

News from the Island



NEWSLETTER OF THE DAUPHIN ISLAND BIRD SANCTUARIES, INC.

Volume 16 No. 2

Spring 2010

President's Message Gregory J. Harber

Slowly, the first signs of spring are creeping across the landscape. Trees and bushes, bare and gray after a seemingly protracted winter, are showing the faintest hint of green as leaves and buds emerge from their winter dormancy. The cardinals and wrens are in full-throated song these days. So much so, in fact, that on a bright sunny day it's hard to tell who is more elated about the impending explosion of spring – the birds or me!

Yesterday (March 13th) I had the pleasure of strolling the trails at Lanark, the home of the Alabama Wildlife Federation near Millbrook, AL. The day was somewhat chilly and dreary; light sprinkles and gray skies reminded us that March is often prone to bouts of winter. For the most part we encountered the birds typical of any Alabama woodland setting: several species of woodpeckers, Wood Ducks, bluebirds a'courtin in the meadow, sparrows flushing from under the brush and wrens, chickadees and titmice ducking here and there.

Amongst all these common birds were two Blue-headed Vireos. To my eyes, their soft, clean colors and seamless markings paint a picture of subtle beauty that is so often under-appreciated. I enjoyed watching the vireos as they steadily selected their way through the canopy while the other birds tussled in the leaves below.

The antithesis to the vireo, in almost every way, was a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher. This Plain Jane of a bird looked like a hyperkinetic ball of energy tumbling over and around each branch in search of a morsel, all the while whipping its tail this way and that! In summer, the gnatcatcher is as common as dirt in a country house, but on this day – amidst this last gasp of winter – the plain little bird in the nearly non-existent foliage was a most elegant harbinger of spring. Lordy, the sight of that bird made my heart leap as surely as the father's prodigal son returning home at long last!

Reports from the coast of neotropical migrants are starting to appear on the AL-birds and FL-birds lists. Purple Martins and Swallow-tailed Kites (yes!) were among the first to appear. Behind them will surely follow a legion of other migrants from across the far waters. Indeed, Northern Parulas and Louisiana Waterthrushes are now arriving too, fulfilling the promise of spring. I hope that the birders posting these reports realize that they serve as a bit of a mental lifeline on which we inland-bound birders cling, biding our time until we can indulge our passion too.

I hope you'll be able to visit Dauphin Island this spring, and enjoy the fruits of our land conservation efforts these past few months. John Porter, our volunteer Executive Director, recently closed on the four lots on the south side of the Shell Mounds Park. This acquisition was made possible by the generosity of John Stowers, John and Beverly Winn, and a host of DIBS friends and supporters. Read John's report on page 2 for further details.

John also closed the deal on two wet lots on the eastern end of the island, near the intersections of Admiral Semmes Ave with Dewberry and Epinet Str. This location is not likely on your list of places you've visited on the island, but once you've birded the site and observed the flooded habitat, you'll want to make this a regular stop. As you travel east on Bienville Blvd, turn right onto Forney Johnson, then take the second left onto Admiral Semmes.

Last but not least, you'll want to visit the Goat Trees Reserve at the intersection of Grant Street and Cadillac Avenue. Saturday, March 20th members of the Coastal Birding Association and DIBS volunteers held a work day and cleared the underbrush from the trails and low hanging foliage near the water drip, in an effort to make the area surrounding the drip more attractive to the birds. Rest a spell at any of several benches in the reserve and enjoy the peace and solitude – and the birds, of course!

America's Birdiest City/County Bird-a-thon

As has become customary we will be hosting America's Birdiest City/County bird-a-thon this year, thanks to Mike Wilson's continuing dedication to the cause. See page 3 for details!

