

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption: Five-time winner James Hautman designed the 2017-2018 Federal Duck Stamp featuring Canada geese.

Caption: Painting with a Twist of Fort Myers will conduct a hands-on painting class for kids.

Caption: Terry Baldwin's popular Nature Photography Tram Tour returns.

Duck Stamp artists, hands-on workshops headline free Conservation Art Day

Five-time Federal Duck Stamp winner James Hautman from Chaska, Minn., headlines the ninth annual free Conservation Art Day at J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Sanibel Island, on Saturday, Oct. 21, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Florida Junior Duck Stamp winner Faith Malfa and Federal Junior Duck Stamp winner Isaac Schreiber will also be on hand.

"Nine years ago we moved the duck stamp artist presentations from Family Fun Day so we could honor the winning artists with a day devoted especially to them," said Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland. "So Conservation Art Day is the time to get your duck stamps signed."

The event will bring the weeklong "Ding" Darling Days 2017 to a close with the duck stamp artist presentations, face painting, nature art, cartooning, photography, and art demonstrations. Admission to Wildlife Drive is free all day, and plein-air artists will be painting along the way.

The first 200 arrivals to Conservation Art Day receive a reusable bag with art supplies and an opportunity to "Ask the Artist a Question," as fine wildlife artist John Brennan demonstrates in the Visitor & Education Center. Select gifts will be 10 percent off in the Refuge Nature Store.

The Santiva Chronicle Dress-Up Photo Station in the center will allow visitors to take "selfies" and "groupies" to immediately share on social media platforms and via email.

“Conservation Art Day has grown into a day of wildlife art that pays homage to the legacy of conservation art begun by the refuge’s namesake, Jay ‘Ding’ Darling, a Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist and the original duck stamp artist,” said Westland.

Geared toward families and art enthusiasts, the day will offer participants the choice between a photography tram workshop on Wildlife Drive, compliments of nature photographer Terry Baldwin and Tarpon Bay Explorers (for the first 30 to reserve at 239-472-8900); and a Make & Take Nature Portrait class with Painting with a Twist of Fort Myers for the first 25 children who sign up that day.

The day’s full schedule is posted at www.dingdarlingdays.com.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge, and Tarpon Bay Explorers co-host the “Ding” Darling Days. Sponsors 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 Sprinkle; **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 www.dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4, or dingdarlingsociety@gmail.com.

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