

News from the Island



Volume 20 No. 2

Spring 2017

President's Message

The spring bird migration on Dauphin Island is now upon us... that spectacular time of each year when dozens of species of neo-tropical migratory birds funnel through the island on a daily basis, dependent on the refuge of your DIBS properties for food, fresh water, shelter and rest after their long and often arduous 600 mile trek across the Gulf of Mexico. With lots of rain during the winter, our tupelo swamps contain an ample supply of essential fresh water and island-wide the wild food crop appears to be plentiful. Big, obvious birds such as ospreys, bald eagles, and great blue herons are busy with nesting on the Island as well as in our adjacent coastal areas.

2016 has been a busy year for us here on the island with habitat acquisitions progressing nicely. However, we at DIBS, along with the Alabama birding community as a whole, mourn the deaths of our three great friends, Dr. John Porter, our co-founder and Executive Director, Emeritus, John 'Sto' Stowers, Jr. and Harriett Wright.

Over a 20-year period, John Porter's tireless work resulted in the acquisition and perpetual protection of over fifty properties of high conservation value - both on the Island as well as in the nearby Bayou la Batre coastal area. None of our accomplishments would have been remotely possible without John's expertise and insight. To John, nothing was impossible! Dr. Porter served as executive director of the Alabama Commission on Higher Education until 1981 and he completed his career of academic service as the Director of Research at the University of Alabama, retiring as Professor Emeritus in 1993.

A birder, explorer and adventurer, John 'Sto' Stowers, Jr. who was always here to share his knowledge with others, was always such a pleasure to be around. We at DIBS will be forever grateful for our connection to a life that was lived with integrity and grace; Sto was at constant readiness to help others. Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries has recently purchased a beautiful, oak-shaded lot across from Shell

Mounds Park, which will be dedicated to the memory of our wonderful friend. These words of Ralph Waldo Emerson say it best. "It is not length of life, but depth of life." And we who were fortunate to have known this amazing man will always remember him for his kindness and generosity.

Harriett Wright, her Birmingham backyard woods a bird sanctuary for more than 60 years, graciously shared with everyone her vast knowledge of the natural world. As a neophyte birder decades ago, I doubt I would have ever been able to figure out the myriad intricacies of fall warbler identification without Harriett's expertise and patience.

Migrating songbirds and human visitors alike will find refuge and solitude on Dauphin Island thanks to the commitments of these special people to conservation and land preservation. We miss them and will forever remember them for their dedication to our ongoing mission of protecting migratory and resident birds and habitat on Dauphin Island.

As you know, the many prime parcels of land on Dauphin Island acquired and protected by DIBS provide critical habitat for our resident birds as well as essential stopover habitat, so vital for the hundreds of thousands of spring and fall neo-tropical migrants that depend on Dauphin Island each spring and fall. We have acquired five additional pieces of property over the last couple of months. We wish to thank Mary Elizabeth Perry of Mobile for the donation of a lot on Omega Street adjacent to Bayou Heron. Mary Elizabeth donated this property in memory of her late cousin, Lee Ola Dewberry of Birmingham. Miss Dewberry was active in land conservation efforts in Alabama for many years. We also thank J. Patrick (Rick) Courtney, III, who donated a lot on Marquette Street to the memories of his father J Patrick Courtney, Jr., John F. Porter, Jr., and John 'Sto' Stowers. Barbara Byrd has donated a lot on General Page Place near our Gorgas Swamp Reserve holdings in memory of Sto. We thank Mrs. Perry, Mr. Courtney and Mrs. Byrd for these generous property donations.

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In Memory of Dr. John F. Porter

Our Executive Director Emeritus, our friend, and my mentor in land conservation, DIBS Executive Director Emeritus Dr. John F. Porter, Jr. passed away on Tuesday, Aug. 2, 2016.

Born in Birmingham, Dr. Porter served as a captain in the US Army during the Korean War and graduated from the University of Alabama with a master's degree in physics. He went on to Johns Hopkins University where he earned his Ph.D. in physics. In 1966 he joined the physics faculty at the University of Alabama Huntsville where he was a pioneer in the emerging field of laser technology. He became the dean of the graduate school after briefly serving as acting president.

