



[www.dingdarlingsociety.org](http://www.dingdarlingsociety.org)

**SUMMER 2019**

# Society Pages

News from Friends of  
the J.N. "Ding" Darling  
National Wildlife Refuge

## ABOUT THE SOCIETY

"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society, the non-profit Friends of the Refuge organization, supports the J. N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge Complex through the generation of independent funds to undertake student education, internships, research projects, informational literature, advocacy, land acquisition and facility enhancements. Efforts may extend beyond the Complex's borders and involve partnerships with like-minded conservation organizations.

## Refuge 75th Anniversary



*The Clyde Butcher Photographic Exhibition takes place in the Visitor & Education Center November 3 through February 5, sponsored by Mark & Gretchen Banks. Photo by Woody Walters.*

**The Refuge and "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society are planning a full calendar of events to celebrate the 75th Anniversary of the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge.**  
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## 68-ACRE PRESERVATION CAMPAIGN

# We've Reached Our Private Donation Goal!

**T**he "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society has successfully met its Wulfert Bayous land preservation goal to raise \$3 million in private donations toward the overall sum of \$9.5 million. We now await the Lee County Board of Commissioners' decision to approve the \$6.5-million contribution toward the 68-acre acquisition of the property adjacent to the Refuge.

We expect to hear that decision in August. If favorable, we will have effectively, with the help of generous donors and community partners, saved the last remaining large parcel of undeveloped land on Sanibel Island, an important wildlife corridor for a bounty of species. However, we are not able to celebrate quite yet, not knowing what amount, if any, the Lee County 20/20 program will kick in.

In anticipation of the acquisition's completion, DDWS has begun planning for habitat restoration at Wulfert Bayous, including invasive plant removal and the establishment of a rookery to attract Wood Storks, Roseate Spoonbills, and other colonial wading birds.

An enormous thank-you to all of the donors who made this possible, and to the Wulfert Bayous Campaign Committee: Chair John McCabe, Marc Giattini, Doris Hardy, David Jeffrey, Dick Levinson, Jim Sprankle, and Bill Valerian.

Those interested in supporting this and other Refuge restoration projects should contact DDWS Executive Director Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org). To read more about the project, visit [www.savewulfertland.org](http://www.savewulfertland.org). View our short and inspiring campaign video at [tinyurl.com/wulfertvideo](http://tinyurl.com/wulfertvideo).

# Volunteer Awards Luncheon

"Ding" Darling Refuge and DDWS celebrated their annual Volunteer Awards Luncheon on March 26 at The Community House.

"This really is the best day on the Refuge," said Bill Miller, acting Refuge Manager while Paul Tritaik was on detail at regional headquarters in Atlanta. "We get to celebrate you [volunteers]. Our staff gets to serve you and thank you for all that you do for us."

Refuge staff reports that in fiscal year 2018, 292 volunteers worked 42,109.5 hours at the Refuge, representing a labor and benefits savings of more than a million dollars, equivalent to 20 full-time employees.

"That million-dollar figure exceeds the budget allocation we receive yearly," Bill remarked.

DDWS Executive Director Birgie Miller stated the increasing need for volunteers in another way: "I just find it amazing that when Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland started here about 15 years ago, there were about 600,000 visitors each year and less land to



manage with 22 staff members. Today we have 11 staff members to handle a million visitors and more land."

DDWS formed in 1982 specifically to support a volunteer corps after the opening of the Refuge's Visitor & Education Center that year. More than 11,000 people visited in the first month after the center opened, overwhelming a staff unaccustomed to dealing with the inquisitive public.

Below is a list of volunteers who won awards for reaching hour and year achievement levels.



Volunteer Coordinator Ranger Jeff Combs with Jane Gieryc, receiving her award for 10 years of service. Above left: The Volunteer Luncheon drew in a full house.

