

News Release



J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge
1 Wildlife Drive
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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The 4-mile Wildlife Drive at J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge on Sanibel Island will be closing for repaving from May through September 2013. This construction project will replace the existing open-grade pavement on Wildlife Drive with an asphalt concrete pavement. Existing and newly planted vegetation will help filter runoff. Portions of the shoulder currently used for parking will be reinforced and/or topped with crushed stone/gravel to prevent erosion and additional runoff.

The existing pavement, installed in 2002, was expected to be pervious and last 10 years. However, the pavement deteriorated significantly, and because it accumulated fine silt and sand, it is no longer functioning as a pervious surface. Additionally, the rough surface discourages bicycle and disabled access. Highway maintenance funds to repave the surface were requested in 2009 and made available in 2013. Repaving with another pervious surface was preferred, but unfortunately was not feasible due to the high cost and short life span of pervious pavement. The new surface will be an asphalt concrete that will extend the life of Wildlife Drive for 20 years, and will enhance visitor access, especially for bicyclists and pedestrians.

Wildlife Drive will be closed for repaving from May through September of 2013. Indigo Trail will only be accessible through guided tours conducted by Tarpon Bay Explorers. All other refuge access locations, including Tarpon Bay Recreation Area and the Bailey Tract will remain open. Visitors will continue to have access to the free Visitor Education Center.

Also, free refuge summer programs will be conducted from June through August 2013 at other refuge locations. A full schedule of these free events will be available as summer approaches. Check out our Frequently Asked Questions and stay informed about this project-and all other refuge news by joining us on Facebook: J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge (Official) or visit either our website: <http://www.fws.gov/dingdarling>, or the Ding Darling Wildlife Society's website: <http://www.dingdarlingsociety.org>.

Any questions or concerns should be directed to the acting Wildlife Refuge Manager, Joyce Palmer, at 239/ 472-1100 x 225.

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