

Mobile Bay Audubon Society

A Chapter of the National Audubon Society Since 1971

Volume XXV No. 2

Alabama Coastal BirdFest Makes Donation to Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries

By D. Fran Morley

Once again, the Alabama Coastal BirdFest is making good on its goal to help preserve and protect bird habitats on the Alabama Gulf Coast. John Borom, president of the Mobile Bay Audubon Society and one of the organizers of BirdFest, recently presented a \$10,000 check to John Porter, executive director of Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc.

“Over the last two years, BirdFest has contributed \$30,000 in both Mobile and Baldwin counties to help acquire bird habitat,” said John. “We’re pleased to give this money to Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries this year, because Dauphin Island is critical for neo-tropical birds that migrate from North America to habitats in Central and South America. We are able to make this donation thanks to all of our wonderful BirdFest sponsors and to everyone who took part in BirdFest.” Some of those sponsors include: the Alabama Dept. of Conservation and Natural Resources, State Lands Division; Alabama Power Company; Baldwin County Commission; The Forum; ConocoPhillips; Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation, Mobile Bay National Estuary Program; City of Fairhope; Faulkner State Community College; The Nature Conservancy, Dauphin Island Sea Lab and others.

The 2005 Alabama Coastal BirdFest had over 300 registered tour participants from 13 different states, including visitors from as far away as California, Massachusetts, and Ohio.

“We love introducing people to the beauty of the Alabama Gulf Coast and to the wonders of birding,” said John. “It’s wonderful to know that our efforts can make a difference and can help preserve vital bird habitat in Mobile and Baldwin counties.”

Dauphin Island, recognized as



Dr. John Borom, left, president of the Mobile Bay Audubon Society and one of the organizers of the Alabama Coastal BirdFest, hands a \$10,000 check to Dr. John Porter, executive director of Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc. The money represents profits from the 2005 Alabama Coastal BirdFest and will be used to help purchase land on Dauphin Island to be used as protected habitat for migratory and local birds.

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the “Birdiest Small City in the US,” benefits greatly from birding, according to Dr. Porter.

“Birding is very good for our local economy. A study that we commissioned in 1997 showed an economic impact for Dauphin Island of \$2 million over a six-month period. Since then, we’re seeing even more birding visitors, so that figure would be even higher now. We thank the Alabama Coastal BirdFest for their help in bringing birders to our area and for their financial support in helping to preserve bird habitats.”

The Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc., a community land trust, is a non-profit corporation dedicated to preserving the island’s stopover habitat for all North American migratory birds by working with government and other agencies to ensure a balance between human land uses and conservation, and by educating landowners about practices that strengthen the island’s unique ecosystem.

Louisiana Bird Resource Center Opens

More than 70 million people in America watch birds, and Louisiana—because of its vast marshes and swamps and remarkable concentrations of birds during migration—is a particularly desirable destination for bird watchers and other ecotourists.

Louisiana leads most other states in ornithology, the scientific study of birds. LSU, Tulane, the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, and the State Department of Wildlife & Fisheries have excellent bird research programs. Indeed, LSU’s bird program is second only to Cornell University’s in productivity, and it is well ahead of Cornell’s in graduate student training. Moreover, in Louisiana, many clubs, societies, and non-government organizations exist to promote bird watching, conservation, and other natural history endeavors. In addition to Baton Rouge Audubon Society, these include the Louisiana Ornithological Society, Orleans Audubon, The Nature Conservancy, and several birding clubs.

To improve the infrastructure for bird research and tourism in Louisiana, the Louisiana Bird Resource Center has been established at LSU’s Museum of Natural Science. This Center coordinates research on birds by providing a conduit for information for bird interest groups in the state. Its goal is to be an information clearinghouse for data on birds from all available sources and to make those data available online and through publications to researchers, conservationists, developers, birdwatchers, and other interested parties. The Museum was the logical location for this Center because of its large and productive research program and its experience in collecting and storing data. It traditionally gathers information on birds, ranging from observations of nests and rare species by bird watchers, to basic life-history data inherent in bird collections and obtained during bird surveys, to molecular genetic information produced from the Museum’s world-renowned Collection of Genetic Resources.

