

# News from the Island



NEWSLETTER OF THE DAUPHIN ISLAND BIRD SANCTUARIES, INC.

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Spring 2020

## President's Message

Nearly anywhere you are, and at most any time of the day, you always see and hear birds. They are the most familiar visitors to our neighborhoods and backyards. Birds seem to be everywhere and they are an integral part of our daily communication with the natural world. However, recent studies have shown that over the last five decades it is estimated that the North American continent has nearly three billion fewer birds today as compared to the year 1970—American birds populations have declined by 25% in only fifty years. In a landmark study recently conducted by scientists at Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology using data from the North American Breeding Bird Survey, National Audubon's Christmas Bird Count, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service waterfowl surveys, and many other datasets, this marks the first time experts have tried to estimate in real numbers the bird losses in North America. The study highlights that even many of our familiar back yard birds that we consider to be so commonplace, are actually posting heavy population losses over time. In this study, the research team analyzed the breeding populations of over 500 bird species. Unfortunately for the birds, I feel that we can be quite confident in these results. As any long-time birder can certainly attest, that there is no doubt there are fewer birds now than were present in the not-so-distant past.

While our many our forests in the South and the East have partially recovered from the extensive logging and westward expansion of the past, many Neotropical migrant birds wintering in Central and South America are facing threats that scientists are just beginning to understand. An estimated 167 million eastern forest birds, most of which being Neo-tropical migrants, have been lost since 1970 — a more than 20 percent loss.

The good news is that not all birds have declined and some species have even showed remarkable gains over time. Ducks and geese, as a group, have seen a population

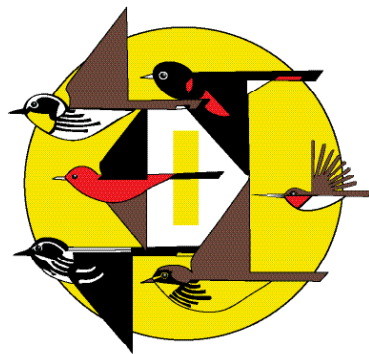
increase of 34 million individuals since 1970, thanks largely to extensive public and private wetland habitat conservation efforts. In the Lower 48, thanks largely to the ban of DDT in 1972, large raptors such as Bald Eagle and Osprey have also fared much better; with Bald Eagle gains of approximately 15 thousand individuals and Osprey populations that now exceed pre-pesticide levels! Thankfully, these birds are out of the woods!

But the study also serves, as a wake-up call. The Chuck-will's-widow is a prime example. Our familiar denizen of the night, the southern cousin of the more northern Whip-poor-will, has shown a precipitous decline. Their numbers have decreased by an astounding 2.3% per year between 1967 and 2015, representing a cumulative decline of around 70%, according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey data. It would be sad for our grandchildren not to hear their haunting call in the Southern night.

Dauphin Island, being a first point of landfall for migratory birds is officially recognized as a Globally Important Bird Area. This is why our mission, the conservation and perpetual protection of critical Neo-tropical migratory bird stopover habitat on the island is so important. Thanks to you, Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. (DIBS) is now the largest private property owner (by number of parcels) on the island and in light of accelerated residential and commercial development, our mission continues and becomes that much more important.

DIBS, in partnership with our good friends at the Weeks Bay Foundation will soon begin habitat acquisitions on the island with a grant enabled by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). We have identified properties of high conservation value and beginning in this calendar year we hope to begin these acquisitions. DIBS will hold title to the properties, all of which will be protected in perpetuity under conservation easement by our conservation partners.

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We are pleased to announce the election of our 2020 class of new members of the DIBS Executive Board of Directors.

They are:

• **Cynthia Freeman** — Cynthia divides her time between Dauphin Island and Gadsden, AL, but is spending more and more time on the island. She has been a valuable volunteer for DIBS. Cynthia will be an asset to our Board, with expertise in publicity, social media and public relations.

• **Meg Goecker** — Meg lives on the island full-time, is a senior engineer and Coastal Scientist with Moffit Nichols. She has tremendous experience with grant writing and fund-raising, and is involved with many conservancy groups on the coast. Meg serves on the Board of Directors of The Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation (Gulf Partnership).

• **Beth Marietta-Lyons** — Beth earned her law degree from the University of Alabama School of Law in 1978. She served two terms in the Alabama House of Representatives and heads up the Lyons Law Firm in Mobile. Beth, an enthusiastic birder and her husband Jimmy, who serves as director and CEO of the Alabama Port Authority, have a deep-seated affection for our coastal area and are full-time Dauphin Island residents.

• **Reese Partridge** — assistant attorney general in Mississippi and a resident of Jackson. He and his wife, Louise, are avid birders and have a home on the island where they spend much of their time. Reese has long been an enthusiastic DIBS volunteer.

I wish to welcome all four of our outstanding new DIBS Directors and thank them for their willingness to dedicate their time and expertise to our mission.

