

Observation Guidelines

Respect wildlife – Remember you are in their home.

At the J.N. “Ding” Darling NWR, we encourage visitors to respectfully enjoy wildlife at a safe distance. The disturbance or harassment of wildlife on a national wildlife refuge is unethical and illegal, and can result in hefty fines or arrest. Disturbance or harassment of wildlife is defined as any activity that affects or changes the natural behavior of wildlife, which can be detrimental to the animal’s health, safety, or productivity.

Types of activities that can cause disturbance or harassment are:

- Getting too close to or chasing wildlife
- Using flash photography in close proximity to wildlife
- Playing recorded bird/wildlife calls
- Moving or cutting vegetation near a nest
- Feeding wildlife
- Throwing objects at wildlife

Witnesses to any of these types of violations are encouraged to report them immediately to Refuge Management at (239) 472-1100. Respect wildlife and other visitors when viewing and photographing wildlife.



Nature at your fingertips

Download the **FREE Discover Ding Game & Wildlife Spotting App**

Head out on Wildlife Drive and test your knowledge using the first of its kind—place-based nature trivia game that helps you see more with Seymour! Share photos & field tips, and see what others are posting even when you return home. Available for both iPhone and Android.

Stay Connected #dingdarlingnwr

@dingdarlingrefuge
@dingdarling

@dingdarlingwildlifesociety

@ Ding Darling Wildlife Society

DingDarlingSociety.org



Leave nothing but footprints; take nothing but pictures. To all who take pictures, use courtesy to fellow visitors and wildlife.



Wildlife Drive is one-way, 15mph road, seatbelts required. Cars make good observation blinds because the wildlife have become accustomed to them. For better observation of feeding, resting, and preening birds, minimize noise by turning down radios, closing doors quietly, and speaking softly. Park at the edge of the road, on the right hand side but not where birds are close to the road.



Please place all trash and recyclables in receptacles. Otherwise, wildlife could ingest or become entangled in plastic and other trash. They often become ill and die.



Observe all speed zones and closed areas when boating. Manatees can be injured by boat propellers and birds can be disturbed when approached too closely. Federal and Florida State boating regulations apply. All refuge waters are slow speed/minimum wake zones. All refuge islands and lands accessed by water are closed to public entry. Motorized boats under 14 feet and non-motorized canoes and kayaks of any length may be launched on the right (North) side of Wildlife Drive.



Carry water, sunscreen, binoculars, and bug spray.



Check out America’s Best Restrooms of 2018.



Refuge Map

J.N. “Ding” Darling
National Wildlife Refuge

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

J.N. “Ding” Darling
National Wildlife Refuge
1 Wildlife Drive
Sanibel, Florida 33957
www.fws.gov/dingdarling
239-472-1100



The National Wildlife Refuge System...

J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge is one of more than 560 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The System, encompassing more than 150 million acres, is the nation’s largest network of lands and waters managed specifically for wildlife. The Refuge System is administered by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, an agency of the Department of the Interior.



This Blue Goose, designed by Jay Norwood “Ding” Darling, is the symbol of the National Wildlife Refuge System.



J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge

DAY USE ONLY

Legend

-  Refuge lands
-  Refuge lands closed to public access
Use designated trails only
-  Refuge water boundary
-  Canoe/kayak trail
-  Foot/bicycle trails
Walk bikes on all boardwalks.
-  Wildlife Drive - 4 miles
Closed to all access on Fridays.
One-way for vehicles and bicycles
-  J.N. "Ding" Darling Wilderness Area
Motor boat use allowed except in No Motor Zone.
-  No Motor Zone - pole/paddle only
-  Wulfert Flats Pole/Troll Zone
Seagrass protection area.
No combustion engine zone - pole/troll only.
-  Wildlife Education Boardwalk with Tower
-  Visitor & Education Center and Administration Headquarters - Tram Ticket sales. Tram tickets sale and restrooms.
-  Canoe/kayak launch site
-  Mangrove Overlook
-  Cross Dike Pavilion
-  Restrooms
-  Observation tower
-  CROW Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife
Healing Winds Visitor Education Center
-  SCCF Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation - Nature Center
-  Shell Museum
-  Sanibel Historical Museum and Village
-  Picnic areas
-  Public beach access
-  Tram pick-up/drop-off
January-April along Sanibel-Captiva Road
May-December Visitor & Education Center lot
-  Fishing access - Florida state fishing regulations apply. Fishing license required. Seines and trotlines are prohibited. The use of bows or spears from land is prohibited. Use of cast nets is prohibited from any water control structure, bridge, boardwalk or rip rap affixed to Wildlife Drive. Did you lose or spot fishing gear? Report it to Mindyourline.org
-  Florida state crabbing regulations apply. Crabs may be taken with dip nets only. Crab traps are prohibited.
-  Tarpon Bay Recreation Area
Tarpon Bay Explorers
Rentals: kayaks/canoes, bicycles, boats, stand-up paddle boards, Guided tours: pontoon boat, kayak, and fishing. Nature gift shop. (239) 472-8900
TarponBayExplorers.com



Visitor & Education Center
Free entry
 9a.m.-4p.m.
 Call for information
 (239) 472-1100
 Main picnic area in parking lot
 Closed some Federal holidays

Wildlife Drive - CLOSED FRIDAYS
 Park on right side only
 Motorized vehicles \$10
 Hiker/biker \$1 (Children 15 and under FREE)
 Federal passes available for entrance fees only
 One-way for vehicles and bicycles, 15 mph speed limit
 Tram tours available (239) 472-1351

Indigo Trail
 Hiker/biker \$1
 Visit the **Wildlife Education Boardwalk with tower** along the way

Bailey Tract
Free entry
 Hiker/biker only

- PROHIBITED REFUGE ACTIVITIES**
- Hunting
 - Bowfishing from land
 - Cast-netting at water control structures or left side of Wildlife Drive
 - Collecting
 - Camping
 - Feeding or disturbing wildlife
 - Unleashed pets
 - Drones
 - Possession of unauthorized firearms
 - Crabbing with baited line or trap
 - Entering areas that are closed to public
 - Using areas after sunset
 - Biking against traffic flow on Wildlife Drive
 - Entering Wildlife Drive from Wulfert Road

For more information and an updated list of all Refuge specific regulations visit www.fws.gov/dingdarling or call (239)472-1100.

All visitors must exit refuge lands and waters no later than 1/2 hour after legal sunset.

