

Blue-winged teal

Wildlife To Be Seen . . .

March through May, painted buntings, red-eyed vireos and other migrating songbirds may be seen. One of the most spectacular refuge scenes is that of the roseate spoonbills flying over the Drive near the observation tower at sunset. This often occurs during the spring at periods of low tide. Young yellow-crowned night herons, baby mottled ducks and immature little blue herons are out during the hot and humid summer season. Migrating songbirds such as the orange-crowned warblers, orioles and buntings again frequent the Refuge during the fall. December through February visitors can see blue-winged teal, pintails; red-breasted mergansers and other migrating ducks.

Year-round residents include the often-seen osprey, the nocturnal raccoon, the large brown pelican, the gregarious moorhen and the alligator. Alligators can be observed basking in the sun, along the water's edge, to the left of the Drive. In the winter, they are seen during the sunnier parts of the day; but during the hotter parts of summer days, alligators seek cooler areas of the Refuge, where they are not likely to be seen. You are cautioned to stay on the trails and road to observe alligators.

The Refuge provides a place for approximately 291 species of birds, over 50 types of reptiles and amphibians and at least 32 different mammals. Because of this, you are likely to see a variety of animals during a journey through the Refuge.

The National Wildlife Refuge System . . .

J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge is one of over 460 refuges in the National Wildlife Refuge System. The System, encompassing nearly 90 million acres, is a network of lands and waters managed specifically for wildlife. The Refuge System is administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, an agency of the Department of the Interior.



This blue goose, designed by "Ding" Darling, has become a symbol of the Refuge System.

For An Enjoyable Visit . . .

Start your tour at the Refuge Visitor Center. The staff and volunteers will orient you to the Refuge. Take your binoculars and cameras, drive slowly, walk a trail and look closely. This will help you see animals that blend in well with their surroundings. Visit the Refuge during periods of low tide for the best wildlife observation opportunities. Tide changes occur on the Refuge one to two hours later than times stated on island tide charts. Sanibel was once known for its immense mosquito population. Currently, mosquito control practices keep insect population numbers down. Yet, you should be prepared for mosquitoes and other biting insects.

For More Information Contact . . .

Refuge Manager
J.N. "Ding" Darling NWR
1 Wildlife Drive
Sanibel, FL 33957
813/472-1100

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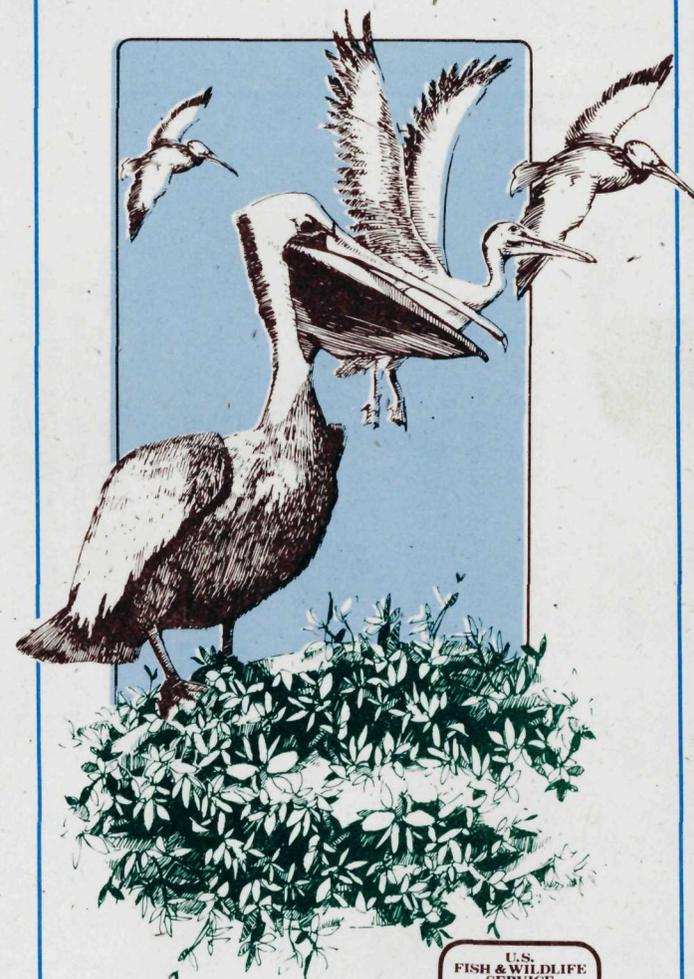


