foot traveling science center features enriching and engaging activities for a hands-on look at Florida's diverse watersheds, water conservation, and recycling.

WaterVentures will also be open for touring the following day, Monday, Oct. 16, when Lee County schools are off for the day. The theme is “Let’s Go on a Hike Day,” and free programs include a scavenger hunt at Bailey Tract, Animal Olympics on Indigo Trail, a hike and story time with Ranger Toni at the Wildlife Education Boardwalk, and a showing of the film *The Lorax*.

New free programs throughout the week include horseshoe crab clinics, a bee presentation, a “Making Calusa Mounds of Midden” program by archaeologist Theresa Schober, and film showings. To see the full calendar of events, visit www.dingdarlingdays.com.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS), and Tarpon Bay Explorers, the refuge’s recreation concession, co-host “Ding” Darling Days with generous support from the local community and businesses.

Sponsors for “Ding” Darling Days 2017 include: **ROSEATE SPOONBILL SPONSORS:** Doc’s Ford Sanibel Rum Bar & Grille; **GREAT EGRET SPONSORS:** Blue Giraffe Island Dining, Wayne & Linda Boyd, Gardner Families, Jim & Patty Sprankle; **GREAT BLUE HERON SPONSORS:** 97.7 Latino & Juan Radio, Andrew Thompson Company, Bailey’s General Store, Mike & Terry Baldwin, Bank of the Islands, Cape Coral Kiwanis Club, Island Condo Maintenance, Island Sun, Panther Printing, Sanibel-Captiva Beach Resorts, Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, Sanibel Captiva Rotary Club, Sanibel Moorings, Santiva Chronicle, Sunny Day Guide; **REDDISH EGRET SPONSORS:** Sarah Ashton & Jim Metzler, Blu Site Solutions, Casa Ybel Resort, Art & Susan Cassell, Cedar Chest Fine Jewelry, Jerry Edelman & Maryanne Daly, Sally & Rich Ennis, Florida Weekly, Phyllis Gresham, Grounds by Green Ways, Island Inn, Jensen’s on the Gulf and Marina & Cottages, Mitchell’s Sand Castles, Muench Families & Periwinkle Park, Painting With a Twist, Sanibel-Captiva Kiwanis Club, Roberta and Realtor David Schuldenfrei, Stewart and Sons Insurance, Inc., TopBirdingTours.com; **SNOWY EGRET SPONSORS:** Ambu Yoga, Barefoot Charley's Painting Co., Big Red Q Quickprint, John Brennan, The Butterfly Estates, Charlotte Harbor National Estuary Program (CHNEP), Colony Inn, Henderson Franklin Attorneys at Law, Island Therapy Center, Marina Customer Service Training, Sanibel Art & Frame, Sanibel School Steel Drumming Band, George & Wendy Schnapp, Jim & Anne Scott, seashells.com, Vasanta Senerat, Winston & Barbara Spurgeon, Tents ‘n’ Events, Chelle Koster Walton.

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 proceeds.

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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