## YEARS AWARDS

**20 years:** Sally Barsley, Barbara Baumecker, Malcolm Harpham, Susan Harpham, Joanne Heroy-Giller, Harold Johnstone, Joyce Krivenko, Martin Pokedoff

**10 years:** Jane Gieryc, Mike Gieryc

## HOURS AWARDS

**8,500 hours:** Doris Hardy

**6,000 hours:** Ed Combs, Judy Davis

**5,500 hours:** Is Cloak

**5,000 hours:** Jack Wettstein, Patty Wettstein

**4,500 hours:** Latham Morris

**4,000 hours:** Miriam Hursey, John McCabe

**3,500 hours:** Betsy Doonan, John McCabe, Alan Parker, Linda Parker

**3,000 hours:** Susan Harpham

**2,500 hours:** Joanne Heroy-Giller

**2,000 hours:** Allan Marcus, Greg Scherer, Shirley Schiffman, Anne Scott

**1,500 hours:** Mike Baldwin, Jim Bennight, Bob Gonser, Joan Gonser, Jan Lucree, Walt McNairy, Arland Oleson

**1,000 hours:** Pat Appino, Robert Blacklow, Barbara Broadhurst, Bob Gonser, Joan Gonser, Millicent Heene, Mary Horney, Ronald Horney, Tom Mehalic, Roger Tosch

**500 hours:** Judy Barbieri, Sue Danford, Kenneth Gum, Lou Ann Gum, Thomas Hoopes, Zdenko Krizan, Michael Rice, Cathy Swerdluck, Ray Vasquez

**250 hours:** Teresa Anzalone, Mark

Banks, Muriel Blaisdell, Katharine Britton, Bob Brooks, Henry DeRonck, Sandy Gage, Kenneth Gum, Lou Ann Gum, Patricia Healey, James Lewin, Jen McSorley, Peter Meekin, Dan Moeder, Maureen Napier, Linda Naylor, Leeann Otoole, Diane Wien, Ann-Marie Wildman

**150 hours:** Genia Alperin, Teresa Anzalone, Donald Breiter, Katharine Britton, John Brothwell, Kenneth Gum, Lou Ann Gum, Patricia Healey, Sonya Keene, Ken King, James Lewin, Janet McLaughlin, Kimberly Powers, Ross Spencer, Nancy Stillwell, Ann-Marie Wildman, Kathleen Wilson



## 75th ANNIVERSARY

*continued from page 1*

— from now through the official anniversary date on December 1, 2020.

Plans include a Clyde Butcher 75th Anniversary Photographic Exhibition, special lectures and exhibits, a "Trashion Fashion Show" of clothing and accessories made from recycled materials, festivals, discounted recreational activities at Tarpon Bay Explorers, and other educational and celebratory events. The year's theme and next year's Go Wild for "Ding" — Lovin' Spoonbills on February 12 will center around the Refuge's iconic Roseate Spoonbills, the official 75th anniversary bird.

Thanks to Mark & Gretchen Banks for sponsoring the Clyde Butch 75th Anniversary Photographic Exhibition. Visit [ding75.org](http://ding75.org) to keep up on what's new and upcoming on the anniversary calendar.

## UPCOMING EVENTS

Stay tuned to our "Ding" on the Wing email newsletter or visit [ding75.org](http://ding75.org) for more upcoming events to celebrate our 75th Refuge Anniversary Celebration.

- Free Summer Programs — Through August 3, 2019
- "Ding" Darling Day — October 20, 2019
- Clyde Butcher 75th Anniversary Photographic Exhibition — November 12, 2019-February 6, 2020
- "Ding" Studio Exhibit Unveiling — December 1, 2019
- 75th Anniversary Holiday Shopping Happy Hour — December 3, 2019
- 75th Anniversary Lecture Series — January 17-April 3, 2020
- Go Wild for "Ding" — Lovin' Spoonbills Fundraiser — February 12, 2020
- 75th Anniversary Trashion Fashion Show & Lecture — March 10, 2020
- Official Refuge 75th Anniversary Celebration — December 1, 2020

# Tarpon Tourney Breaks Records

## 88 Fish, \$125,000

*The sun rising  
on the eighth  
annual  
tournament*

The eighth annual “Ding” Darling & Doc Ford’s Tarpon Tournament on May 3 topped previous years’ fundraising efforts by netting \$125,000 from tournament sponsorships, donations, and silent auction proceeds to benefit the Refuge.

The tournament also broke the record for fish caught, set in 2018. Anglers photo-recorded 88 tarpon catches this year, compared to as few as two and as many as 49 in the previous seven years.