The Governor of Alabama chose John to serve on the first Alabama Commission on Higher Education in 1972. He became its executive director and served at this post in Montgomery until 1981. John completed his career of academic service as the director of research at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa. He served in this position until retiring as Professor Emeritus in 1993.

Shortly before his retirement, the Alabama Ornithological Society embarked on a collaborative effort to publish A Birder's Guide to Alabama through The University Press and asked John to edit the edition. The book was published in 2001.

John worked to help establish the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail, served as president of the Alabama Ornithological Society, and as president and executive director of the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries (FODIAS/DIBS) from its inception in 1993 until his retirement in 2014.

DIBS, originally incorporated in 1993 as Friends of the Dauphin Island Audubon Sanctuary (FODIAS) with its mission being to partner with the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board, to preserve, protect, and support the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board in improving the Audubon Sanctuary on Dauphin Island using best management practices, to conserve its natural resources, and to preserve its wildlife, biological, scenic, aesthetic and natural values. John worked tirelessly to promote and increase public awareness of the irreplaceable natural resources of the sanctuary.

John and his first wife Jackie (deceased 2001), retired to

Dauphin Island, and worked tirelessly to raise funds for land purchases, preserving many acres of Dauphin Island habitat as rest and refueling havens so vital for North American migratory birds.

John's vision of the need to form a land conservation group with a mission primarily dedicated to the purchase of important habitats throughout Dauphin Island resulted in the birth of Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. In 2003, the FODIAS name was changed to DIBS, with land purchase becoming its primary focus. Through this effort, he met another bird enthusiast – Mary Flint Porter – and they married in 2006.

Through John's work over a 20 year period of raising funds, writing grant proposals, public interaction and education, working with governmental agencies, not to mention attending far too many meetings to count has resulted in the acquisitions of nearly fifty properties of high conservation value both on the Island as well as in the nearby Bayou la Batre area. Of course John didn't rest on his laurels with these accomplishments. He realized that protective conservation easements would ultimately be necessary to ensure the perpetual protection, legal defense and stewardship of DIBS' island properties.

In 2011 John began negotiating with the Weeks Bay Foundation (WBF) about the possibility of their accepting a conservation easement on all of our Dauphin Island parcels, and in October WBF and DIBS completed this historic conservation easement agreement that provides a rock-solid double layer of perpetual protection of your DIBS properties. Then in the summer of 2014 the Dauphin Island Park and Beach Board announced that it had secured protection of its Audubon Bird Sanctuary, more than 160 acres of public parklands through a conservation easement with Atlantic Coast Conservancy/ Pelican Coast Conservancy - a process that took three years to complete. None of this would have been possible without John's insight. To John, nothing was impossible!

In 2015, a plaque was erected at the Goat Trees Preserve on Dauphin Island honoring John's tireless dedication to habitat preservation on Dauphin Island.

Thank you friend!
Ralph Havard, DIBS

In Memory of Harriett Wright

1918 - 2016

Harriett Wright (98), a resident of Birmingham since 1945, died Sept. 15, 2016. She was a native of Conway, Arkansas, born January 18. Harriet received a BA degree from Hendrix College in Conway and an MA from Peabody College in Nashville, Tennessee. In 1940 she married Dr. D. O. Wright, who died in 1968. In 1986 she married John Findlay III, who died in 1995. Harriett was active in many organizations that supported nature and ecology. She was a published nature photographer who gave hundreds of

programs on birds and wild flowers for garden clubs and civic groups. She was a charter member of the Alabama Ornithological Society and served as president. She was also a member of the Blanche Dean Chapter of the Alabama Wildlife Society, the National Audubon Society and the Birmingham Audubon Society, which she served as president, and was a member and ardent supporter of Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. Her backyard woods were a bird sanctuary for more than 60 years.

In Memory of John Walter Stowers, Jr. 1949 - 2016

Our friend John W. Stowers, Jr., known simply to all of his friends as 'Sto'... passed away peacefully on July 9, 2016 in Asheville, NC, following a brief illness. Our thoughts are with his wife Jennie McConnell Stowers, with his family and his many, many friends.

Sto was born in Dothan and moved to Montgomery as a child. After graduation from Sidney Lanier High School, he attended and graduated from the University of Alabama where he was a member of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity. He was a board member of the Bartram Trail Society, Highlands (NC) Biological Foundation, and a long-time member of the Alabama Ornithological Society and Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc.

