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. (Continued next page)
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, 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.

**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 Menhyert & 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

**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 Eager

- For: Walter Ernest
  Shirley & Frank Farrell
  Ellyn 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 Ulciny & Tracy Tiller

- For: Ralph and Mary John Tiller
  From: Karl Ulciny & Tracy Tiller

**AOS Meeting Contributors:**

**(Summer 2019)**
- Katherine & George Clemo
- Alison & Charles Glascock
- Ann 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

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~ 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 Eager, DIBS Treasurer
P.O. Box 1295
Dauphin Island, AL 36528-1295

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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

**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**
- New
  - Bobby Doris Cherones
  - Dianna & Paul Porter

**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 Ernst
  - Randy Fallin
  - Shirley Farrell
  - Gregory Harber
  - Jane Hartline
  - Lida Hill

**Amazon Smile**

When you shop online through Amazon, please consider helping DIBS. If you shop through AMAZON SMILE (https://smile.amazon.com) and choose DAUPHIN ISLAND BIRD SANCTUARIES, INC. (Magnolia Springs), Amazon donates 0.5% of your eligible purchases to DIBS. The donation will be made at no extra cost to you. Thank you for your consideration.