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Calendar

April

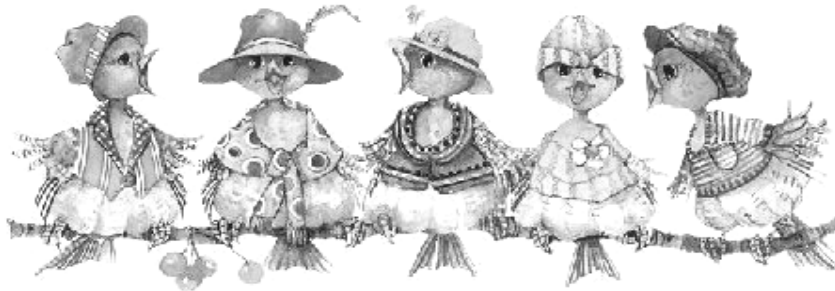
- 1-15 **Hummer Bird Study Group Spring Banding Session at Fort Morgan, AL Banding**
hours from before dawn until mid-afternoon, depending on the flow of birds. Contact Bob or Martha Sargent at 205-681-2888.
- 1-30 **Birdathon** month. For details see newsletter article on page 6.
- 15 **Field Trip, University of Mobile campus.** Elizabeth French, leader. Meet at 8 ASM at the flagpoles at the main entrance. We will be through by approximately 11 or 11:30. For directions and particulars, call E. French at 452-1121. If you already have plans for the CBA trip to Ft. Morgan that same morning, don't ditch those plans; we'll do this trip again next year with the hopes of no conflicts in dates. Maybe some of you new folks will venture forth!
- 11 **Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.**
General Meeting. "The Weeks Bay Reserve Foundation" presented by **Walter Ernest**. Government Street Baptist Church in Mobile. 7:30 p.m. Bring a friend.

May

- 9 **Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.**
General Meeting. "Oyster Research and Reef Restoration in Mobile Bay"
Presented by **Dr. Rick Wallace**, Director Auburn University Marine Extension and Research Center. Faulkner State Community College Fairhope Campus, Centennial Hall. 7:30 p.m. Bring a friend.
- 13 **Annual Picnic**, Meaher Park on the Causeway. Come early and enjoy the boardwalk. 1:00 o'clock lunch in the picnic area. Bring bag lunch, insect repellent and a friend. Admission into park \$1.00.

June

- 2 **Field Trip to Gaillard Island** in Mobile Bay to observe nesting Brown Pelicans as well as gulls, terns, and Black Skimmers. Meet at Beachcomber Marine Supply at Dog River in Mobile County. Going south, take the first left at Dog River Bridge. There will be a \$15 per person fee. Limited to 20 people. 9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. For reservations call **John Borom** 251-990-0423.



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The Bird Resource Center is up and running smoothly under the direction of its coordinator, Richard Gibbons, and with the help of Audubon's Important Bird Area coordinator, Melanie Driscoll.

In addition to establishing important bird areas and working on the Birds of Louisiana and a Guide to Birding in Louisiana, the Center's first projects include the Nest Record Project, a winter bird atlas and a Second Breeding Bird Atlas Project.

For more information, regarding the Louisiana Bird Resource Center, go to www.lsu.edu/birdcenter. This is a very interesting and informative website and it would be nice to have something like it in Alabama.