Sto never met a stranger, sharing his energy, enthusiasm and expert advice with friends and strangers alike. His deep-seated love of nature and the outdoors, his vast knowledge and intense curiosity of our natural world, its birds and animals, its rivers, bays, coastlines, and trails, and his generosity in protecting and enhancing the environment for all its denizens will always be remembered. An explorer, birder and adventurer, he was always so much fun to be around.

He generously gave of his time so freely, never expecting anything in return. He was a dedicated volunteer for Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries (DIBS), always willing to lend

a helping hand whenever and wherever needed, whether it was patching fences, removing invasive plants from our properties, or mowing birding trails. Sto's warmth was legendary – opening his Dauphin Island home to both AOS attendees and frozen Christmas Bird Count participants alike, warming them up with both his hospitality and his famous pot of gumbo!

As noted by all who knew him, it is so true that Sto's greatest joy was helping other people. Whether birding, hiking, boating, cycling, kayaking, fishing or in any other of his many activities, he shepherded those who were with him to make sure they had the fullest experience possible. Sto loved to introduce friends of all ages to new pursuits and made a difference in the lives of so many people.

We at DIBS are grateful for our connection to a life that was lived with integrity, grace, and in constant readiness to extend a helping hand to anyone who needed it. These words of Ralph Waldo Emerson say it best. "It is not length of life, but depth of life." And we who were fortunate to have known this amazing man will always remember him with much love!

Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries has recently purchased a beautiful, oak-shaded lot across from Shell Mounds Park, which is dedicated to the memory of our friend.

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DIBS recently purchased an important property on Cadillac Avenue adjacent to Indian Shell Mounds Park and another on General Gorgas Street, adding another property to our Gorgas Swamp Reserve holdings. The Gorgas Street property is dedicated to the memory of Bob Sargent in recognition of the amazing hummingbird research that both he and his wife Martha conducted through the years - research that has added so much to the scientific knowledge base of North American hummingbird migration.

In the upcoming year we hope to add additional properties to the DIBS Gorgas Swamp Reserve, where we currently have four parcels, as well as other important bird habitats.

DIBS hopes to purchase another Tupelo gum lot located between two of our existing properties within the Gorgas Swamp Reserve area.

With ever-increasing development pressures on the island your continued support of DIBS' mission of land protection is essential and appreciated. I hope that you can visit your unique Dauphin Island DIBS properties soon! We thank you and the birds thank you, too!

Working for land conservation,

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. The list on the following pages represents contributions received between October, 2015 and April, 2017. If we have omitted your name from this list, please contact our treasurer, Mary Porter, at 251/861-2120 or maryflintporter@gmail.com.

Additionally, DIBS apologizes for the tardiness of this newsletter. Ours is a small organization and 2016 was a difficult year for the "DIBS Family," as our president conveyed in his message to the membership and in the memorials. Rest assured, though, that DIBS continues its mission to conserve and protect habitat on Dauphin Island. As John Porter reminded us when we dedicated the Goat Trees Preserve in his honor, "It's for the birds; it's always been for the birds."

Memorials for John F. Porter, Jr.

Bianca Allen
The Arnold Foundation : Sandra and
David Flint, Lauren and Michael Flint,
Stephanie and Bryan Flint
Gayle and Sandy Barnett
Nicki S. Beckham
Laura Blutstein and Charles Duncan
Ann and Paul Burkholder
Lela Brewer
Eugenia and Don Carey
Alice Christenson
Charlene and John Dindo
Julia and Steve Dugan
Lucy and Bob Duncan
Lynne Fitzgerald
Charlotte Fanz
Venetia Friend
Larry Gardella and Andrea Menyherth
Jessica Germany and Edward Senter
Carolyn Griffin
Dana and Stan Hamilton

Jeanette and Jimmy Hancock
Cathy and Ralph Havard
Lida Hill
Mary and Bob Holycross
Jackson County Bar Association
Debra and Greg Jackson
Sandra Kendall
Peggy King
Joan and John Lane
Dena and Don McKee
Shirley and Duffy McKenzie
Ann McLaurin
Annabel Markle
Carol and David Meador
Ann Miller
Sherry Moret
Sue Moske
Phyllis Nofzinger and Melissa Baginski
Hans Paul and Lori Oswald
Polymer Industries
Mary M. Porter