Land Acquisition

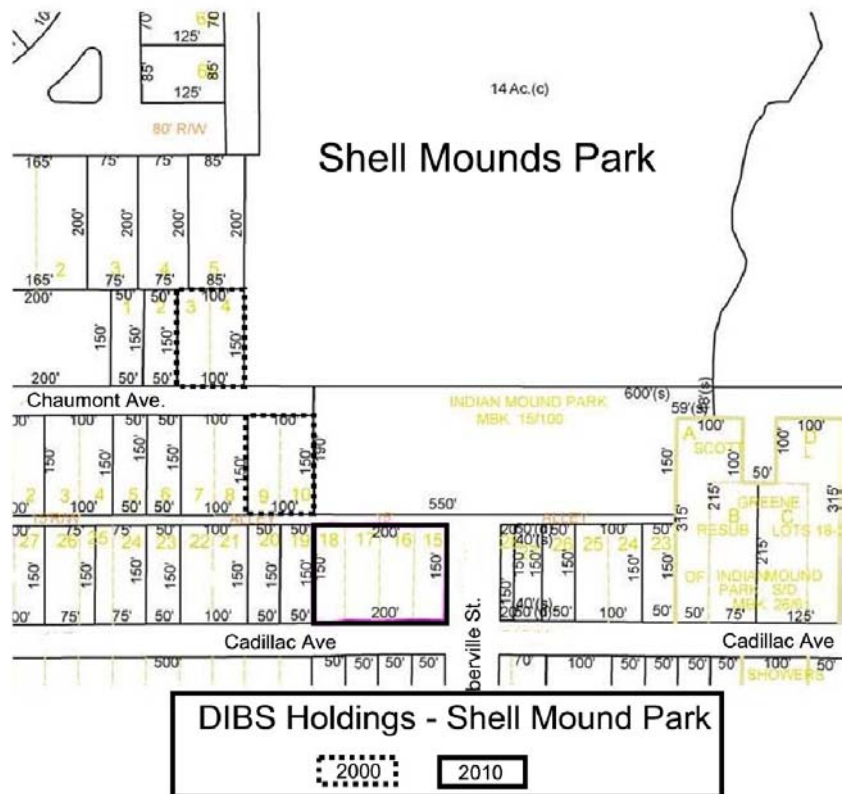
Shell Mounds Park - DCNR - Marine Resources

We closed on the purchase of the lots at the entrance to the Shell Mounds, shown on the plat below, on March, 10, 2010. This completed the protection of this critical piece of stop-over habitat, an effort begun ten years ago with our first property purchases, just west of the Bee Tree, also shown on the plat.

Early on it was generally assumed that this property was an integral part of the park. However, in fact, the four lots on the corner of Iberville and Cadillac were the site of the original Dauphin Island School and owned by a foundation. Surprisingly, in mid April 2007, we learned that the property had been deeded to the University of South Alabama Foundation with a covenant requiring the proceeds from its sale to be used for scholarships. To this end it was put up for sale by competitive bid. Closing date for bids was May 1, 2007! John Stowers (Sto), jumped into the fray immediately and offered to finance the purchase, subject to a promissory note from DIBS to repay the purchase price within ten years. Working together, we quickly got an appraisal for the property, \$200,000. Sto then submitted a bid for \$200,100 on the off chance that another prospective buyer might get the same appraisal. Fortunately, our bid was high! We then entered into a lease purchase agreement with Sto to secure payment within ten years and manage the property in the interim.

After several fruitless years of exploring funding sources to pay off this debt we were rescued by a long standing benefactor, John Winn. In the fall of 2009 he established a challenge grant fund for \$100,000 at the Community Foundation of South Alabama, in memory of his recently deceased wife Beverly. We then pledged to match his generous grant with the balance required to pay off the obligation to Sto. During the fall of 2009 we formally solicited donations to the Community Foundation to help us match the need, setting the closing date for the campaign for the end of the year. But when that time arrived the Foundation was still receiving donations so we extended it to the end of January. By then we had generated an additional \$30,000 as match. With the generous support of many individuals as well as that of the Birmingham Audubon Society and the Alabama Ornithological Society we were able to complete the match and finally complete the acquisition.

You should know, however, that we left some funds in the corpus of the fund with the Foundation so that future donations could be matched.



Summary of Holdings to Date

It is gratifying to note that with the completion of the Shell Mounds property we have now protected a little over nine acres of prime stop-over habitat in 27 parcels. These purchases have totaled a little over \$1.3M! Thanks to all the donors who helped make it possible, and thanks and congratulations to the workers whose dedication and diligence made it possible. In addition to the properties on Dauphin Island, DIBS owns approximately 42 acres of wetlands consisting of 10 parcels of varying sizes in Bayou LaBatre.

Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc

Property Inventory 3/14/2010

Street Address	Legal Description	Lot Size	Acres	Appraised	Purchase	Close Date	Source
800 Cadillac Ave	Lots 15-18, Blk 139	200x150	0.69	\$200,000	\$201,559	3/10/2010	VI
109 Dewberry	Lot 16, Blk EL	100x150	0.31	\$42,000	\$42,203	11/7/2009	V
108 Epinet	Lot 13, Blk EL	100x150	0.31	\$38,000	\$40,480	11/7/2009	V
600 Bienville	Lot 1 of Lot 7 Steiner	50X148	0.17	\$40,000	\$40,232	4/1/2009	IV
500 Grant	A STRIP 50 FT WIDE	50X108	0.12	\$35,000	\$35,000	3/23/2009	IV
610 Bienville Blvd	W 1/3 of Lot 8, Steiner	50X148	0.17	\$62,500	\$62,818	3/23/2009	IV
604 Bienville Blvd	Lot 3 of Lot 7 Stein.	65X148	0.22	\$70,000	\$75,000	10/6/2006	IV
300 Grant	Lot 4	225x150	0.77	\$45,000	\$45,000	9/23/2005	III S
202-204 Grant	S 1/2 Lot 6	100x150	0.34	\$62,000	\$62,000	2/14/2005	III S
402 Grant	N 1/2 Lot 2 etc	112x149	0.38	\$160,000	\$160,000	10/1/2004	III S
301 Ft Conde	S 1/2 etc	125X150	0.43		\$31,000	5/30/2003	III S
113 Gen Gorgas	Lot 18 Blk EH	125X100	0.29	\$26,000	\$21,000	6/11/2004	III G
117 Gen Gorgas	Lot 19 Block EH	125X100	0.29	\$26,000	\$20,000	5/24/2004	III G
121 Gen Gorgas	Lot 21 Block EH	125X100	0.29	\$26,000	\$0	5/12/2004	III G
707 Houston Pl	Lot 72 Blk EF	142x130	0.42	\$25,000	\$25,000	8/5/2002	II
710 Infanta	Lot 45 Blk EF	100X125	0.29	\$95,000	\$95,000	6/25/2006	II
715 Infanta	Lot 58, Blk EF	100x125	0.29	\$59,000	\$59,000	1/25/2005	II
708 Itasca PL	Lot 100 Blk EF	142x130	0.42	\$12,000	\$8,000	11/26/2001	II
707 Hunley Pl	Lot 108 Blk EF	142x130	0.42	\$55,000	\$50,000	11/21/2001	II
709 Itasca Pl	Lot 109 Blk EF	142x130	0.42	\$45,000	\$0	11/21/2001	II
702 Cadillac Ave.	Lot 14 Blk A-12	90x135	0.28	\$40,000	\$35,000	4/29/2002	I
700 Cadillac Ave.	Lot 15 Blk A-12	100x135	0.31	\$40,000	\$40,000	2/15/2002	I
211 Bienville Blvd	Lot 13 Block EU	100x135	0.31	\$39,000	\$35,000	5/8/2001	I
809 – 811 Chaumont Ave.	Lots 9 & 10 Blk 139	100x150	0.31	\$33,000	\$17,000	11/7/2000	I
812 Chaumont Ave.	Lots 3 & 4 Blk 138	100x150	0.34	\$35,000	\$32,000	7/14/2000	I
701 Conti	Lot 16 Blk A-12	100x125	0.29	\$40,000	\$40,000	2/18/2003	I
703 Conti	Lot 17 Blk A-12	100x125	0.29	\$40,000	\$40,000	2/18/2003	I
Total			9.17	\$1,390,500	\$1,312,292		
	# Parcels		27				

Phase I = Shell Mounds, Goat Trees and Audubon Sanct. Exit road, NFWF Grant #1

II = Tupelo Gum Swamp, NFWF Grant #2

IIIG = Gorgas Swamp, Gift Property & Private Donations

III S = Steiner Block, Birmingham Audubon Society & private Donations

IV = The Nature Conservancy / Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Grant

V = Gulf Coast Bird Observatory / Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Act Grant

VI = Community Foundation of South Alabama (Beverley Winn's Fund for the Birds) / Private Donations

America's Birdiest City/County Competition

DIBS will host the America's Birdiest City birding competition the weekend of the AOS Spring Meeting – April 15-18, 2010. Participating is easy and the rules are simple. At compilation on Sunday we will total the species list for each team and award prizes to the members of the winning team. We'll then tally a grand total for Dauphin Island and pray that it will withstand the challenges from small coastal cities nationwide!

1. Our 72-hour window starts Thursday, April 15 at 12:00 noon and runs till noon Sunday, April 18, when the compilation will be held.
2. Teams of 2-4 people will have the entire 72-hour period

to count birds, i.e., they don't have to adhere to a 24-hour window.

