

News from the Island

NEWSLETTER OF THE DAUPHIN ISLAND BIRD SANCTUARIES, INC.

Volume 22 No. 1

Fall 2018

President's Message

As the summer season draws to a close, the fall shore bird migration on Dauphin Island is now in full swing, with lots of our wintering, arctic-nesting shore birds, many still in their breeding plumages arriving each day. Neo-tropical passerine birds are beginning to move through the area and dozens of species of passerine migrants will soon be funneling through, taking advantage of the food and water resources on Dauphin Island. With lots of rain in late summer, much of which brought to us courtesy of Tropical Storm Gordon, our tupelo swamps contain a good supply of essential fresh water and our local wild food crop, the myriad seeds, berries, and insects appears to be quite good.

Ospreys occupying six nests in the Dauphin Island area all have successfully fledged their chicks this summer and approximately 600 pairs of Least Terns have successfully nested on an islet in Pelican Bay, once a part of Sand Island. (See article on next page). Brown Pelicans, Laughing Gulls, Royal and Caspian Terns had a bumper nesting season on Gaillard Island in upper Mobile Bay, so as you can imagine, there is quite a lot of avian fishing activity taking place in our coastal waters. We had an apparent record high number of Gray Kingbirds, really our only true tropical bird species, successfully nest along the Island's dune areas this summer.

This year we at Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. (DIBS) have added three additional properties to the DIBS Gorgas Swamp Reserve, both of which are large lots located on the primary sand dune ridge, bringing our total to seven parcels in this very important bird area. Furthermore, we plan to soon purchase a Tupelo gum lot that is contiguous to two of our existing properties within the Gorgas Swamp. Additionally, we have acquired a unique and beautiful dune lot on Hernando Street and another on Hunley Place. We at DIBS were able to purchase these important properties with monies provided by a generous bequeathment from our great friend, the late Harriett Wright. Resident and migrant birds as well as human visitors alike will find refuge and solitude here thanks to Harriett's commitment to land preservation on Dauphin Island.

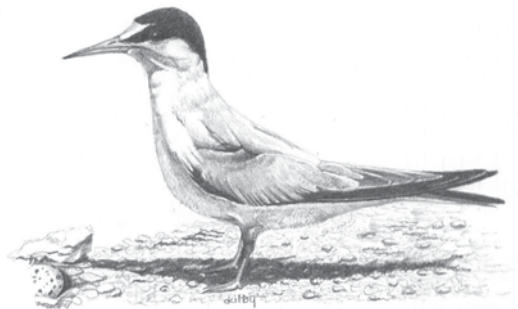
As you know, the many prime parcels of land on Dauphin Island acquired and protected by DIBS provide essential migratory bird stopover habitat, so vital for our fall and spring neo-tropical migratory birds. With development pressures and new construction activity on the Island very high, your continued support of the DIBS mission is essential and very much appreciated and I hope that you can visit your DIBS properties on the Island this fall!

I would like to remind everyone the Alabama Ornithological Society (AOS) Fall Meeting will be held on the island October 12 - 14, 2018. Registration will be at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab's Shelby Center Friday at 5:00 p.m. I would also ask 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!

Sincerely,



Ralph Havard, President
Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc.



Least Tern, by Daniel S. Kilby

Tern Island

by Andrew Haffenden, DIBS Board Member

Least Terns are a small beach nester whose eggs sit in shallow scrapes in the sand. Katie Barnes, Senior Coastal Biologist with Birmingham Audubon's Coastal Programs team based in Mobile, has referred to them as the "world's best parents" because, despite their small size, they fiercely defend their young. The smallest of American terns, their eggs are close to the size of grapes.

Swirling birds had been observed over Tern Island, a small sand island which is a piece of the otherwise submerged part of Pelican Island. Tern Island is popular with boaters, especially on holiday weekends when many gather and often overnight there. In early July, Birmingham Audubon's Seasonal Steward Andrew Haffenden and Coastal Biological Technician Emma Rhodes, key members of the Coastal Programs team, visited Tern Island to investigate. They found a colony of five to six-hundred Least Tern pairs in various stages of nesting, from courting to feeding small chicks. Thirteen pairs of nesting Black Skimmers were also seen.



few hours of exposure to the direct sun is enough to kill the chicks growing inside the eggs or newly hatched, according to Roger Clay, a wildlife biologist with the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources.

