



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 2022

CONTACTS: Ray Sarracino, Jackie Parker, Miriam Dotson 239-338-3500

What's new from Fort Myers - Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods

Celebrate National Seashell Day and the first day summer on June 21

LEE COUNTY, Fla. (U.S.A.) – Fort Myers' Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods in Southwest Florida continues to provide new experiences for returning guests and first-time visitors. Whether you're looking for great year-round weather or shell-drenched beaches along the sparkling Gulf of Mexico, VisitFortMyers.com is the source for the most up-to-date vacation information.

Shellebrate National Seashell Day

Shelling is such a popular pastime in the Fort Myers area that it has its own special day coinciding with the first day of summer. **National Seashell Day** takes place on **June 21** and shelling enthusiasts may *shellebrate* the joy of shelling and pair it with the perfect summer getaway.

Visitors come from all over the world to explore the area's world-famous beaches and to take advantage of the abundant treasures from the sea. Shelling is such a big deal here that in 2018, the destination broke the **GUINNESS WORLD RECORDS™** title for "Largest human image of a seashell" with 1,093 participants. This year, there are lots of ways to celebrate the day. visitfortmyers.com/national-seashell-day

- **Plan a vacation and have a shell of a good time this summer**
Take advantage of special travel deals with a stay at hotels, vacation rentals and RV parks. Check out offers at visitfortmyers.com/deals
- **Take a beach walk with a shelling expert**
Join a Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum marine biologist at the Island Inn on Sanibel Island for an hour-long beach walk exploring the shells, mollusks and other marine life that washes ashore on Sanibel Island. Meet at 9 a.m. daily (except holidays). Reservations and ticket information at 239-395-2233. shellmuseum.org/beach-walks
- **Take a private charter and have a shelling adventure**
Shelling guides can help find the perfect shell with a trip to explore some of the area's outer islands. And there is also a chance to see some of the area's wildlife along the way.

Most shellers may expect to find lettered olives, lightning whelks, Florida fighting conchs, baby's ears, worm shells, nauticas, scallops, coquinas and other bivalves. But one of the rarest finds, the shell that keeps many returning to these islands, is the brown-speckled Junonia. Only a lucky few find it. visitfortmyers.com

- **Touch tanks, shells, mollusks and a giant Pacific octopus**

Visit the Bailey-Matthews National Shell Museum on Sanibel Island, the only museum in the U.S. devoted solely to shells and mollusks. The entire family will enjoy fun, educational activities, plus kids love touch pools, winning scavenger hunt prizes and watching a giant Pacific octopus. Check out the live Octocam at shellmuseum.org/octocam

- **Read Anne Morrow Lindbergh's *Gift from the Sea***

When the day is done, curl up with a copy of Anne Morrow Lindbergh's classic, *Gift from the Sea*. Like many who visit today, she found peace and solitude as she walked the beach on Captiva Island. There, using the shells on the beach for inspiration, she reflected on the life of the American woman, mid-20th century. A groundbreaking, best-selling work when it was originally published in 1955, *Gift from the Sea* continues to be discovered by new generations of readers. It has sold 3 million copies and has been translated into 45 languages. visitfortmyers.com/visit/plan-your-trip/fromhome/books-movies

Ghost sighting at Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary

Grab your binoculars and head for Audubon's Corkscrew Swamp Sanctuary this summer for a "Super" ghost orchid sighting. Discovered in July 2007, the Corkscrew "Super" ghost orchid (*Dendrophylax lindenii*) has been in the spotlight each summer. This orchid flowers annually and has drawn attention from around the world as it is the largest ghost orchid discovered so far and is known to have only been spotted in Southwest Florida and Cuba. Visitors will find the orchid located about 70 feet off the ground on a bald cypress tree roughly 100 feet from the boardwalk. In order to see the blooms, orchid enthusiasts are encouraged to bring a spotting scope or binoculars. corkscrew.audubon.org

Scavenger hunt for families at Edison and Ford Winter Estates

A new scavenger hunt for families is available to visitors to the Edison and Ford Winter Estates. The main character in the game is Jerry the Pelican, inspired by a pelican who actually spent time on the property and was named by the Edison family. Thomas and Mina Edison also had pet alligators, monkeys and a peacock.

