

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

Contact: Chelle Koster Walton

239-699-4754

ChelleTrav@aol.com

Caption SNAKE: “Snakes Alive!” is one of the day’s wildlife presentations.

Caption sawickiarchery: Archery demos put bows and arrows in the hands of older kids.

Live wildlife presentations, Kidz Kool Zone, service vehicle demos highlights of free ‘Ding’ Family Fun Day 2018

Sunday Family Fun Day winds up the weekend-long “Ding” Darling Days at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge, Sanibel Island, on Oct. 14, 2018. The refuge, “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS), and Tarpon Bay Explorers (TBE) have planned a free day packed with activities for all ages from 9:45 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Following the 9:45 a.m. flag-raising ceremony by local Boy Scouts, the refuge will celebrate the 142nd birthday of namesake Jay Darling with birthday cake in the Refuge Visitor & Education Center, followed by a reusable goodie bag giveaway for the first 250 kids.

New this year, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service displays a spread of its emergency-response vehicles for an interactive visitor experience outside. Inside, when it comes time to cool down, the Kidz Kool Zone in the Visitor & Education Center will include Animal Yoga, environmental puppet shows by Littleton Elementary School, face painting, and make-and-take arts and crafts activities. Kids can also participate in a scavenger hunt of the new Learning Lavatories exhibits for a chance at prizes.

Wildlife presentations outside under the “big top” showcase snakes, birds of prey, and animal ambassadors from the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW).

Other Sunday highlights include all-free narrated TBE tram tours of Wildlife Drive (based on availability), archery skills clinics (for ages 10 and older), a butterfly house, hot dogs, and live music by the Americana Community Music Association.

"We estimate the value of this free event to be up to \$75 for a family of four," said "Ding" Days Committee chair, Ranger Toni Westland. "But the value of family- and nature-bonding? You can't put a price tag on that."

Continuous free shuttle service will run from the refuge's Tram Parking Lot on Sanibel-Captiva Road (look for signs).

The entire day's schedule is included below. For more information on other events during the upcoming "Ding" Darling Days weekend, Oct. 12-14, visit www.dingdarlingdays.com.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, DDWS, and TBE co-present "Ding" Darling Days with generous support from the local community and businesses.

(EC= "Ding" Darling Visitor & Education Center)
(TBE= Tarpon Bay Explorers)

Sunday, Oct. 14, 2018
FREE FAMILY FUN DAY
J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR
A FREE day valued at \$75 per family of four

9:45am Flag-raising ceremony, EC entrance
10am Sing to "Ding!" FREE birthday cake to celebrate "Ding" Darling's 142nd Birthday & giveaway of free reusable goody bags giveaway to the first 250 kids, EC Auditorium Kidz Kool Zone
10am-12noon 25% off Commodore Creek Paddle, TBE
10:30am-2:30pm FREE Live Music from Americana Community Music Association
10:30am FREE Walk on the Wildlife Side Puppet Show, Littleton Elementary, EC Auditorium Kidz Kool Zone
11am FREE Live Wildlife Presentation: Birds of Prey by CROW, EC parking lot

11am-12:30pm 25% off Sea Life & Nature Cruise, TBE
12noon FREE *One Tiny Turtle* story and fish craft, with Ranger Toni, EC Auditorium
Kidz Kool Zone
12noon FREE Make & Take Nature Portrait (limited to first 25 middle school children
who sign up that day), EC Kidz Kool Zone Classroom
12noon FREE People & Panthers program, Florida Wildlife Commission, EC parking lot
12:30am FREE The Black Water Mystery Puppet Show, Littleton Elementary, EC
Auditorium Kidz Kool Zone
1pm FREE Kids Animal Yoga program by Ambu Yoga and Ranger Toni, EC Auditorium
Kidz Kool Zone
1pm FREE Live Wildlife Presentation: Do's & Don'ts of Animal Rescue by CROW, EC
parking lot
1-3pm 25% off Commodore Creek Paddle, TBE
1:30am FREE The Spiny Stranger Puppet Show, Littleton Elementary, EC Auditorium
Kidz Kool Zone
1:30-3pm 25% off Sea Life & Nature Cruise, TBE
2pm FREE Snakes Alive! program with Calusa Herpetological Society, EC parking lot
2pm FREE Techie Show-&-Tell: Reddish Egret and Mangrove Cuckoo Studies with Dr.
Ken Meyer, EC Auditorium
5-7pm 25% off Sunset Rookery Kayak Tour, TBE
5-7pm 25% off Evening Sea Life & Nature Cruise, TBE

FREE & CONTINUOUS THROUGHOUT THE DAY:

In the EC Auditorium Kidz Kool Zone

FREE group Let's Get Outdoors canvas painting
FREE face painting
FREE DIY nature crafts
FREE dress-up photo station
FREE Federal & Junior Duck Stamp art exhibit

Outside

FREE parking at Special Events Parking site (look for signs)
FREE shuttle service
FREE naturalist-narrated, 60-minute tram tours (check in at tram booth upon arrival)
FREE Butterfly House
FREE hot dogs
FREE U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service emergency response vehicles & demos
FREE archery demos, adjacent to overflow parking lot
FREE ongoing Learning Lavatories Scavenger Hunt: Look for sheets in your goodie bag
to be entered in a drawing for five prizes (need not be present to win)
FREE fly-fishing demos
FREE hands-on nature crafts
FREE informational booths with giveaways

The following sponsors make "Ding" Darling Days possible this year: **ROSEATE
SPOONBILL SPONSORS:** Doc's Ford Sanibel Rum Bar & Grille; **GREAT EGRET**

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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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