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"Ding" Darling Wildlife Society - Friends of the Refuge

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: The “Go the Distance” bike tour and plein-air artists are part of this year’s “Ding” Darling Day. w/logo

Refuge celebrates 75th anniversary at ‘Ding’ Darling Day, Dec. 1

In deference to pandemic complications, this year’s “Ding” Darling Day moved to Dec. 1, in concert with the 75th Anniversary Celebration at the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island. The refuge has scaled back activities, in keeping with CDC protocols, to present a relaxed and engaging day outdoors interacting with nature.

Wildlife Drive will be open free of charge all day, from 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., to all visitors. Environmental exhibitors and plein-air artists will be spread along the “Ding” Darling Visitor & Education Center parking lot, Indigo Trail, and Wildlife Drive that day.

A Ding-O Bingo Scavenger Hunt will allow attendees to self-tour the exhibits in an engaging but distanced manner and win a prize for completion. Scavenger hunt forms will be available online at dingdarlingdays.com and that day at the information table at the bottom of the Visitor & Education Center ramp.

Other free activities will include a 4-mile, ranger-guided “Go the Distance” bike tour at 9:30 a.m. and a 1 p.m. 75th Anniversary Presentation with Acting Refuge Manager Kevin Godsea and dignitaries, outdoors in the parking lot area. Also in the parking lot, 2021 “Ding” Artist in Residence Rachel Pierce will be doing nature art demonstrations, and the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS)

will display the winning photos from its 2020 “Ding” Darling Day Amateur Nature Photography Contest. See a list of more activities below.

“‘Ding’ Day may look entirely different this year, but it still has the same mission to get families and others out to the refuge and exploring and learning about the great outdoors,” said Toni Westland, supervisory refuge ranger and “Ding” Darling Day committee chair. “We didn’t want to miss an opportunity to celebrate our official 75th anniversary date on Dec. 1 with friends and neighbors as safely as possible. We will be building a time capsule that day. It will go on display thereafter in the Visitor & Education Center.”

“Thanks to our faithful sponsors, who have helped turn this into a day of celebration that ends with a ticketed 1940s drive-in theater gala in the evening,” said Birgie Miller, executive director of the “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society, gala host and co-sponsor of the “Ding” Darling Day. For more information, visit dingdarlingdays.com.

“Ding” Darling Day Scheduled Activities

7 a.m. - Wildlife Drive opens free of charge

9 a.m. Information table opens with scavenger hunt forms and hand-outs. Wildlife Drive/Indigo Trail and parking lot stations open for safe self-touring.

9:30 a.m. Ranger-guided, 4-mile "Go the Distance" Distanced Bike Tour, Wildlife Drive (bring your own bikes and helmets, meet at flagpole)

1 p.m. 75th Anniversary Presentation, in parking lot

Ongoing 9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Exhibitors along Wildlife Drive and Indigo Trail, CROW exhibit in parking lot

“Ding” Darling Day Amateur Nature Photography Contest Winners display in parking lot

Art demonstrations by 2021 Resident Artist Rachel Pierce in parking lot

USFWS Law Enforcement Trailer in parking lot

USFWS Fire Demo in parking lot

Mobile Nature Store in parking lot

Scavenger hunt with prizes

Plein-air artists in parking lot and on Wildlife Drive and Indigo Trail

“Ding” Darling Day and 75th Anniversary Celebration sponsors:



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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 profits.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.

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