3. All birds recorded must be seen from dry land within the Town Limits of Dauphin Island. This includes Sand/Pelican Island but birds must be seen from dry land, and not from a boat. There is no need to record individual numbers of birds, only bird species.

It's as simple as that! To facilitate keeping track of your checklist for the weekend DIBS will provide copies of the island bird list, printed on colored paper, at the Friday night AOS gathering. Or, you may wish to download a copy in advance from the DIBS web site: <http://coastalbirding.org/>

BEVERLY WINN FUND FOR THE BIRDS

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 their generous donations to the Beverly Winn Fund for the Birds. As detailed in John's report, your faithful support has enabled us to acquire the four lots immediately south of Shell Mounds Park, thereby ensuring that even more quality stopover habitat is forever preserved for the birds. If we have omitted your name from this list, please contact our treasurer, Mary Porter, at 251/861-2120 or maryflintporter@gmail.com.

Bianca J. Allen	Dr. R. M. McPhearson, Jr.
Gussie Arnett	Mr. Thomas R. McPherron
Jeanne Azen	Dr. Frank L. McPhillips
Mrs. Russell Bailey	David W. Mehlman
Emery E. Baya	Sandra L. Miller
Lela Anne Brewer	Edwina C. Mullins
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Jinksie & Denson Burnum	Mary & John Porter
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Mr. & Mrs. Lamont H. Dees	Maud Skiba
Bob & Lucy Duncan	Mary France Stayton
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James L. Early	Rosalind B. Swart
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Venetia B. Friend	Judge and Mrs. Scott Vowell
Dr. and Mrs. James W. Green	Greg, Patti, Beth & Anna Waldrip (Honorarium for John & Mary Porter)
Ron & Darlene Hansen	Jon & Beth Waldrip (Honorarium for Bill, Laura, Lisa, Greg, Patti, Beth & Anna Waldrip)
Gregory J. Harber	George D. Walker
John Tullo & Lucy Harber	Larry F. Warren
Terry P. Harris	Shirley A. Wayland
Cathy & Ralph Havard	Julia A. Willis
Lida I. Hill	John Winn
Dr. Diane C. Holliman	Elizabeth M. Wolfe
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Kathryn Keaton	
Joan M. King	
Michael Krumpelt	
Patsy K. Larsen	
Ann M. McLaurin	
	Alabama Ornithological Society
	Mitchell, McLeod, Pugh & Williams, Inc.

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 August 31, 2009 and March 15, 2010. If we have omitted your name from this list, please contact our treasurer, Mary Porter, at 251/861-2120 or maryflintporter@gmail.com.

Special Gifts

Butch & Connie Baggett
 Gayle & Sandy Barnett
 Robert L. Sims & Katherine A. Bouma
 Carey & Lynne Cooper
 Angela & Robert Dixon
 David & Carrie Dortch
 Donna & McCune Dudley
 Gregory J. Harber
 Catherine Crothers Hodges
 Paul Kittle
 Laurie Oswald & Hans Paul
 Charlie Burlee & Betsy Rogers
 A. J. Stringer
 Ann & Bob Tate
 Kenneth & Rufina Ward
 ExxonMobile (Matched Gift from Sam A. Flint)
 Gulf Coast Bird Observatory
 The Nature Conservancy

From: Ann Miller

For: John F. Porter, Jr
 From: Gayle & Sandy Barnett (Happy Birthday)
 The Greg Waldrip Family (Happy Birthday)

Memorials:

For: Zoe Neville Kearns
 From: Hillary L. Cabaniss
 J. R. Delaney & William R. Delaney
 W. B. Erickson, Jr.
 Janet & Daniel Farmer
 Harold Stuart Kearns, Jr.
 Uyang Wan Kearns
 Ginger McKinney
 Elizabeth Ktitrell
 Brett & Anne Pechuls
 Erin Wheeler

For: Edith Tolson Upchurch (Edith Hunt's Mother)

From: Bianca J. Allen
 Jeanette & Jimmie Hancock
 Pelham Rowan
 Mary Frances Stayton

For: Thelma C. Wallace (Pat Reed's Mother)