Scavengers will search for Jerry in eight different places, including the Edison caretaker's house, the Moonlight Garden, main house, Thomas and Mina's bedroom, guest house, the Ford car exhibit, the secretary's bedroom in the Ford house and in the Ford house dining room. Children will receive a prize when they find all eight hidden pelicans. Families are invited to post their scavenger hunt success on Facebook @EdisonFordFL. The scavenger hunt is included in admission. edisonfordwinterestates.org

Songs from the Sand on June 16 and make plans to attend Island Hopper 2022

Don't miss the upcoming **Songs from the Sand** at 8 p.m. June 16. **Lance Carpenter**, BMI songwriter and performer, as well as a three-time veteran performer at Island Hopper Songwriter Fest, is the featured artist.

Taking place at The Westin Cape Coral Resort at Marina Village in Cape Coral, the privately recorded event will be hosted by VCB Communications Manager Jackie Parker and will feature Carpenter's music and stories behind the songs. Check it out on the [Island Hopper Songwriter Fest Facebook page](#), [Instagram](#) and [Visit Fort Myers YouTube channel](#).

Carpenter is known for his "Love Me Like You Mean It," (2014) a No. 1 song he co-wrote with Kelsea Ballerini and she also recorded the song. He is scheduled to perform again as part of the 10-day Island Hopper event Sept. 16-25.

Mark your calendar for Island Hopper Songwriter Fest 2022, returning for its eighth year. A 10-day music festival featuring performances by some of the country's greatest singer-songwriters, Island Hopper takes place in three areas, with the first weekend kicking off on Captiva Island, Sept. 16-18, then moving to downtown Fort Myers, Sept. 19- 22, and ending with a weekend on Fort Myers Beach, Sept. 23-25. Most shows are free, with the exception of a few ticketed experiences, like our headliner shows. Stay up to date on festival news with the Island Hopper app or islandhopperfest.com

Dining/entertainment news

Work is underway on an all-new, reimagined Crow's Nest Bar & Grille at Tween Waters Island Resort and Spa on Captiva Island. A popular spot with locals and visitors, the transformation takes it from one to two stories with views of the Gulf of Mexico and spectacular sunsets. Completion is expected in late 2022. tween-waters.com

Accommodations news

Holiday Inn Fort Myers Airport at Town Center plans renovations including a new fitness center that is expected to be completed in June. The marketplace, boardroom, main meeting space and restaurant are expected to be completed in early October. Renovation of guest rooms will take place in summer 2023. ihg.com/holidayinn/hotels/us/en/fort-myers/fmyar/hoteldetail

Pink Shell Beach Resort & Marina on Fort Myers Beach plans a \$7 million renovation starting in August. The project, expected to be completed early next year, includes upgrades to 195 hotel guest rooms, including the Captiva Villas, Sands Villas and Sanibel View Studios. pinkshell.com

Airport news

New air service at Southwest Florida International Airport (RSW)

Breeze Airways: nonstop to Las Vegas (LAS) and Charleston, South Carolina (CHS), twice weekly, beginning June 11.

Eurowings Discover: Frankfurt, Germany (FRA), weekly, year-round service

Alaska Airlines: Seattle (SEA) weekly, year-round service.

Attractions news

McCullum Hall named to the National Register of Historic Places

The National Park Service has listed McCullum Hall on the National Register of Historic Places.

McCullum Hall, located at 2701 Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Blvd., was popular from the 1930s through the 1950s as a *Chitlin' Circuit* venue where famous black entertainers such as Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Louis Armstrong, B.B. King and others performed. The colorful murals on the wall behind McCullum Hall show the history of both the venue and the surrounding community. [Facebook @McCullumPlace](#)

J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge plans new pavilion

Soon to break ground, The Roost, a \$1 million-plus project will greet visitors to the J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge with outdoor flex space for a broad spectrum of educational purposes. The “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge plans to break ground on The Roost, by late summer.

