

## PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: Fourth-grade classes that visit the refuge sign up for students' one-year free passes.

### **'Ding' Darling issues free federal lands passes for fourth graders and families**

As part of the federal Every Kid in a Park initiative, J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island is participating by issuing free annual passes to any fourth-grade student and homeschool equivalent during the 2018-2019 school year.

The passes are available and valid through August 2019 at any national wildlife refuge, national park or forest, and other federal land and provide free admission for every fourth grader, accompanying siblings up to age 15, and up to three accompanying adults.

"The Every Kid in a Park program is part of an ongoing effort to get kids outside and enjoying nature," said Toni Westland, supervisory refuge ranger at "Ding" Darling. "That has been our goal for years, so we are taking it a step further to encourage fourth graders and their families."

Obtaining the free annual pass – a value of \$80 – requires fourth-grade students to print out a voucher at [everykidinapark.gov](http://everykidinapark.gov). Fourth graders should complete the voucher and take it to front desk at the admission-free "Ding" Darling Visitor & Education Center or the fee booth on Wildlife Drive to receive their pass. They must present a completed printed voucher; electronic forms are not accepted.

"We are working with local schools to promote this program," said Westland. "We will be further promoting it at National Public Lands Day at the refuge on Saturday, Sept. 22, and "Ding" Darling Days' free Family Fun Day on Sunday, Oct. 14. We are shooting to issue the most passes of any national wildlife refuge, and there are more than 550 of them." Support for promoting the passes comes from the "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS).

For more information on the Every Kid in a Park pass, please visit [everykidinapark.gov](http://everykidinapark.gov). For questions about obtaining a pass at “Ding” Darling, call 239-472-1100 ext. 237.

#### 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](http://www.dingdarlingsociety.org) or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org).

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