“That’s a really impressive number of fish caught!” said Marty Harrity, co-owner of Doc Ford’s Rum Bar & Grille. “We see that as a positive sign for the recovering health of our fishery.”

### DID YOU KNOW?



*The life span of a Tarpon can be in excess of 50 years.*

“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society organizes the annual tournament with Doc Ford’s to honor the milestone history of tarpon fishing in the Refuge’s Tarpon Bay, where the first tarpon was caught by rod-and-reel in 1885, and to promote responsible fishing. The 2019 tournament paid out \$29,800 in prizes to five winning teams out of the 55 registered teams. Unlike the majority of fishing tournaments around the country, this tourney has, from its inception, returned 100 percent of registration fees to the participants in prize winnings.

The first-place prize of \$13,400 went to Team Dorado Boatworks — captain Eric Davis, with team members Seth Hayes and Randall Marsh — for catching seven fish total.

Second-place Team YAM, led by captain Dave Holzhauer, won \$7,450. In third place, captain Ozzie Lessinger’s Team RS Walsh Landscaping took home \$4,470. Third-place winners Team Mabry Electric with captain Nick Fischer won \$2,980; fourth-place winners Team Windows Plus/Maastricht Engineering with captain Pete Maastricht took \$1,490.

**Mark Your Calendar:** Next year’s tarpon tournament will take place May 21 and 22.

The tournament also gave out awards for female angler to Sage Indendi from Team Doc Ford’s, senior angler to John McCabe from Team Castabout Charters, and amateur team to Team Windows Plus/Maastricht Engineering.

To date, the tarpon tournament has raised nearly \$575,000 for Refuge water and wildlife research and



David McClellan/Lee County Visitor & Convention Bureau



First-place winners, Team Dorado Boatworks, received a check for \$13,410.

conservation education. “We can’t thank Doc Ford’s enough for their incredible show of support these past eight years,” said Birgie Miller, Executive Director of DDWS and tournament organizer. “They’ve already committed for the 2020 tourney on May 22.”

Because all registration fees go to the awards purse,

sponsorship partners are very important to this tournament, paying the costs for putting on the tourney and contributing to the charity proceeds. See a list of tourney sponsors and donors on the insert page.

For more information on the tournament and this year’s winners, visit [www.dingdarlingtarpontourney.org](http://www.dingdarlingtarpontourney.org).

## STAFF NEWS

### Farewell, Nate

In May, Refuge and DDWS staff bid a fond adieu to Refuge Deputy Manager Nate Caswell, who has served in that position since November 2016. Nate heads to a new position at the New Mexico Fish and Wildlife Conservation Office in Albuquerque. We wish him all the best in his life post-“Ding.”



Nate Caswell

### Welcome Wildlife Specialist

Bob Gerwig, who served as crew lead for the Refuge's 2009 summer Youth Conservation Corp program, re-joined the Refuge team in April as Refuge Wildlife Specialist.

Following his temporary stint at “Ding,” Bob worked full-time for the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service for 10 years at the Winthrop National Fish Hatchery in Washington State, rising to the position of assistant manager. Most recently, he spent a year working in the Army Corps of Engineers' Fort Myers office.

A graduate in biology from Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Bob will be assisting the Refuge's biology, maintenance, and administrative teams full-time for a four-year term.

“This is coming full circle,” said Bob, who became a fan of the Refuge as a child in the 1970s while visiting family from his home in Chicago. “The Refuge is exactly what made me want to go into the field.”

### New Biology Interns

Two new biology interns joined the team effort at the Refuge in April. Avery Renshaw and Becky Woodward plan to stay into mid-December 2019 as part of the Refuge's long-running internship program supported by DDWS.

Avery, originally from Mount Airy, Maryland, most recently interned with Mote Marine Lab's Coral Reef Ecological Processes Program in the Florida Keys. She



Becky Woodward and Avery Renshaw

graduated in 2018 with a bachelor's degree in environmental science and studies with a biology concentration from Towson University in Towson, Maryland.

Surprisingly, Avery named no-see-ums as her favorite thing at the Refuge, “with the diverse wildlife and idyllic marine setting being a close second. I'm a sucker for field work, and I especially look forward to working on seagrass monitoring.”

