

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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*Caption:* Make reservations today for the free birding tram to Bunche Beach.

### **Bunche Beach Birding Tram, ranger bike tour highlights of ‘Ding’ Days Friday**

The free Bunche Beach Birding Tram will depart from “Ding” Darling Refuge Friday, Oct. 20, at 7 a.m. to experience low tide at the active birding park. The three-hour tour is an annual highlight of “Ding” Darling Days, which takes place Oct. 15-21 at the Refuge. Spaces are limited, so make reservations with Tarpon Bay Explorers (TBE) in advance at 239-472-8900.

The Bunche Beach tour is one of a number of special activities scheduled for Friday. Although Wildlife Drive is normally closed on Fridays, the Refuge is allowing free admission to cyclists and hikers from 7:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. You can also gain admission aboard five special, discounted tram tours that day. Cost is \$9.75 for adults, \$6 for children. Private vehicles are not allowed on the drive that day.

At 10 a.m., supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland leads a free, narrated, 90-minute bike tour of Wildlife Drive. A free Animal Olympics Games activity is ongoing at the refuge’s Bailey Tract campus on Tarpon Bay Road from 10 a.m. through 3 p.m.

At 1 p.m., a free showing of Animal Planet’s film *Million Dollar Duck* takes place in the “Ding” Darling Visitor & Education Center. Winner of the coveted Audience Award for Best Documentary Feature and the Jury Award for Documentary Feature at the 2016 Slamdance Film Festival, the amusing film follows artists through the trials and tribulations of competing in the “Olympics of wildlife art” and the prospect of earning a

million dollars as a result of winning the annual contest. The refuge's namesake, Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, started the federal duck stamp program in 1934.

TBE will offer other discounted kayak and boat tours throughout the day. See the schedule below for times, and call 239-472-8900 for reservations. For a full "Ding" Darling Days schedule, visit [www.dingdarlingdays.com](http://www.dingdarlingdays.com), or call 239-472-1100.

### **Friday, Oct. 20 DUCK STAMP DAY**

**7-10am FREE Bunche Beach Birding Tram**, meet at EC flagpole\*

**7:30am-6:30pm Wildlife Drive is open FREE to hikers/bikers only**; closed to vehicular traffic except special TBE trams throughout the day

**8:30-10am 25% OFF Breakfast Nature & Sea Life Cruise**, TBE\*

**10am-12noon 25% OFF Commodore Creek Paddle**, TBE\*

**10am, 11:30am, 1pm, 2:30pm, 4pm 25% off special Friday Narrated TBE Wildlife Drive Tram Tours**

**10-11:30am FREE Refuge Bike Tour**, with Ranger Toni, meet at EC flagpole

**10am-3pm FREE Animal Olympics Games at Bailey Tract**, Tarpon Bay Rd., self-guided and ongoing

**11am-12:30pm 25% OFF Sea Life & Nature Cruise**, TBE\*

**1-2pm FREE Showing of Million Dollar Duck Film**, EC Auditorium

**1-3pm 25% OFF Commodore Creek Paddle**, TBE\*

**1:30-3pm 25% OFF Sea Life & Nature Cruise**, TBE\*

**5-7pm 25% OFF Sunset Rookery Kayak Tour**, TBE\*  
(Experience necessary)

**5-7pm 25% OFF Evening Sea Life & Nature Cruise**, TBE\*

"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) presents "Ding" Darling Days with support from TBE, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, and other private and business partners.

The following businesses and individuals support this year's "Ding" Darling Days. **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, In Memory of Roger Bell, 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, Intech Printing & Direct Mail, 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](http://dingdarlingsociety.org) or contact Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566, 239-472-1100 ext. 4, or [dingdarlingsociety@gmail.com](mailto:dingdarlingsociety@gmail.com).

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