Barnes quickly notified the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, since Least Terns are federally protected under the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. An investigation is now underway with the Department of Justice. Marine Resources were notified and immediately added the island to their patrol route. Additionally, Katie and her team posted signs and fencing around the colony the next day to prevent further human disturbance. According to Katie, there have been no signs of human activity within the fenced area since these were installed.

"While the Tern Island colony took a hard hit, the birds still managed to fledge at least eighty-three chicks, all thanks to our coastal team's quick response," said Ansel Payne, Executive Director of Birmingham Audubon. "We hope this can be an educational opportunity about how important it is for beachgoers to share the shore and respect the wildlife."

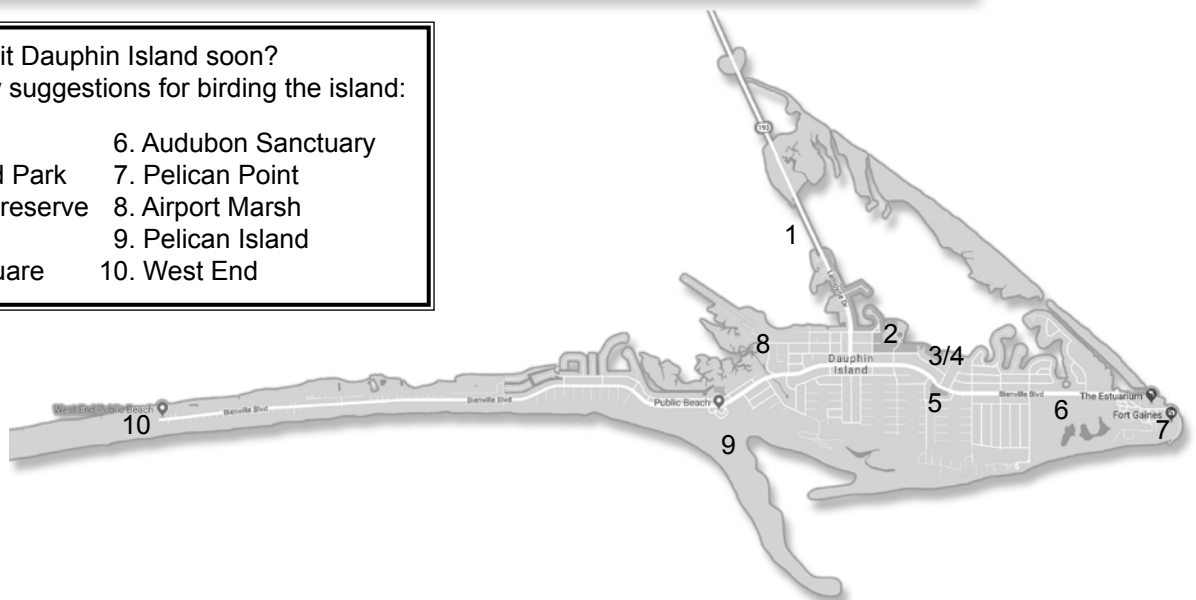
The discovery was bittersweet, however, as also on the island was a large and permanent volleyball net and two shade frames. Furthermore, Emma and Andrew found twenty-six Least Terns eggs placed in a circle in the sand, taken from their nests to make room for the volleyball court. The biologists found at least a hundred nests in and around the court that were abandoned, the parents kept from their eggs and very small chicks by the beachgoers. Sadly, just a

Separated from the mainland and away from natural predators which plague Dauphin Island's colony and solitary nesters, Tern Island appears to be the Least Tern's best hope for survival in Alabama. Next year, the Coastal Programs team plans on pre-fencing the whole area to head off another beach-day tragedy.

(Printed with Permission of Birmingham Audubon Society)

Planning to visit Dauphin Island soon?
Here are a few suggestions for birding the island:

- | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------|
| 1. Causeway | 6. Audubon Sanctuary |
| 2. Shell Mound Park | 7. Pelican Point |
| 3. Goat Tree Preserve | 8. Airport Marsh |
| 4. Steinerville | 9. Pelican Island |
| 5. Cadillac Square | 10. West End |



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 March 1, 2018 and September 8, 2018. If we have omitted your name from this list, please contact our treasurer, Betsy Eagar, at (251) 455-0362 or aeeagar@att.net.