### *Remembering Mary Flint Porter*

On a somber note, our dear friend, Mary Flint Porter, passed away on November 18, 2019. Mary met her husband, DIBS co-founder and Executive Director, the late Dr. John F. Porter, Jr., through their mutual love of birding. They married in 2006 and lived on Dauphin Island, where they enjoyed the wonderful birding and beautiful sunsets

from their back deck overlooking the Bayou Heron salt-marsh. Mary was quite busy on the Island. Mary served on the Dauphin Island Planning Commission, as a volunteer at the Little Red School House Island Museum and Welcome Center, as well as the executive board of DIBS and for many years and was our DIBS Treasurer. Being close to her brother Sam Flint, was one of her greatest enjoyments and at the close of her life was her greatest blessing. Sam has thoughtfully volunteered to fund the purchase of a selected property that will be dedicated to Mary's memory. Purchasing and protecting additional properties is our mission and thanks to you, our friends, DIBS is making a huge difference for the preservation of the unique natural integrity of Dauphin Island, for North American migratory birds, and for our native flora and fauna as well. If you would like to learn more about how to help save bird habitat by making a personal contribution to Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc., please visit our website, [coastalbirding.org](http://coastalbirding.org), and like us on Facebook at Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. DIBS is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and your contributions are tax deductible.

As you may know by now, the AOS Spring Meeting on Dauphin Island has been canceled due to the global coronavirus pandemic and social distancing measures are encouraged by health experts. Should you visit the island on your own, please observe these measures and maintain the recommended 6 foot minimum distance should you encounter other birders at one of the island's birding hotspots. Note, also, that the beaches and Audubon Bird Sanctuary are closed through the end of April, at least. Hopefully by fall our daily routine will return to some semblance of normalcy and we can enjoy the birds together once again.

I would also encourage you, our supporters, to ask your friends and your family to join us in our mission of habitat protection on Dauphin Island. You are the backbone of our mission of land preservation and stewardship on beautiful Dauphin Island. We at DIBS sincerely extend our thanks!

Working for Conservation,

Ralph Havard, President  
Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc.

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## Community Outreach

🐦 "All About the Birds," a joint effort between DIBS and the Town of Dauphin Island, returned for another spring! The goal is to protect plots of wildflowers, which serve as a food source for migrating birds, that are growing in the right-of-way. Mowing will resume in early May. Many thanks to Mayor Jeff Collier and the town of Dauphin Island for their support.

🐦 Volunteers Chuck Estes and Reese Partridge rebuilt the boardwalk in the Shell Mounds in October. DIBS provided the funding for the building materials. Many thanks, Chuck & Reese!

🐦 The John F. Porter, Jr. Goat Tree Reserve fence underwent some much needed restoration work.

🐦 A "friend-raiser" was held by DIBS at the Dauphin Island Museum and Welcome Center on November 8, 2019 from 6:00pm – 8:00pm. Over 85 people attended and enjoyed food, refreshments, and friendship.



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 gifts, honorariums, and memorial gifts. This list represents contributions received between September 1, 2019 and March 1, 2020. 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 Laura F. Bounds  
 Network For Good  
 (Facebook Donors)  
 Network For Good  
 (Don McKee's Birthday  
 Donors)  
 Bianca J Allen  
 Andrea Menyhert & Larry  
 Gardella  
 The Charles Duncan &  
 Laura Blutstein Charitable  
 Fund  
 Ann T. Forster  
 Dianna & Paul Porter

**Gifts:**

Dauphin Island Book Club  
 Angela Connelly  
 Charlie Broach & Island  
 Friends  
 Ben Garmon  
 Jane Hartline  
 Lida Hill  
 Cheryl Jones  
 Kathryn Keaton  
 Rosemarie Marchant  
 Sandy Miller  
 Fred & Brandee Moore  
 Mary Frances Stayton

**Honorariums:**

**For:**  
 Gwen Fernandez Wedding  
**From:**  
 Paul Sheldon

**For:**  
 Linda Reynolds  
**From:**  
 Bianca "BJ" Allen

**For:**  
 Lyle Reed,  
 Merry Christmas!  
**From:**  
 Lucia & Charles Partin

**For:**  
 Lucy & Bob Duncan  
 Ann T. Forster  
 Will, Carolyn, & Wren  
 Duncan

**From:**  
 Scott Duncan  
 Merry Christmas 2019

**For:**  
 Eleven Grandchildren!

**From:**  
 Darlene & Mike Sirmon

**For:**  
 Charlotte Fanz, Happy  
 "Leap Year" Birthday

**From:**  
 Bianca "BJ" Allen

**For:**  
 Phyllis Nofzinger,  
 Happy Birthday

**From:**  
 Mary Clare

**Memorials:**

**For:**  
 Bernard Crawford

**From:**  
 Bianca "BJ" Allen

**For:**  
 Lamont & Marsyl Dees

**From:**  
 Plia Dees

**For:**  
 Mary Flint Porter

**From:**  
 Bianca "BJ" Allen  
 Lisa Bailey & Pelham  
 Rowan  
 Gayle & Frank Barnett  
 Melinda & Mary Katherine  
 Calderini  
 Charlene & John Dindo  
 Betsy Eagar

