

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

Contact: Chelle Koster Walton

239-699-4754

ChelleTrav@aol.com

Caption for JDS: Three-time winner Bob Hautman designed the 2018-2019 Federal Duck Stamp featuring a pair of mallards.

Caption for HORTON: Popular island cartoonist Dave Horton returns to draw personalized wildlife portraits.

Caption for PLEINAIR: Free admission and plein-air artists attract Art Day visitors to Wildlife Drive.

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

Three-time Federal Duck Stamp winner Bob Hautman will travel from Minnesota to headline the 10th annual free Conservation Art Day at J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Sanibel Island, on Saturday, Oct. 13, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Florida Junior Duck Stamp winner Anna Grace Swanson and Federal Junior Duck Stamp winner Rayen Kang will also be on hand.

"We created Conservation Art Day 10 years ago to honor the winning artists with a day devoted especially to them," said Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland. "Through the years, the event has grown to a family-oriented affair with hands-on activities and demonstrations. This year, we are adding a chalk art demonstration in the parking lot, thanks to Cypress Lake High School."

Part of the weekend-long "Ding" Darling Days, Oct. 12-14, the event will also feature face painting, cartooning, and plein-air artists along Wildlife Drive. Admission to Wildlife Drive is free all day, and Tarpon Bay Explorers, the refuge's recreation concession, will be offering discounted tram, boat, and kayak tours.

The first 100 kids to arrive to Conservation Art Day receive a reusable bag with art supplies and an opportunity to "Ask the Artist a Question," as fine wildlife artist Nancy Tome demonstrates in the Visitor & Education Center. Cartoonist Dave Horton will sketch individualized wildlife

portraits starting at 11 a.m. for the first 50 guests. Select gifts will be 10 percent off in the Refuge Nature Store, and visitors can greet the Blue Goose for chances at prizes.

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 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 Make & Take Nature Portrait class or an outdoor Nature Sketching Workshop with artist Tome.

Below is a full schedule of the day’s activities.

Saturday, Oct. 13: CONSERVATION ART DAY

ALL DAY

- 10% off select art items in the Refuge Nature Store
- Free Chalk Art Drawing in the Parking Lot
- Free Nature Painting Demo by Nancy Tome
- Free Santiva Chronicle Dress-Up Photo Booth

*reserve in advance with Tarpon Bay Explorers (TBE) at 239-472-8900 or www.tarponbayexplorers.com.

7:30am-6:30pm FREE admission to Wildlife Drive; look for Plein-Air Artists

9am free art kits for first 100 kids

10am, 11:30am, 1pm, and 2:30 p.m. 25 percent off Narrated TBE Wildlife Drive Tram Tours*

10am-12noon 25 percent off Commodore Creek Paddle, TBE*

10-11:30am free Face-Painting

10-12noon Low Tide Paddling Tour, TBE*

Ongoing 11am-1pm free Meet the Blue Goose for chances at prizes

11am Dave Horton Individualized Wildlife Cartoons for first 50 guests

11am-12:30pm 25 percent off Sea Life & Nature Cruise, TBE*

11:30am-12:30pm Conservation Cartoon Awards

12:30-1pm “Ding” Darling Days Nature Photography Contest Awards

1-3pm Meet the Champs: Winning Duck Stamp Artists; Junior Duck Stamp (JDS)
Awards: Meet and greet current Federal Duck Stamp winner Bob Hautman plus Federal
JDS winner Rayen Kang and State JDS winner Anna Grace Swanson.
(1:45 Intermission: snacks and duck stamp signing)
1-3pm 25 percent off Commodore Creek Paddle, TBE*
1:30-3pm 25 percent off Sea Life & Nature Cruise, TBE*
3-4pm Make & Take Nature Portrait (limited to first 25 children who sign up that day)
3-4pm Nature Sketching at the Wildlife Education Boardwalk with artist Nancy Tome,
free journals for first 25 participants
5-7pm 25 percent off Evening Sea Life & Nature Cruise, TBE*

For a full schedule of weekend events, visit 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:** Wayne & Linda Boyd, Jim & Patty Sprankle; **GREAT BLUE HERON SPONSORS:** Bailey’s General Store, Mike & Terry Baldwin, Bank of the Islands, Island Sun, Sanibel Captiva Beach Resorts, Sanibel Captiva Rotary Club, Sanibel Moorings, Sunny Day Guide; **REDDISH EGRET SPONSORS:** Sarah Ashton - Realtor, RE/MAX of the Islands, Casa Ybel Resort, Chicago Midwest Claims, Inc., Jerry Edelman & Maryanne Daly, The Gresham Family, Jensen’s on the Gulf and Marina & Cottages, Tiffani Kaliko and John Silvia, Mitchell’s Sand Castles, Palm Printing, Sanibel-Captiva Kiwanis Club, George & Wendy Schnapp, Winston & Barbara Spurgeon; **SNOWY EGRET SPONSORS:** Ambu Yoga, Anisa Stewart Jewelry, Colony Inn, Bob & Kemba DeGroot, John & Anette Gritti, Dave Horton, Island Therapy Center, Just Water, Panther Printing, Jim & Anne Scott, Santiva Chronicle, Nancy Tome.

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.

###