Coastal Birding Assn. Calendar



April

- 1 Dauphin Island** for early migrants. Meet at **8:00 am** at the Shell Mounds. [for info: Mike Wilson, (251) 649-5760]
- 7- 9 International Migratory Bird Festival and Birdiest Coastal City Competition, Dauphin Island.** Bird walks, children's workshops and activities, native plants, birding information, displays, birding merchandise, evening social and buffet dinner, team competitions, and more. For a schedule of activities and additional information, go to <http://coastalbirding.org> and click on the links on the left side of the page. [for info: John Porter (251) 861-2120]
- 15 Fort Morgan** for migrants. Meet at **8:00 am** at the stable/banding area at the fort. The Hummer/Bird Study Group will be banding. Bring a lunch. [for info: Howard Horne, (251) 605-9043]
- 21-23 Alabama Ornithological Society** spring meeting on Dauphin Island. For meeting information, check your spring issue of *The Yellowhammer* or the AOS website <www.bham.net/aos/>.
- 29 Dauphin Island** for migrants. Meet at **8:00 am** at the Shell Mounds. [for info: Tom/Joan Siegwald, (251) 666-1762 or (251) 605-2989]

May

- 6 Mobile Delta/End-of-Season Get-Together.** Meet at **8:00 am** at the gas station (formerly a Conoco) on the northwest corner of the Hwy 225 exit off I-65. We will bird various sites off Hwy. 225 and then enjoy a picnic lunch in the field. During lunch, we will have our informal end-of-year meeting to discuss new officers, current projects, and future field trips. [for info: Tom/Joan Siegwald, (251) 666-1762 or (251) 605-2989]

May 13 The Alabama Ornithological Society has decided not to participate in this year's North American Migration Count. Instead, members are asked to help on this Saturday with the Alabama Breeding Bird Atlas project. If you are in Mobile or Baldwin County, contact Howard Horne [(251) 605-9043] for additional information. If you are in another county, you can find your local coordinator by going to the Alabama Ornithological Society website <www.bham.net/aos/>, clicking on "Alabama Breeding Bird Atlas," then on the "Regional Coordinator" link (fourth paragraph), then on your region on the map.



International Migratory Bird Day Celebration!

Cadillac Square Park, Dauphin Island

April 7-9, 2006

Greg Harber

Plans are underway for this spring's big event, our annual International Migratory Bird Day Celebration, April 7-9, 2006. Mark your calendars now and join us in Cadillac Square Park as we celebrate the return of our neotropical migrant songbirds. There will be something for everyone!

Cadillac Square Park will again be the center of activity with vendors, music, food and more on Saturday, April 8th! There will be activities for the children, guided bird walks, vendors, and sales and information booths.

To start the weekend we'll again host the America's Birdiest City/County competition. The 72-hour count window will start Friday, April 7th at noon and run till noon Sunday, April 9th, with each team selecting their own 24-hour window in which to count. Full schedule with details follow in a submission by John Porter, Executive Director of the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries, Inc.

As always, volunteers are needed to help with the festival. Please contact me at 205-251-2133 or gharber@mindspring.com and I will put your talents and enthusiasm to work for DIBS!

Welcome to our 3rd International Migratory Bird Day Celebration

April 6-9, 2006

John Porter

We're out to defend our title as America's Birdiest small city earned last year. The rules of the game have been modified for 2006. Cities/Counties can choose a 72 hour window for their Bird-a-thon between April 1, 2006 and May 31, 2006. Teams may use the entire 72 hour window for birding, a change from last year's 24 hour counting period.

Thursday, April 6th

Teams limited to 2-4 members per teams.

Friday, April 7th

Chamber of Commerce Hall

6:30 pm Open Bar and Music

7:00 pm Wine and Cheese

Saturday, April 8th

Cadillac Square Park

10:00 am—2:00 pm IMBD Celebration

Festivities include:

Bird Walks, leaving from Cadillac Square Park

Business and Industry Partners—Booths and Displays

Sales items and exhibits

Vendor booths

Chamber of Commerce Hall

6:00 pm Open Bar and Music by Thomas Edwards

7:00 pm—Dick Russell's BBQ Buffer Dinner, **Pre-registration required**

8:00 pm—*Katrina Impact on Coastal Nesting Habitat*, Dr. John Dindo, Dauphin Island Sea Lab

Sunday, April 9th

12:00 noon. America's Birdiest City Competition ends

Teams submit final results by 12:30 pm

Compilation begins a 1:00 pm at Goat Trees Reserve

1:30 pm Awards and Recognitions

Birdathon 2006



*'tis the season once again, **Birdathon** season!*

What: Birdathon—Birding for fun and funds.