Becky comes to the Refuge from Katy, Texas. She graduated in 2017 from Texas Lutheran College in Seaguin and will graduate from St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, with a master's degree in environmental management and sustainability.

“So far, my favorite part of ‘Ding’ is the work we have been doing in the mangroves,” said Becky. “It is important to understand how they are responding to the increased nutrient flow. I am looking forward to helping the Marine Lab with seagrass surveys, and I am also working on a project comparing the data collected in Cornell University's eBird database to the data collected by our bird surveys. The goal is to determine if the eBird data is consistent with the data collected by survey efforts conducted by the trained staff at the Refuge.”

DDWS provides living stipends and other benefits for about a dozen interns each year. The Refuge supports interns with free housing. For more information about the Refuge's internship programs, contact Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland at 239-472-1100 ext. 237. To learn about supporting the Refuge intern program, contact Birgie Miller, DDWS Executive Director, at 239-472-1100 ext. 4.

### New Education Intern

In May, Education Intern Izzy Garcia began working to help with staffing shortages this summer, thanks to funding from DDWS. Izzy — a native Floridian originally from Sweetwater, a Miami suburb, and a 12-year Cape Coral resident — graduated from the University of Florida in Gainesville earlier in the month with a degree in wildlife ecology and conservation. For her previous internship, she conducted research field work as a BioCorps shared intern at Everglades National Park last summer.

“Sanibel is a beautiful island full of amazing wildlife and wonderful people,” said Izzy. “What I love about the Refuge is how welcoming the staff are and how you can get a close view of nesting birds.”

She will assist Refuge Conservation Educator Sara Hallas with summer programming at least through August.

“I am very excited for our ‘Saniverse of Myths’ program we will be presenting at libraries this summer,” she said. “We will be debunking wildlife myths for kids, and I look forward to being a part of that impact.”



Izzy Garcia



Barb Bluedorn

## Welcome New Board Member

Part-time Sanibel Island resident Barb Bluedorn recently joined the Board of Directors for the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society. She and her husband, Todd, have commuted back and forth from their other home in Dallas for 25 years. Now, as a trained permittee for the Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation (SCCF) sea turtle patrol program, Barb makes the trip weekly.

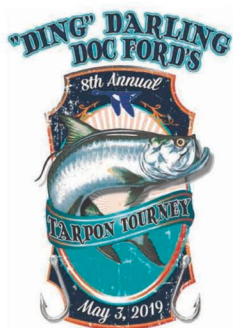
She says her love for the environment stems from her childhood in a small farming community in southern Indiana.

“I grew up in nature, totally out in the boonies,” Barb said, adding that her father, who still lives there, five miles from cell reception, instilled an early love of the environment into his children. That passion was fanned when she and her family began visiting Sanibel.

“It was all the conservation going on in Sanibel,” Barb said. “For the kids, it was like coming to an outdoor laboratory. One of the highlights was biking through the Refuge. There was something different to see every time. I feel like ‘Ding’ and SCCF are vital to what represents Sanibel and I am honored to be a very small part of the collective whole.”

Barb, who received her nursing degree from the University of Indianapolis, worked in the areas of cardiac critical care, labor and delivery, home care, and discharge planning before retiring to raise her two daughters, Jessie and Emily. The family lived in Hawaii, Boston, Pittsburgh, Hartford, Syracuse, and Singapore before settling in Dallas and Sanibel.

“We heartily welcome Barb, and her passion for nature, into the fold of the DDWS board,” said Board President Mike Baldwin. “Already her enthusiasm has proven an asset to the mission we honor in supporting the conservation, research, education, and land acquisition programs for the Refuge.”



# We had a "reel" good time at the "Ding" Darling & Doc Ford's Tarpon Tournament

Thanks to all of our sponsors and donors  
who made this event possible:



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# 45/82 Society



Together, through planned giving, we can continue the education and conservation efforts at the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge.

## Continue Your Impact

Many of our members help shape the future of the Refuge by designating the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society as a beneficiary in their estate plans. They become members of the **45/82 Society** (signifying the year of the Refuge’s establishment in 1945 and the year of the Society’s founding in 1982). A combination of large and small planned gifts received throughout the years has enabled the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society to continue its support of the Refuge in areas of land acquisition, education, research, and other important conservation efforts.