Gill Reed
Linda and Dick Reynolds
Annette and Fred Rounsaville
Pelham Rowan and Lisa Bailey
Joan and Michael Russell
Cheryl and Mark Shelley
Joan and Tom Siegwald
Brenda and Horton Smith
Joan Smith
Janet Stange
Mary Frances Stayton
Jennie Stowers
Ann and Donald Sweeney
Shirley and James Wayland
Courtney and Robert Webb
Weeks Bay Foundation
Erin Wheeler
Julia and David White
Karen and Mike Wilson

Memorials for John W. "Sto" Stowers, Jr.

Amanda Adams
Sarah and Kevin Ade
Bianca Allen
Cory and Evan Allison
Gretchen Boyd
Paula and David Brandt
Thelma Braswell
Lela Brewer
Kay and Clinton Burnett
Becky and Rodney Byard
Barbara Byrd
Janie and Bill Campbell
Eugenia and Don Carey
Karin and Jim Carmichael
Rich Colberg and Sandy Miller
Alice Christenson
Crum Charitable Foundation
Charlene and John Dindo
Joan and John Dixon
Avary and Gary Doubleday
Lucy and Bob Duncan
Claudia and Marvin Ellis
Kay and Cameron Ernest
Charlotte Fanz
Donna and Jim Farrior
Cathy and Bob Fisher
Lynne Fitzgerald
Jean Folsom
Barbara Fowler
Anne and Herman Franco
Venetia Friend

Sylvia Fullerton
Larry Gardella and Andrea Menyherth
Ben Garmon
Kap Garmon
Amy and Jimmy Gaskin
Jessica Germany and Edward Senter
Raye and Rusty Gregory
Julia and Bill Grumbles
Dana and Stan Hamilton
Cathy and Ralph Havard
And William Haynes
Hallie Head
Maria and Bowen Hill
Camille and Inge Hill
Mary and Denis Hitchcock
Mary and Bob Holycross
Marcia and Adams Hudson
Edith Hunt
Suzanne Inman
Kathy Ingram
Debra and Greg Jackson
Marianne and Ben Jenkins
Sandra Kendall
Ann Longshore
Laura and Mike Lockett
Nancy McCollum
Linda McIntyre
Dena and Don McKee
Ann McLaurin
Montgomery Country Club
Annabel Markel

Sue Moske
Robin and Tommy Nation
Evelyn and Bill Newton
Clare Novak
Mildred Page
Lyl and Bill Parker
Suse and Tom Patton
Kay and Edwin Poole
Hallie and Bruce Rawls
Linda and Dick Reynolds
Cary and Spears Rhodes
Frank Rhodes
Mike Rogers
Pelham Rowan and Lisa Bailey
Joan and Mike Russell
Bettye and John Scott
Nancy and Spud Seale
Beth Short
Joan and Tom Siegwald
Mary Frances Stayton
Brenda and Horton Smith
Marilyn and Lang Smith
Doris and Jimmy Stephenson
Ann and Donald Sweeney
Catherine and Robert Taylor
Barbara and Woody Thrasher
Mary and J.L. Weidler
Erin Wheeler
Dawn and John Williams
Karen and Mike Wilson

Special Gifts:

Gayle Barnett, Happy Birthday, Mary!
Dr. Ernest Brody
Susan Dees
Celia Delaney
John Dindo
Betsy Eagar
Sam A. Flint
Larry Gardella & Andrea Menyhert
Jessica Germany & Ed Senter
Clara L. "Topsy" Granata
Greg & Debra Jackson
Fred & Brandee Moore
Hans Paul & Lori Oswald
John & Mary Porter
Mr. & Mrs Phil Sankey
Jane H. & Donald H. Smith, Jr.
Mary Frances Stayton, in memory of
Lucy & Cardi
Greg & Patti Waldrip & Family
Ken & Rufina Ward
AOS Spring 2015 Meeting Contributions
AOS Fall 2015 Meeting Contributions
Exxon Mobil Corporation

Honorariums:

For:
Don & Dena McKee
From:
Renaissance Charitable Foundation

For:
John F. Porter, Jr.
From:
Martha B. Sargent, Hummer/Bird Study Group

For:
Ralph & Mary Tiller
From:
Tracy Tiller, M.D.
Karl S. Ulicny

Memorials:

