

# News from the Island



NEWSLETTER OF THE DAUPHIN ISLAND BIRD SANCTUARIES, INC.

Volume 21 No. 1

Fall 2017

## President's Message

### The Changing Seasons

As our summer season slowly draws to a close and we begin to feel the first subtle hints of the cooler weather that lies ahead, the fall bird migration on Dauphin Island is ongoing with many species of migratory birds funneling through daily. Shorebirds, many of which nest north of the Arctic Circle, must begin their southerly autumn journey in early July to escape the rapidly approaching frigid temperatures and dwindling food supplies on their arctic breeding grounds. Diminishing day lengths and the increasingly acute angle of the sun are sure indicators of the change of seasons, and the birds know the time is right to begin their annual migration south. Our busy tourist season is at an end, the fall wildflowers are beginning to bloom and the miracle of the fall trans-gulf neo-tropical passerine migration is upon us. With ample rain this summer, our tupelo gum swamps contain a good supply of essential fresh water and the local wild food crop - the insects, seeds, fruits and berries - the necessary fuel required for the arduous trans-gulf migration, appears to be good.



Migration is a dangerous but necessary endeavor for many bird species, and through countless generations of adaptations they are well equipped to complete the trips in both fall and spring and bring winged enjoyment back to birder's yards year after year. Consider a ruby-throated hummingbird - weighing less than five grams and known to live for over 10-years...in its lifetime it will complete the non-stop 600-mile trans-gulf flight to the Yucatan Peninsula possibly twenty times...that's at least 12,000 miles travelled over the open Gulf! Even if neo-tropical birds were able to survive the cold of winter in their temperate breeding grounds, food would become scarce and breeding would be less successful. But come each autumn the vital food resources in their tropical wintering habitats have been replenished, and these millions of birds must relocate to those southern climes to take advantage of these resources.

To the thousands of warblers and vireos, flycatchers and kingbirds, tanagers and orioles, buntings, and grosbeaks preparing to undertake this arduous but necessary trans-gulf flight, prime stop-over habitat on Dauphin Island is a most important aspect contributing to a successful migration. When the fall wildflower bloom is at its peak, and the southerly migration of Monarch and Gulf fritillary butterflies is underway - we are reminded that for all migratory birds, one of the principle driving factors is food availability, adequate fresh water and proper habitat.

As you know, the mission of Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. (DIBS) is dedicated to the acquisition and perpetual protection of island habitat so critical for both neo-tropical migrants as well our resident island birds! As an example: this summer, to everyone's surprise, and for the first time in local memory bald eagles successfully fledged two eaglets on Dauphin Island! The adults decided to set up shop on a wooded lot directly on the island's main thoroughfare, Bienville Boulevard, and the eaglets are now out and about and learning all the tricks of the trade necessary to become successful adult bald eagles! Over the past year we have acquired six pieces of prime bird habitat on the island,

the latest being a beautiful dune lot located at the south end of General Gorgas Street and adjacent to the several properties comprising the DIBS Gorgas Swamp Reserve. Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. was able to purchase this important property with monies provided by a generous bequeathment from our great friend, the late Harriett Wright. We have compiled a prioritized list of over thirty important properties that we hope to add to our holdings over the coming months and years. With development pressures extremely high on Dauphin Island, recognized as a globally important bird area, our mission is more vital than ever before, and we wish to thank you, our fellow DIBS members for your continuing support. You are the backbone of our mission of habitat preservation and land stewardship on beautiful Dauphin Island!

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Harriett H. (Findlay) Wright  
by Greg Harber, 9-15-17

When I awoke this morning the calendar app on my phone reminded me that one year ago today, our dear friend, Harriett Wright, earned her wings and heaven gained a beautiful soul. I didn't really need the reminder,

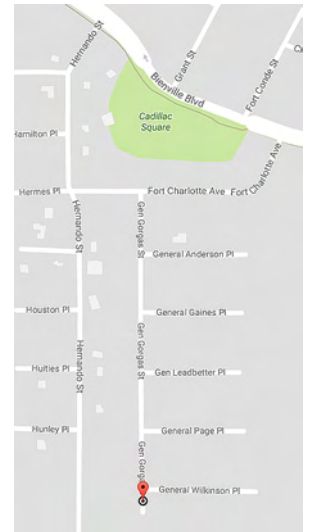


yard where they received nothing but the best when it came to seed, suet, fresh water and more! More often than not, visitors to her house were entertained not in her living room or dining room, but in her kitchen, at the breakfast table, where we could watch her birds while we ate, drank fresh-brewed tea and chatted away the hours.

Birds, of course, were often the topic of conversation, and this included the decline of bird populations and their conservation, too. This was to be expected, I suppose, given how long Harriett had been birding and all the changes in the landscape she had witnessed firsthand. Harriett's support of DIBS through the years is a reflection of her concern for the welfare of the birds. She was also an ardent supporter of the American Bird Conservancy.

Harriett's friends knew of the special bond she shared with the Red-shouldered Hawks that frequently visited her yard, and the fact that on the morning of her passing the hawk appeared outside the kitchen window, waiting to escort her to her heavenly home. And certainly it was no coincidence that the hawk appeared at its usual post in the yard at the precise moment Harriett was laid to rest in Elmwood Cemetery in Birmingham.