**Supporting these efforts through your estate is easier than you may think.**



The J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge acts as an incubator for so many different young beings. From the nearly featherless Green Heron chicks excited to explore a new world, to the 5,000 students who are bused here each year to learn about our environment, the small and impressionable find a special place to grow at “Ding.” It needs to stay protected, and **you** can help that.

**Thank You**  
for your  
commitment to  
conservation.

By creating a personal legacy, you also create a lasting legacy for the Refuge. Your gift through your estate plan, large or small, is critical to the Refuge’s future survival. We would like to recognize you as a member the 45/82 Society, unless you prefer anonymity. **If you have already remembered the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society in your estate plans, please let us know so we can thank you and make a plan to fulfill your wishes at the time the gift is realized.**

## Sample Language for Your Plan

If you wish to name the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society in your estate plans or name us as a beneficiary of your retirement accounts or life insurance, please name us as follows:

**“I, [name], of [city, state, ZIP] give, devise, and bequeath to the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society, Inc., a Florida non-profit corporation located on Sanibel Island, Florida [written amount or percentage of the estate or description of property].”**

**Our tax identification number is:  
59-2240895**

For more information on how to leave a lasting gift for conservation, please contact Associate Executive Director Lynnae Messina at 239-472-1100 ext. 233 or [messina@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:messina@dingdarlingsociety.org), or visit our website at [dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/leave-a-legacy](http://dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/leave-a-legacy).





*In support of our Wulfert Bayous Preservation Campaign, the Sanibel-Captiva Audubon Society made a generous donation of \$5,000.*

*Above: As part of our spring Artist "in Residence" program, Idaho artist greeted Wildlife Drive visitors as he painted in his Artist in Action Pop-Up Studio.*

*Right: Python hunter Dusty "Wildman" Crum and team leader Mike Kirkland counted among an exciting calendar of lecturers during the 2019 Friday Lecture Series presented by DDWS and HighTower Fort Myers/Thomas & Swartz.*



*Artist "in residence" Ed Anderson spent seven weeks at the Refuge, to kick off "Ding's" 75th anniversary, mentoring and teaching all ages. He helped at-risk kids at Quality Life Center of Southwest Florida create a mural for the youth center.*

## IN THE REFUGE NATURE STORE

### Staff Picks

There's no doubt, our Assistant Store Manager has style. Here she shares a couple of her buying tips from the Refuge Nature Store inventory.

"It is difficult to determine my favorite items in the Nature Store, there are so many that I love! But by far the two



that I use the most often (every single day!) are my Mary Frances beaded handbags and my many pairs of Blue Planet sunglasses.

I am always admiring our newest Mary Frances arrivals, and deciding if they should come home with me. The Blue Planet sunglasses are an addiction. I love the look of the bamboo on the sides and there are so many styles to choose from. I get to feel good whenever I buy a pair because the company itself is hugely eco-friendly, opting for sustainably and naturally sourced materials and reusing their excess materials. Not only that, through their Visualize Change Program, they donate one pair of corrective lenses to a person in need for every pair of sunglasses sold."

*Remember, DDWS members receive a 10% discount at the Nature Store. Profits from all Nature Store sales go directly to the Refuge for educational programs and wildlife research.*



## MEMORIAL AND HONOR GIFTS

March 1 – May 31, 2019

Memorial gifts and gifts made in honor of special occasions are a wonderful way to pay tribute to family and friends who are important to us. Throughout the year, the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society has received gifts in memory and in honor of loved ones. Thank you to everyone who supported the Refuge in this thoughtful and meaningful way.