Walter Ernest  
 Shirley & Frank Farrell  
 Eilyn R.S. Grady  
 Dana & Stan Hamilton  
 Greg Harber  
 Lucy Harber & John Tullo  
 Karin & James Hermiller  
 Edith Hunt  
 Sandra Kendall  
 Marty Kontos  
 Denise Larson  
 Annabel Markle  
 Sherry Ancil Moret  
 Sue Moske  
 Steven & Celia Napper  
 Dianna & Paul Porter  
 Linda Reynolds  
 Connie & John Roan  
 Haley & Benjamin Shelly  
 Joan & Tom Siegwald  
 Mary Frances Stayton  
 Jennie Stowers  
 Erin Wheeler

**For:**  
 John and Mary Porter  
**From:**  
 Haley & Benjamin Shelley

**For:**  
 John & Jackie Porter  
**From:**  
 Gayle & Sandy Barnett

**For:**  
 Mary, John, and Jackie  
 Porter  
**From:**  
 Anonymous

**For:**  
 Tom Rice  
**From:**  
 Jennie Stowers

**For:**  
 JR "Buddy" Stapleton  
**From:**  
 Charlene & John Dindo

**For:**  
 Bob Stayton  
**From:**  
 Bianca "BJ" Allen  
 Charlotte Fanz

**For:**  
 John Stowers  
**From:**  
 Karl Ulicny & Tracy Tiller

**For:**  
 Ralph and Mary John Tiller  
**From:**  
 Karl Ulicny & Tracy Tiller

**AOS Meeting Contributors:  
 (Summer 2019)**

Katherine & George Clemo  
 Alison & Charles Glascock  
 Anne Miller  
 Cynthia Palmer  
 Mary Snow  
 Harriett Somerville  
 Ann & Donald Sweeney

**(Fall 2019)**

Patricia Bird  
 Dick & Sally Bruer  
 Jared Busen  
 Katherine & George Clemo  
 John Cole  
 Joan & John Dixon  
 Lucy Duncan  
 Cynthia & Tim Freeman  
 Jean Golden  
 Ken Hare  
 Cheryl Killingsworth  
 Cynthia Palmer  
 Michelle Reynolds  
 Harry Roach  
 Joan & Tom Siegwald  
 Theresa Withee

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

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

- Membership Levels:
- Yellowhammer, \$35
  - Magnolia Warbler, \$50
  - Black Skimmer, \$100
  - Osprey, \$250

- Painted Bunting, \$500
- Life Member, \$1,000
- Family Life Member, \$1,250
- Gift: My check for \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 is enclosed.

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



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YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE**



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P.O. Box 1295  
Dauphin Island, AL 36528  
251.861.8134/phone  
coastalbirding.org

**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 March 1, 2020**

**Yellowhammer**  
**New**

Susan Case

**Renewed**

Stella Anderson  
Virginia & Jimmy Dunn  
Pat & Bill Edwards  
Paul Kittle  
David Mehlman  
Joan Smith  
Elizabeth Wolfe

**Magnolia Warbler**  
**New**

Southeastern Avian  
Research  
c/o C. Routledge  
Cynthia Brasher  
Camille Monohan

**Renewed**

Temd & Lucy Deason  
John Tullo & Lucy Harber  
Sharon Hudgins  
Martha Jenks  
Edward B. McDermott  
Ann L. Miller  
Phil & Carolyn Sankey  
Sylvia Tousley

Susanne Wadsworth

**Black Skimmer**  
**New**

Linda & Michael  
Henderson  
Catherine & Park  
McGehee  
Celia Smith

**Renewed**

Carol & Randy Alford  
Stephanie & Ernest Brody  
Plia Dees  
Susan Dees  
Karen & Jonathan Edelson  
Ben Garmon  
Jane Ishee  
Carol A. Merkel  
Cathy O'Sheal  
Barbara & Roy Price  
Darlene & Mike Sirmon  
John Stringer  
Frank M. Wilson

**Osprey**

**Renewed**

Bobby Doris Cheronos  
Dianna & Paul Porter

Jane & Donald Smith, Jr.  
Mimi & Bud Urquhart, Jr.

**Painted Bunting**  
**Renewed**

Robert & Pat Meaher

**Life Member**

Carol Ascherfeld  
Jean Golden

**Family Life Member**

Pat Rischbieter &  
Ken Harrelson

**Donations via PayPal**  
**(9/18/19-2/1/20)**

Gayle Barnett  
Angela Connelly  
Susan Downing  
Scott Duncan  
Walter Ernest  
Randy Fallin  
Shirley Farrell  
Gregory Harber  
Jane Hartline  
Lida Hill

Martha Jenks  
Rosemarie Marchant  
Fred & Brandee Moore  
Pelham Rowan

**Amazon Smile**

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