All this to explain why it came as no surprise, when I read Ralph's email, to learn that on this anniversary of her death Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries purchased the lot on General Gorgas Street with a portion of the funds Harriett had bequeathed to DIBS. The closing will be on Monday. I cannot think of a better way to remember her legacy, and, I have to believe, this was exactly as Harriett arranged it.



though, as I had already been thinking about Harriett for several days – and that probably explains why I wasn't too surprised when Ralph's email appeared in my inbox later this afternoon. In fact, I thought to myself, "Harriett's still at it."

Harriett loved her birds. She spent countless hours watching them - on trips with friends, on Audubon bird counts and outings, at AOS meetings, and especially in her

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I would like to remind everyone the Alabama Ornithological Society (AOS) Fall Meeting will be held on the island October 13 - 15, 2017. Registration will be at the United Methodist Church from 3pm to 6pm on Friday. For further details please check the AOS website at [www.aosbirds.org](http://www.aosbirds.org). I would also like to remind all of our members to check the renewal dates of your DIBS memberships and to ask your friends to please consider joining us in our mission of perpetual land preservation on Dauphin Island! I hope that you can visit your DIBS properties this fall!

Thanks,  
Ralph Havard, President  
DIBS



The Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. would like to thank the following individuals, organizations, and companies for their financial support of our conservation efforts by becoming members, renewing their memberships, or making special, honorariums, and memorial gifts. This list represents contributions received between April and August 31, 2017. If we have omitted your name from this list, please contact our treasurer, Betsy Eagar, at (251) 455-0362 or aeeagar@att.net.

**Special Gifts:**

Estate of Harriett H. Wright  
Kathryn Palmore

**Memorials:**

**For:**

Eugenia Baginski

**From:**

Phyllis Nofzinger

**For:**

Ralurn Cutten

**From:**

Don & Eugenia Carey

**For:**

Frank E. Little  
(Howard Horne's grandfather)

**From:**

Jennie McConnell Stowers

**For:**

Forrest Talma McConnell Jr.

**From:**

Don & Eugenia Carey  
Kap Garmon  
Erin Wheeler

**For:**

John Porter

**From:**

Steve & Julie Dugan  
Elberta Reid

**For:**

Jerry Stacks

**From:**

Jean Folsom

**For:**

John W. "Sto" Stowers Jr.

**From:**

Robert & Elizabeth Day  
Mike & Tricia Dunn

**For:**

Dr. James Wayland

**From:**

Phyllis Nofzinger

**For:**

Harriett Wright

**From:**

Bianca J. Allen  
Alice Christenson  
Jessica Germany  
Jimmie & Jeanette Hancock  
Elberta Reid  
Mary Francis Stayton  
Jennie Stowers

**AOS Meeting Contributors:**

**(Winter 2017)**

Lin Fagen  
Jean K. Folsom  
Anne Miller  
Elberta Reid  
Tom & Joan Siegwald  
Ken Wills

**AOS Meeting Contributors:**

**(Spring 2017)**

Susan Barrow  
Dick Bruer  
Charlotte Franz  
Kap Garmon  
Allison Glascock  
Jean Golden  
Larry Goodman  
Sandra Kendall  
Cheryl Killingsworth  
Ira Kupferberg  
Bill McAllister  
Anne Miller  
Patricia Patty  
Mary Porter  
Dave Pylant  
Dick Reese  
Elberta Reid  
Tom & Joan Siegwald  
John Walton

~ Membership or Renewal Application ~  
Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Levels:

- Northern Cardinal, \$25
- Indigo Bunting \$50
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak, \$100

- Great Egret, \$500
- Life Member, \$1,000
- Family Life Member, \$1,250
- My check for \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to: DIBS, Inc.  
Mail this form and check to:  
Betsy Eagar, DIBS Treasurer  
P.O. Box 1295



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Dauphin Island, AL 36528  
251.861.8134/phone  
ralph.havard@gmail.com

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED**

A non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation  
of the Dauphin Island Audubon Sanctuary and other  
ecologically valuable habitat on Dauphin Island

**New and Renewed Members through August 31, 2017**

**Northern Cardinal  
New**

Kathryn Palmore  
**Renewed**  
Bill Cox  
Blanche Emerson  
Ellyn & Cliff Fill  
Kap Garmon  
Greg Harber  
Sandra Kendall  
Paul Kittle  
Hayette Slayden Lang  
Barbara Rancour  
Edwina & Jim Robertson  
Charlie Burke & Betsy Rogers  
Bill & Karen Schneller  
Larry & Linda Smith  
Robert A. Stewart  
Coralie & John Tooney  
Mark & Carroll J. Uithoven

**Indigo Bunting**

**Renewed**  
Randy & Carol Alford  
Emery E. Baya  
Bobby & Doris Cheronas  
Jeff Collier

Lucy & Bob Duncan  
Karen Allen and Laura Meeds  
David Mehlman  
Mary Anderson Pickard  
Tom & Martha Rogers  
Joan Smith  
Mary Frances Stayton  
Russell & Jeanne Voisin  
Sarah Whitfield

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak  
Renewed**

J. Patrick Courtney III  
Temd & Lucy Deason  
Plia Dees  
Betsy Eagar  
Venetia Friend  
Jim & Nancy Gaines  
Ben Garmon  
Joel & Joanne Lunsford  
Jo & Merrill McPhearson  
Carol Merkel  
Mr. & Mrs. Otto F. Ramsey, Jr.  
Floyd & Libba Sherrod  
Mimi & Bud Urquhart, Jr.  
Larry F. Warren

**Great Egret  
Renewed**

Shelia Shaw

**Family Life Member  
New**

Larry & Linda Smith