From: Mary Frances Stayton

For: Beverly Hendricks Winn

From: Elberta G. Reid
 Roger Saatzer
 Mary Wesley

Fall 2009 AOS Contributors

Jinksie & Denson Burnum
 Bobby Cheronos
 Alice Christenson
 Will & Deborah Coggins
 Charlotte Fanz
 Charles Hesselein
 Sandra F. Kendall
 Ranny & Cheryl Kittinger
 Cynthia Lewis
 Curtis & Gladys Miyasaka
 Elberta G. Reid
 Tom & Joan Siegwald
 Ann & Donald Sweeney
 Harriett H. Wright

Honorariums:

For: Blanche Emerson
 From: Donna & McCune Dudley

For: Gregory J Harber
 From: Aldridge Botanical Gardens
 Friends of Emmet O'Neal Library

For: Chazz Hesselein
 From: Pete and Dona Townsend

For: Wimberly Hory
 From: Donna & McCune Dudley

For: Bennett Moison (Grandson of Harry & Pam Dean)
 From: Linda and Dick Reynolds

**For: Bill & Ellen Kimrey
 John & Dawn Lester
 Alan & Shelia Miller
 Maureen Miller
 Roger Miller
 John & Leigh Ann Siddle**

For: Ava Ila Dean (Harry Dean's Mother)

From: Linda & Dick Reynolds

For: Mary Dowdell Ashley (Bonnie Harris)

From: Lela Anne Brewer
 Mary Lou Miller

For: Dr. Dan Clark Holliman

From: Mary Lou Miller

For: Dolly Little (Howard Horn's Grandmother)

From: Joan & Tom Siegwald

For: Renee Dorothy McDonald

From: Mary Lou Miller
 Fay Chazin Seidelman

For: Odie Kirst Tucker, Sr.

From: Mrs. Amelia Tucker and Family

Winter 2010 AOS Contributors

Martha Dagg
 Charles & Susan Hutchison
 Ranny & Cheryl Kittinger
 Bill McAllister
 Glenda McNair
 Elberta G. Reid
 Maureen Shaffer
 Tom & Joan Siegwald
 James & Shirley Wayland
 (continued on back page)

~ 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
- Snowy Egret, \$250

- Great Egret, \$500
- Life Member, \$1,000
- Family Life Member, \$1,250
- My check for \$_____ is enclosed.

Please make check payable to: DIBS, Inc.
 Mail this form and check to:
 Mary F. Porter, DIBS Treasurer
 P.O. Box 1295
 Dauphin Island, AL 36528-1295



Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc.
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 Dauphin Island, Alabama 36528
 251.861.2120/phone
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PLEASE CHECK YOUR MAILING LABEL FOR YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE

New and Renewed Members for August 1, 2009 through March 15, 2010

New Life Member:

George M. Shola

Temd & Lucy Deason

Blanche S. Emerson

Linda L. Fagan

Paul & Ann Burkholder, Jr.

Bill & Nancy Cox

Bobby Doris Cheronos

Rose-breasted Grosbeak Level

New Members:

Bruce & Doretha Holbert

Peter & Therese Finlay

John Tullo & Lucy Harber

Anne F. Heard

Elsie K. Croft

Lucy & Bob Duncan

Darlene & Ron Hansen

Renewed Members:

Loretta G. Brown

John L. Hinton, Sr.

Michael Jordan

Gregory J. Harber

Celeste Hinds

Patsy & James Causey

William & Cindy McFadden

Tom & Lynn Howes

Amy & Irvin Christian

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Lida Hill

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Roy & Barbara Price

Larry F. Warren

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Vidmantas & Maria Raisys

Amanda & Nathaniel Winstead

Cathy O'Sheal

Edwina & James Robertson

Indigo Bunting Level

New Members:

Dale & Tom Carruthers

Rufus & Merilu Rose

Allen & Marilyn Sullivan

Tom & Martha Rogers

Coralie & John Toomey

Joan Rommes

Frances M. Young

Susanne Wadsworth

Renewed Members:

Lester & Dorothy Burroughs

Northern Cardinal Level

Renewed Members:

Ray & Joyce Bonilla

John & Mitzi Wolf

Remember to join us the weekend of April 15-18, 2010 (AOS) as we attempt to defend our title as America's Birdiest Small Coastal City! Teams of up to four people will have 72 hours (noon Thursday through noon Sunday) to identify as many species as possible on Dauphin Island & the adjacent Pelican Island. Birds must be seen from dry land. Prizes will be awarded! For full details please visit <http://coastalbirding.org/>