The 4,670-square-foot pavilion, designed by Sanibel Island architect Amy Nowacki, will be constructed of innovative earth-friendly materials with solar panels that will provide electricity for its lighting and paddle fans and a battery backup for other refuge buildings. Incorporating design elements from nature, it will serve as an outdoor classroom for visiting school and other groups. dingdarlingsociety.org

Have fun and save with Fort Myers Sun Saver Passport

Fort Myers’ Islands, Beaches and Neighborhoods has launched a free mobile savings passport giving users access to exclusive deals on attractions, restaurants and experiences throughout the destination.

To participate:

- Sign up at explore.visitfortmyers.com
- The passport will be delivered to your mobile phone via text.
- Redeem it on your mobile phone at participating businesses.
- Visit the website for a complete list of attractions, restaurants and experiences.

Check in and have a good day: Fort Myers Discovery Challenge

Explore Fort Myers and surrounding areas to discover the arts and cultural attractions that make the islands, beaches and neighborhoods naturally unique. Embark on a guided tour of the Mound House that overlooks Estero Bay or walk the Calusa Heritage Trail on Pine Island. From the nationally recognized shell museum on Sanibel Island to the art galleries of Matlacha, there are so many ways to have a good day. Using your mobile device, check in to each location and you could find exclusive savings and deals. Even better, you can earn a variety of prizes.

visitfortmyers.com/challenge

Annual festivals and events

Captiva Pride Weekend

June 3-5

tween-waters.com/captiva-pride-weekend

National Seashell Day

June 21

visitfortmyers.com/national-seashell-day

24th Annual MangoMania Tropical Fruit Festival, Pine Island

July 16

mangomaniafl.net

Island Hopper Songwriter Fest

Sept. 16-25

IslandHopperFest.com

Roar Offshore, Fort Myers Beach

Oct. 6-8

roaroffshore.com

37th Annual Oktoberfest, Cape Coral

Oct. 21-23 and 28-30

capecoraloktoberfest.com

Lee County Alliance of the Arts 5th Annual Arts on Tap, Fort Myers

November TBD

Artinlee.org/ontap

2023 Events

38th Annual Cape Coral Festival of the Arts, Cape Coral

Jan. 14-15

capecoralfestival.com

ArtFest Fort Myers, downtown River District

Feb. 3-5

artfestfortmyers.com

Edison Festival of Light Grand Parade, Fort Myers

Feb. 18

edisonfestival.org

Boca Grande Film Festival

February TBD

friendsofbocagrande.org/events/boca-grande-film-festival

86th Annual Sanibel Shell Festival, Sanibel Island

March

sanibelcommunityhouse.net/p/84/shell-festival

24th Annual Southwest Florida Reading Festival, Fort Myers

March 4

readfest.org

ECHO Global Food and Farm Festival, North Fort Myers

March 7-11

echonet.org/events/global-food-and-farm-festival

65th Annual Fort Myers Beach Shrimp Festival, Fort Myers Beach

March 11-12

fortmyersbeach.org/events/fort-myers-beach-shrimp-festival

Spring training 2023

Boston Red Sox

February-March

JetBlue Park, Fort Myers

mlb.com/redsox/tickets/spring-training

Minnesota Twins

February-March

Lee County Sports Complex/Hammond Stadium, Fort Myers

mlb.com/twins/tickets/spring-training

33rd Annual “Ding” Darling Day, Lakes Park, Fort Myers

Conservation Carnival

April TBD

dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/ding-darling-days

Fort Myers Beach International Film Festival

April TBD

fmbfilmfest.com

13th Annual Fort Myers Film Festival

May TBD

fortmyersfilmfestival.com

11th Annual “Ding” Darling & Doc Ford’s Tarpon Tournament, Sanibel Island

May TBD

dingdarlingsociety.org/articles/tarpon-tournament-1

Editor's note: Fort Myers and surrounding areas includes Fort Myers Beach, Sanibel & Captiva islands, Boca Grande & Outer Islands, Pine Island, Matlacha, Cape Coral, North Fort Myers, Bonita Springs, Estero, Alva, Buckingham and Lehigh Acres. For media assistance, VisitFortMyers.com/media-central