For:
Sam Judd
From:
Dick & Linda Reynolds

For:
Joan King
From:
Eugenia Carey
Food Service Concepts

For:
Larry Lee
From:
Dick & Linda Reynolds

For:
Laurella Owens
From:
Jennie Stowers

For:
Mary Elise Pow
From:
Clara L. "Topsy" Granata

For:
Harris Schlesinger
From:
Clara L. "Topsy" Granata

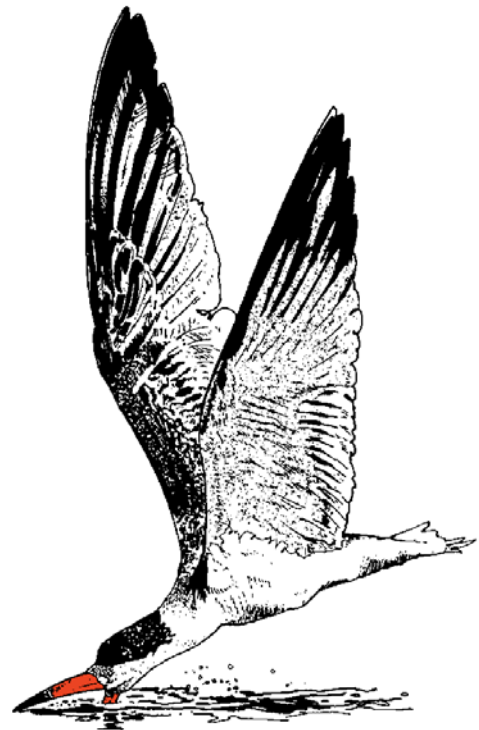
For:
Maureen Shaffer
From:
Bianca J. Allen
Betsy Eagar
Jean Folsom
Kap Garmon
Jessica Germany & Ed Senter
Greg Harber
Terese Harber
Sandra F. Kendall
Linda & Dick Reynolds
Mary Frances Stayton
Jennie Stowers
Helena Uber-Wamble

For:
Odie Tucker
From:
Amelia R. Tucker and Family

New and Renewed Members through April, 2017

**Northern Cardinal
Renewed**

Stella C. Anderson
Jeff W. Collier
Bill Cox
Blanche Emerson
Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Dunn
Kap Garmon
Paul Kittle
Joan and John Lane
Annabel Markle
Karen Allen & Laura Meeds
Barbara Rancour
Augusta Robinson
Bill & Karen Schneller
Carroll J. Uithoven
Russell & Jeanne Voisin
Elizabeth M. Wolfe



~ 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



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YOUR MEMBERSHIP EXPIRATION DATE**



Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc
P.O. Box 1295
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 April, 2017 (cont.)

**Indigo Bunting
Renewed**

Randy & Carol Alford
Emery E. Baya
Bobby & Doris Cheronas
Fred Cushing
Marsyl Dees
Betsy Eagar
Jean Folsom
Gail L. Goodness
John Tullo & Lucy Harber
Livia & Tuck Hayward
Michael & Linda Henderson
Peggy King
Claire Krusko
Duffy & Shirley McKenzie
Robert & Pat Meaher
David W. Mehlman
Ann L. Miller
Jay & Lisa Murray
David & Raye Newton
Cathy O'Sheal
Mary Anderson Pickard
Roy & Barbara Price
Phil Sankey
Annie Schapmann
John L. Smith

Larry & Linda Smith
Allen & Marilynn Sullivan

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Renewed**

Marion C. & Louise Bush
Linda Nichols & Robert Burns
James & Patsy Causey
Temd & Lucy Deason
Lamont & Susan Dees
Marsyl S. Dees
Plia Dees
Venetia Friend
Jim & Nancy Gaines
Ben Garmon
Gladys S. Ishee
Jane Ishee
Joan King
Michael & Karin Krumpelt
Suzanne Langley
Joel & Joanne Lunsford
Paul L. Mayson
Noel Merkel
Paul Porter
Mimi & Bud Urquhart, Jr.
Larry F. Warren

**Snowy Egret
Renewed**

Gretchen Boyd
Fred & Brandee Moore

