Bailey Tract ~ JN "Ding" Darling Wildlife Refuge

hand-painted photograph

When Sanibel gets crowded, one of the quiet places to walk is the Bailey Tract. It's an easy 2 miles trafficked loop trail through various inland ecosystems. Clyde and I had spent a couple of weeks on Sanibel, enjoying the island and doing some photography. I decided I wanted to scout out the Bailey Tract to see if there was anything on it that Clyde would enjoy photographing. Yes, there was for both of us. The next day we returned and enjoyed an afternoon of photography. Thank you, Ding Darling, for saving this special place!

The **Bailey Tract** is named for its first owner, Frank P. **Bailey**, the late 1800s Sanibel settler whose descendants own **Bailey's** General Store. Like much of Sanibel's interior before the 1950s, the parcel was a pristine spartina marsh, full of cordgrass and sawgrass — and wet seven to eight months of the year.

As more people moved to Southwest Florida, the marshland started shrinking. The area was saved, and eventually, Ding Darling took the obligation of keeping it safe from development by protecting the land.

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