

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release.

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Caption: Doc Ford's Rum Bar & Grille once again sponsors "Ding" Darling Day at the Roseate Spoonbill level.

Caption: Tarpon Bay Explorers offers free morning stand-up paddleboarding clinics and discounted tours throughout the day.

Free birding, biking tours and paddleboarding clinic new to 'Ding' Darling Day

As the 75th anniversary celebration at J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island kicks in, staff has planned a "Ding" Darling Day for Sunday, Oct. 20, that will concentrate all the best traditions of the eco-festival into one day of family and conservation art activities, tours, and programs.

The schedule will include a number of new free features for 2019's 31st annual event:

- The day starts early this year with birding, hiking, and biking tours hourly beginning at 8 a.m.
- The 10 a.m. Nature Hike on Indigo Trail will be conducted in Spanish.
- In addition to live wildlife presentations under the main tent, the refuge has invited Burmese python hunting and science experts to talk about the havoc the species is wreaking on the Everglades. (There will be no live snakes at this presentation in the Visitor & Education Center Auditorium.)
- Tarpon Bay Explorers, the refuge's recreation concession, will be conducting free stand-up paddleboarding clinics from 9 a.m. to noon at Tarpon Bay Recreation Area.
- Touch tank presentations at Tarpon Bay Explorers are back. Because of on-site construction the past two years, this popular activity was not available.

- Programs previously held on Saturday Conservation Art Day will be folded into Sunday's calendar. This year's Federal and State Duck Stamp Winners will be presenting that day and signing duck stamps.
- New interactive programs include wildlife origami, chalk drawing, canvas painting, nature sketching, and an iPhone photography walk.

For a full calendar of day's activities, visit dingdarlingdays.com or call 239-472-1100 for more information.

Refuge officials estimate the value of free activities on "Ding" Day at \$75 for a family of four.

Tarpon Bay Explorers (www.tarponbayexplorers.com) offers all-day discounts on kayak tours and boating excursions throughout the day. Reservations for tours are recommended.

"Ding" Darling Day celebrates the birthday of the refuge's namesake, father of the Federal Duck Stamp program and Pulitzer Prize-winning political cartoonist, Jay N. "Ding" Darling.

The U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, "Ding" Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS), and Tarpon Bay Explorers cosponsor "Ding" Darling Day with generous support from the local community and businesses.

Sponsors for the 2019 event include: **ROSEATE SPOONBILL SPONSORS:** Doc's Ford Sanibel Rum Bar & Grille; **GREAT EGRET SPONSORS:** Mitchell's Sand Castles, Feather Jim & Patty Sprinkle; **GREAT BLUE HERON SPONSORS:** Bailey's General Store, Mike & Terry Baldwin, Bank of the Islands, Casa Ybel Resort, The Cedar Chest Fine Jewelry, Island Sun/River Weekly, Just Water, Rotary Club of Sanibel-Captiva, Sanibel Captiva Community Bank, Sanibel-Captiva Kiwanis Club, Sanibel Moorings, Sunny Day Guide; **REDDISH EGRET SPONSORS:** Sarah Ashton - Realtor, RE/MAX of the Islands, The Gresham Family, Island Inn, Jensen's on the Gulf and Marina & Cottages, Tiffani Kaliko and John Silvia, Dick & Emily Muench, Palm Printing, Stewart & Sons Insurance; **SNOWY EGRET SPONSORS:** Ambu Yoga, Big Red Q Quickprint, Coastal & Heartland National Estuary Partnership, John Brennan, Colony Inn, Panther Printing, Santiva Chronicle, George & Wendy Schnapp, Winston & Gretchen Spurgeon, 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 profits.

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 director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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