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Blanche Emerson
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 Happy Birthday, Mary Porter!
From:
 The Waldrip Family

For:
 Dr. Fred Cushing
From:
 Ann Marie Kilpatrick

Memorials:

For:
 Martha Dagg
From:
 Jessica Germany
 Edith Hunt

AOS Meeting Contributors:
(Spring 2018)
 Anonymous

Special Note: Life or Family Life Memberships for Fall 2018 Newsletter:

DIBS would like to recognize the following members who hold Life or Family Life Memberships in our organization. In the previous newsletter, there was some confusion on the mailing label about memberships and we want to confirm that the following individuals and families have Life or Family Life Memberships. If you have been omitted mistakenly from this list or have questions about the list, please contact our treasurer, Betsy Eagar (aeeagar@att.net or PO Box 1295, Dauphin Island, AL. 36528). We would like to also confirm our appreciation to those Life or Family Life members who continue to support the mission of DIBS through their ongoing monetary donations beyond their original contribution.

Life or Family Life memberships include: BJ Allen, Carlotta & George Beck, Robin McDonald & Deborah Bennet, Duane & Lynn Brown, Eugenia Carey, Richard Colberg, Dwight Cooley, Steve & Julie Dugan, Phillip Fuselier, Cathy & Ralph Harvard, Catherine Hodges, Greg & Debi Jackson, Don & Dena McKee, Penny & Rod Musgrove, Phyllis Nofzinger, Margaret & Jerry Pennington, Thomas Peterson, Mary Flint Porter, Elberta Reid, Martha Sargent, George Shola, Maud Skiba, Larry & Linda Smith, Jennie Stowers, Rosalind Bogo Swart, Ann & Donald Sweeney, Mike & Karen Tafra, Philip Waters, Shirley Wayland, Erin Wheeler, John Winn Family, Nancy Zeglan, Diane Zettle. Thank you, Betsy Eagar, DIBS Treasurer.

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

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
 Phone: (____) _____
 E-mail: _____

Membership Levels:

<input type="checkbox"/> Northern Cardinal, \$25	<input type="checkbox"/> Great Egret, \$500	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
<input type="checkbox"/> Indigo Bunting \$50	<input type="checkbox"/> Life Member, \$1,000	
<input type="checkbox"/> Rose-breasted Grosbeak, \$100	<input type="checkbox"/> Family Life Member, \$1,250	
<input type="checkbox"/> Snowy Egret, \$250	<input type="checkbox"/> Gift: My check for \$_____ is enclosed.	



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Dauphin Island, AL 36528
251.861.8134/phone
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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 August 31, 2018

**Northern Cardinal
Renewed**

Linda Fagan
Sandra Kendall
Paul Kittle
Annabel Markle
David Mehlman
Robert Stewart
Charles Burke & Betsy Rogers
Linda & Larry Smith, Sr.
Elizabeth Wolfe

Clara "Topsy" Granata
Joel & Joanne Lunsford
Linda Reynolds
Paul & Martha Rogers
Floyd Sherrod
Larry Warren
Frank Wilson

Life Member
Ann McLaurin
Nancy Zeglan

**Indigo Bunting
Renewed**

Emery Baya
Laura Bounds
Ann & Paul Burkholder
Mary Anderson Pickard
John & Coralie Toomey
Russell & Jeanne Voisin
Mike & Karen Wilson

**Rose-breasted Grosbeak
Renewed**

Mayor Jeff Collier, Dauphin Island
Temd & Lucy Deason
Venetia Friend



**General Membership and
Complementary Newsletter**

DIBS, Inc gratefully sends this newsletter
twice a year to our membership as well as
complementary copies to individuals and
organizations that have supported our goal
to preserve and protect land for the birds on
Dauphin Island.

However, if you wish to be removed from our
mailing list, please contact Betsy Eagar,
DIBS Treasurer, at aeeagar@att.net or PO
Box 1295, Dauphin Island, AL 36528.