We recently received gifts in **MEMORY** of the following:

Adaline H. Allen	Maggie Larson
Rosalie Courter	Mary Helen Ladner
Donald L. Cross	Craig Malcolm
Edith Thatcher De Burlo	Susan Murphy
Mary Sue Denk	Gloria L. Pommerenke
Dr. David Drachman	Sally Reed
Thomas Parmelee Dupree, Sr.	Amy Simkowitz Rogers
Ruth and Charlie Gerecke	Rosina B. Rue
Christine Glancy	Rosemary Shipley
Gerald Holman	Kathleen Stanley
Elaine Jacobson	William Stein
Martha Hulings Kaemmer	Kathryn Todd
Greta and Pierson Long	

We recently received gifts in **HONOR** of the following:

Carrie Alexander	Tyson Hass
Elaine Bachelder	Peter Hawrylyshyn
Wayne and Linda Boyd	Lafayette School 4th Grade
Dr. Andrew Dahlem	Joel & Wandra Lauchner
Dr. Andrew & Laura Dahlem	Birgie Miller
Peter and Susan Danford	Kathleen O'Beirne
Janet Falcone	Mary and John Roth
Phyllis Gresham	Susan Trokey

## Farewell to a Friend

“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society and the Refuge lost a loyal friend on April 7 with the passing of Dick Hult. Dick served on the DDWS Board of Directors for 13 years, from July 1994 to December 2007. He was elected to the Emeritus Board in 2007.



“He was instrumental in the fundraising and construction of the Visitor & Education Center,” said bird sculptor Jim Sprankle, Emeritus Member and former Board President. “And he was the driving force behind the installation of my own personal decoy and bird collection on permanent display at the Center. Without Dick as a facilitator, it never would have happened.”



Frank Brinker won first place in last year's photo contest with his unusual Great Blue Heron capture.



## ‘Ding’ Darling Day 2019 & Photo Contest

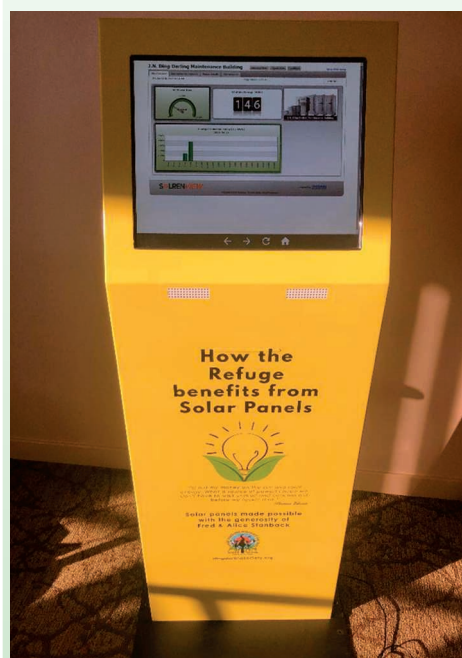
This year, in preparation for the Refuge's 75th Anniversary Celebration, we are concentrating all our efforts into

one BIG day of festivities, Sunday, October 20. Family Fun Day will combine all the best of “Ding” Days traditions, including our annual “Ding” Darling Day Amateur Nature Photography Contest. July 15 marks the opening of the contest; deadline for submissions is

September 15, 2019. For rules, entry forms, and more information about the contest and “Ding” Day, visit [dingdarlingdays.com](http://dingdarlingdays.com).

### DID YOU KNOW?

*The Reddish Egret is an extremely active forager, often seen running, jumping, and spinning in its pursuit of fish*



## Solar Kiosk Interpretation

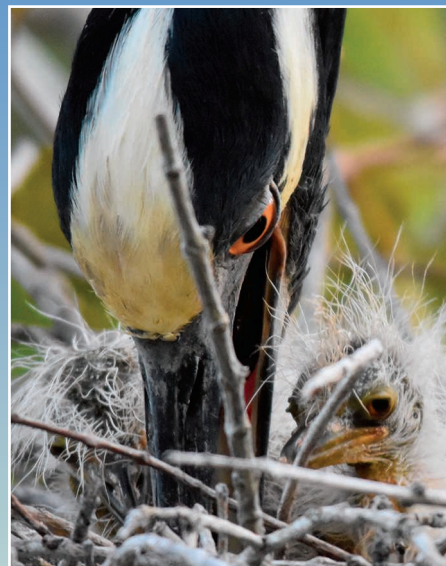
Upon the completion of installing solar panels on the roof of the “Ding” Darling Visitor & Education Center, DDWS designed and implemented an interactive solar kiosk to demonstrate in dollars, kilowatts, CO2 emissions, and gasoline offsets how the Refuge benefits from the solar panels. They were made possible by our 2015 San-Cap Solar Connect program and donations from Fred and Alice Stanback. San-Cap Solar Connect brought affordable solar conversion to island residents and businesses through cooperative buying.

