



Agenda for the February 25th 2011 Ding Darling Better Birding Workshop.

For those traveling from outside the Ft Myers Sanibel area our best recommendation is:

La Quinta Inn & Suites

Ft. Myers - Sanibel Gateway, 20091 Summerlin Rd, Fort Myers, FL 33908,

Phone: 1-239-466-1200, Fax: 1-239-466-3797

We are expecting a good day on Sanibel.. The best recommendation is to dress in layers. We are optimistic we will enjoy a warm afternoon. Check weather reports for expected temperatures.

Things to bring: (recommended, but not required)

Tripod, long lenses, laptop, extra batteries, flash, plenty of memory cards, or any other gadgets or meters you may want to learn or experiment with. Some images from the past for classroom critique - what went wrong/ what went right.

Bring Golden Eagle Pass, or other park passes that allow National Park, and Refuge admission.

My cell phone number is 813-263-2702. Please send me your cell phone number, and verification that you will be joining us, so we will know to expect you.

6:30 AM – For those that want to meet and car pool for the day we will leave the parking lot of the Tanger Outlet Mall at 20350 Summerlin Road Fort Myers, FL 33908 at 6:30 AM. We will meet in front of the Nature Observation Area. (see map on link below)

Cost per car to cross the bridge to Sanibel Island is \$6.00. Cost Per Car to enter Ding Darling \$5.00. Our plan is to carpool across the bridge, and from the ding darling parking lot.

7:00am - Enter Ding Darling 5 mile loop for various shooting spots.

10:30am – Depart Ding Darling for Classroom locatin at 770 Dunlop Road Sanibel, FL 33957
NOTE: You may want to grab a snack along the way.

11:00 – 12:00am Classroom Activities

12:00-1:00pm – Lunch on your own.

1:00 – 3PM - More photo opportunities.

NOTE: Save you receipt from Ding Darling, it is good for one day. Those wishing to go back into Ding Darling on their own can use this receipt.

Cost of the workshop: \$125. Pay by cash or check, (made out to James Corwin Johnson) or call the Studio 941-799-2404 ahead of time to pay by credit card and reserve a spot.

Tanger Outlet Mall: <http://www.tangeroutlet.com/fortmyers/directory.pdf>

Entering the natural world of J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge can be an exhilarating experience. At least one refuge visitor is known to have repeatedly traveled the refuge drive for several days, each time seeing the striking differences in bird presence brought about by tidal changes and each time anticipating additional exciting views of the over 50 species of wading and shorebirds that frequent this barrier island refuge.

Adding to the lure of this popular refuge is its subtropical location in one of Florida's prime tourist areas. Ding Darling NWR occupies over 5000 acres of Sanibel Island, a renowned resort area on Florida's Gulf Coast across San Carlos Bay by causeway from Fort Myers.

The extreme popularity of this outstanding refuge has created unique management challenges for manager Lou Hinds, who has witnessed burgeoning visitor populations and the impact they have had on refuge wildlife populations. But with the able assistance of the refuge staff and a cadre of volunteers plus the support of the highly motivated Ding Darling Wildlife Society, Hinds is breaking new ground in limiting wildlife disruptions while assuring visitors that they are welcome.

Location: Sanibel Island off Florida's Gulf Coast; across the causeway from Ft. Myers.

Size: 5,000+ acres.

Features: Barrier island. 243 bird species including tundra swan, bald eagle, and green-backed heron.

Activities: Hiking, canoeing, wildlife drives, bird watching.

Wildlife: The ever-present wildlife on the 5-mile Wildlife Drive is what makes the refuge so popular, especially during the fall and winter months. The drive offers excellent viewing of tidal mudflats, mangrove forests, and two expansive water-controlled impoundments, originally constructed for mosquito control. Over 230 species of birds have been recorded on the refuge, and 110 species are tallied in Christmas bird counts. The refuge also has 50 species of reptiles and amphibians and 32 mammals. Wading birds are conspicuous including wood storks, white ibis, yellow-crowned night herons, and reddish, great, and snowy egrets. As many as a third of the U.S. population of the striking roseate spoonbills can be in the refuge at times. The mudflats can be covered with shorebirds including Wilson's plovers, American oyster catchers, and black necked stilts in season. Waterfowl are present during winter, although numbers are declining, thought to be the result of problematic salinity increases in the brackish impoundments.

Sharper eyes will see in the thicket cover eastern flycatchers, warblers, tanagers, orioles, and buntings during spring and fall migrations. Osprey nest building in January on a platform near the drive can create a frenzy of whirring cameras by excited photographers.

The marshy areas near the end of the drive will reveal common moorhens and, except during hot months, American alligators basking in the sun. An 11-foot American crocodile also likes to bask on Wildlife Drive in an area that had to be roped off because unwary people were getting too close.

Read more: http://www.gorp.com/parks-guide/travel-ta-prime-hook-national-wildlife-refuge-jn-ding-darling-national-wildlife-refuge-birdwatching-paddling-sidwcmdev_068503.html#ixzz1Bs4uvHnt