SANIBEL FLORIDA

April, 1991

J.N. "Ding" Darling

NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE





Cormorant

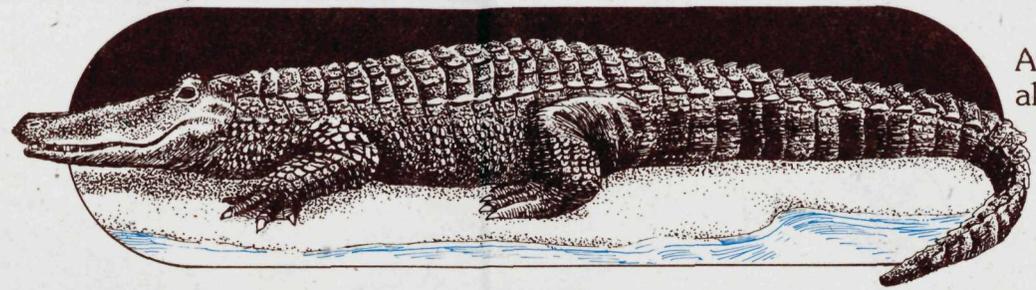
Anhinga

In Times Gone By . . .

Sanibel is a subtropical barrier island composed of sand, shell and silt. Dry ridges and wet sloughs now exist on this 12-mile long island that is fringed with mangrove trees, shallow bays and white sandy beaches.

The island was inhabited by Native Americans for over 2,000 years. Calusa Indians used the island for a place to live and find food. During the mid-1800s, European explorers and settlers found and began to inhabit Sanibel. Farming and fishing provided a living for these settlers. In 1926, a hurricane destroyed the agricultural pursuits. Tourism has since become the economic foundation for residents of this island that today is connected to the mainland by a three-mile causeway.

This 5,030 acre Refuge was established as Sanibel National Wildlife Refuge in 1945. It was originally a satellite of the former Everglades National Wildlife Refuge. The Everglades is now a part of the National Park System; this Refuge is today an independent station of the National Wildlife Refuge System. In 1967, the Sanibel National Wildlife Refuge was renamed the J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge.



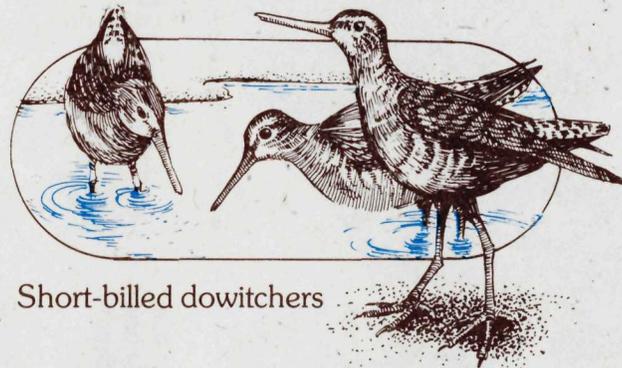
American alligator

Jay Norwood Darling . . .

"Ding" Darling Refuge was named after one of the pioneers of the conservation movement. "Ding" is a shortened version Jay Norwood Darling used for his signature. This is how he signed his political cartoons, for which he received a Pulitzer Prize in 1923 and 1942.

Mr. Darling headed the U.S. Biological Survey (forerunner of the Fish and Wildlife Service) under Franklin Roosevelt's administration. He is also credited as one of the key people in the establishment of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

One of Mr. Darling's most important contributions to wildlife was the initiation, in 1934, of the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp or "Duck Stamp" program. He designed the first stamp and every year since, a new stamp has been issued. The proceeds from the sale of these stamps have purchased wetlands for 200 National Wildlife Refuges. Duck Stamps are sold at the "Ding" Darling Refuge Visitor Center, for those who want to contribute to wetlands preservation.



Short-billed dowitchers

Managing for Wildlife's Vanishing Habitat . . .

