

PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: The “Ding” Darling Visitor & Education Center schedule will be Monday through Saturday starting in the new year. Hands-on exhibits remain closed.

Refuge announces latest COVID adaptations

The J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island recently announced changes to scheduling due to the lingering effects of the pandemic. Starting Sunday, Jan. 3, the “Ding” Darling Visitor & Education Center will be closed every Sunday until further notice. Monday through Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., the front desk and Refuge Nature Store will be open in the center. All exhibits remain closed.

The center’s restrooms will stay open daily 9 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Wildlife Drive will continue with its seasonal schedule of Saturday to Thursday 7 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Tarpon Bay Explorers recreation concession will operate according to its regular schedule.

For the holidays, the Visitor & Education Center will close Dec. 24, 25, and 30, and Jan. 1. Tarpon Bay Explorers closes Dec. 25.

Beginning Feb. 1, 2021, the refuge will begin offering a regular schedule of free programs five days a week. In January, it begins its free artist-in-residence programs, featuring Fort Myers artist Rachel Pierce. Watch for more details at dingdarlingsociety.org.

“Sunday has been our slowest day of the week since we reopened and the hardest day to get volunteers to help work the front desk,” explained supervisory refuge ranger Toni Westland. “Closing that day also gives us a better opportunity to more thoroughly sanitize facilities to ensure the safety of our visitors and staff.”

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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