“We’re excited to be able to provide interpretation for our visitors to see how the Refuge is using this renewable resource and the positive impacts that result from choosing green energy sources,” said DDWS Intern April Boehnen, who spearheaded the kiosk project.

## WILDLIFE SPOTLIGHT

Here, we showcase the best of wildlife shots taken recently at the Refuge by photographers, volunteers, staff, and others. Spring always brings a burst of new life to the Refuge, and this year was no exception. Intern Chris Gutierrez captured Yellow-crowned Night Heron and Anhinga hatchlings from the Wildlife Education Boardwalk, a hot spot for nesting.

If you have a wildlife picture to share, please contact Sierra Hoisington at [shois@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:shois@dingdarlingsociety.org).



### DID YOU KNOW?

Anhingas typically lay from two to five eggs in a brood that incubates 26 to 30 days.

## Wildlife on Wheels

The “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society recently received a \$100,000 grant from a private family foundation toward designing, building, staffing, and implementing into educational outreach programming a Wildlife on Wheels (WoW) mobile hands-on exhibit. To complete the project, DDWS is seeking additional donations equaling \$155,000 to cover the cost of a heavy duty pick-up truck to haul the trailer plus design, equipment, supplies, and an educator.

WoW will be scheduled to visit schools, libraries, senior facilities, conservation-minded events, and economically challenged and minority communities in the five-county area to teach about water quality, the ecosystem, wildlife, and other topics that meet the Refuge’s mission.

As part of the remaining \$155,000 cost of the project, DDWS needs a new or used four-wheel-drive pickup truck to pull the WoW trailer. In lieu of cash to purchase the vehicle, it will accept a donation of a new or used truck.

In addition, DDWS hopes to hire a bilingual educator, who, along with volunteers and interns, will staff the museum-quality, hands-on exhibits inside WoW to maximize their inspirational learning potential.

*An example of the type of rig the Refuge will be developing for its WoW outreach.*



Funding is also needed for learning stations that would interpret mangrove ecosystems, water quality, water conservation, pollution and plastic, animal scat and tracks, Florida’s native animals, and wildlife sounds.

The WoW project is part of the Refuge’s 20-month 75th anniversary celebration ongoing now through December 1, 2020. DDWS hopes to have the mobile learning experience on the road by March 2020. Anyone interested in making a tax-deductible donation to the WoW project can contact Executive Director Birgie Miller at 239-292-0566 or [director@dingdarlingsociety.org](mailto:director@dingdarlingsociety.org).

### SOCIAL MEDIA 10K ‘GRAMMERS

DDWS interns April Boehren and Chris Gutierrez set a goal of reaching 10,000 followers on **Instagram** when they arrived last fall. At the time, we tallied fewer than 7,200. Through exciting photographic posts and stories and join-up prize drawings, the dynamic duo reached their goal in May.

You can follow us on Instagram at [@dingdarlingwildlifesociety](https://www.instagram.com/dingdarlingwildlifesociety). To “like” us on **Facebook** (along with more than 13,000 others), search for “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society. (You can also “like” the Refuge by searching for its “Official” page.) On **Twitter**, search [@DingDarlingWS](https://twitter.com/DingDarlingWS). Also visit our **YouTube** channel by searching “ding darling wildlife society.”



## FREE SUMMER PROGRAMS

The Refuge’s free summer programs continue through August 3 this year. Wildlife Wonders talks, weekly walks, and nature crafts highlight the programming, made possible by support from the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society. No pre-registration is necessary. For information, call 239-472-1100 ext. 237 or visit [dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/free-refuge-programs](http://dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/free-refuge-programs) for a schedule.



One Wildlife Drive  
P.O. Box 565  
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### DID YOU KNOW?

Unlike most owls, where the female is larger than the male, both sexes of the Burrowing Owl are the same size.

*Jackson Mytnik from Cape Coral High School took first place in the sixth annual "Ding" Darling-Theodore Cross High School Photography Contest this spring with his "Owl at Sunset" portrait of a Burrowing Owl. Students from 16 different schools in the five-county area participated.*