A number of wildlife management techniques are used on this Refuge to help offset expanding human development:

- **Water Management.** The dike, now used for the Wildlife Drive, was constructed in the 1960s as a mosquito control device. Today, in addition to controlling mosquito numbers, the dike benefits migratory waterfowl by allowing for water level manipulation.
- **Maintain and Preserve Habitat Diversity.** Exotic plants (not found naturally) have been planted on Sanibel for ornamental purposes. These plants now grow wild. They are crowding out native (naturally growing) plants that benefit wildlife, by providing vegetative diversity. Exotic plant control is an important refuge wildlife management activity. Wilderness areas have been set aside to also help preserve naturally occurring wildlife habitat.
- **Law Enforcement.** Regulations are established to protect wildlife and their habitat. Enforcement and your compliance with these regulations are important. Refuge regulations are listed in the map legend.
- **Wildlife Research.** What does the endangered manatee require for survival? Finding the answers to this and other questions help ensure wildlife's survival.
- **Monitor Wildlife Populations.** Periodic censusing and duck banding are two methods managers use to monitor management results and wildlife health.
- **Public Information.** Your understanding and work towards wildlife's survival are very important. The Refuge's ability to communicate these needs to you is critical.

Finding Your Way

REFUGE HOURS

Wildlife Drive
 Sunrise to Sunset/Sat.-Thur.
 CLOSED to ALL public access on
FRIDAYS.

Entrance Fee/Wildlife Drive
 Motorized Vehicles \$4.00
 Hikers/Bicyclists \$1.00

Hiking Trails
 Sunrise to Sunset/Daily

 **REFUGE LANDS**

 **AREAS CLOSED**
 Area beyond line of area closed signs, closed to public access.

 **MANGROVE OVERLOOK**

 **OBSERVATION TOWER**

 **CANOE TRAILS**
 Buck Key canoe trails provide 4 miles of traveling through a red mangrove forest.

The 2-mile Commodore Creek Canoe Trail affords views of wildlife found in and around the red mangrove tree roots.

 **CANOE RENTAL LOCATIONS**

 **VISITOR CENTER**
 Exhibits and audio-visual programs are available free of charge. Hours are posted.

 **WILDLIFE DRIVE**
 The 5-mile, one-way drive enables good viewing of water birds. Speed limit is 15 mph. A self-guiding brochure is available for purchase.

 **FOOT TRAILS**
 The 1/3 mile Shell Mound Trail has interpretive signs that inform visitors about their surroundings.

Over 1 3/4 miles of trails are located at the Bailey Tract, where alligators, herons, egrets and other wildlife are found.

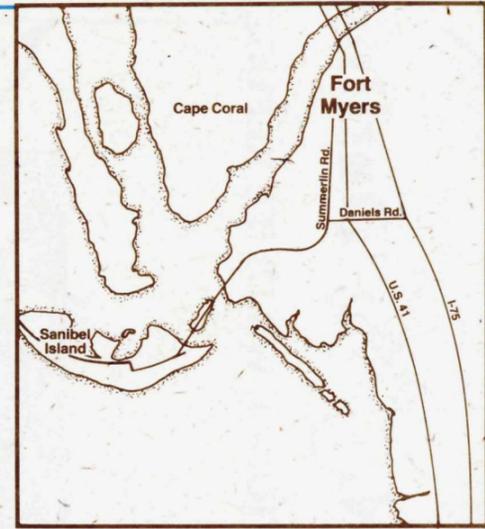
The 2-mile long Indigo Trail enables visitors to see ospreys, wading birds and other wildlife. The Trail starts at the Visitor Center. Trail is closed at Cross Dike, on Friday.

FISHING (Note: FL State Fishing Reg. Apply)
 Saltwater and freshwater fishing is available along the Wildlife Drive, at Tarpon Bay, and at the Bailey Tract. No shelling allowed. Crabbing permitted, exception in CLOSED AREAS.

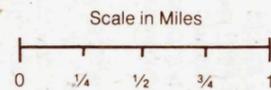
 **PUBLIC BEACH ACCESS**

 **SANIBL-CAPTIVA NATURE CENTER**
 This private center offers exhibits, walking trails and guided tours. Operating hours are posted.

 **PICNIC AREAS**



Gulf of Mexico



Lock Your Vehicle
Place Valuables Out Of Sight

PROHIBITED REFUGE ACTIVITIES

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Collecting | Camping |
| Picnicking | Boating on the left-hand side of the Drive |
| Feeding or disturbing wildlife | Crabbing with baited line or trap |
| Pets not on a leash | Entry into Area Closed Zone |
| Possession of Firearms | |