When: Any 24-hour period this spring.

Where: Any place you find birds. Dauphin Island and Fort Morgan are prime birding spots.

For many years people have been strolling, walking and running for worthy causes. Our society counts birds! Our Birdathon funds are used to place Audubon Adventures in 4th and 5th grade classrooms. Audubon Adventures is a complete science curriculum kit that the students and teacher can use all year. The goal of Audubon Adventures is “connecting students to nature.”

We are asking each member to participate in this worthwhile endeavor. Think how many students we could reach if each member gave at least \$10.00. A \$40.00 donation will provide a kit for one classroom that the teacher can use all year.

To be a participant in the 2006 Birdathon, here’s what you do:

Be a counter: Join a Birdathon group and count species during any 24 hour period. Get sponsors to make pledges for each species you count.

Be a sponsor: Pledge any amount . . . 10 cents, 50 cents, \$1.00 or any amount per species counted. You may choose to give any amount or a one-time gift.

Your contribution is **Tax Deductible**

Thank you for participating

Elizabeth Williams
Birdathon Coordinator
(251) 643-7257



I want to be a part of this fun/fund raising, worthwhile program.

I pledge _____ for each species counted.

Enclosed is my one-time gift of _____.

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Make check payable to Mobile Bay Audubon Society and place in the enclosed envelop or mail to Mobile Bay Audubon Society, P O Box 483, Fairhope, AL 36532.

Audubon Adventures

It's time to start enrolling teachers in the Audubon Adventures program for the 2006-97 school year. Over the last 21 years more than 150,000 teachers and 7,000,000 students have participated in this educational program. Thanks go out to all of our chapter leaders and volunteers across the country. Your efforts have made these achievements possible. In addition to enjoying such impressive participation, Audubon Adventures has been honored with numerous awards for excellence in educational publishing. Most recently, Classroom Earth added Audubon Adventures to its listy of "Top Ten Most Popular Environmental Education Project for K-12 Teachers."

People wishing to help with the Audubon Adventures program should call John Borom, 928-5219. for more information.



Garland Sims, pictured above, gave a very good program on the Purple Martin Riviera in Fairhope, at the last regular meeting of the Mobile Bay Audubon Society.

Newsletter Deadline

To keep the newsletter as up-to-date and informative as possible, we would appreciate members submitting articles of interest to the newsletter editor, Delane Small, 1 Fiesta Drive, Spanish Fort, AL 36527 or email to dhs9700@bellsouth.net. Please have submissions turned in by June 24, 2006, for publication in the next newsletter.



Do Something for the Planet on Earth Day— and Every Day

In 1998, 25 million environmental refugees fled from desertification, deforestation, industrial accidents, and natural disasters. This was more than the 23 million who became refugees because of war. As a result of climate change, environmental refugees will become ever more numerous, driven from their homes by droughts, floods, extremes of weather, or rising sea levels. By 2020, it is estimated that 20 million people will be forced to leave Bangladesh, a vast delta that is especially vulnerable to being inundated. Where will they go?

Every year more than 180 countries celebrate Earth Day. This year Bay Area Earth Day will be Sunday, April 23, from 12:00 noon to 5:00 p.m. at the Fairhope Municipal Pier Park. Join the party—take part in events organized that day. Then, through your own behavior, make every day an Earth Day.

Mobile Bay Audubon Wants You!

Join Us Today!

Every membership supports Audubon's vital efforts to protect birds, wildlife and natural habitats. As a member, you'll become an important part of our dynamic chapter and receive a host of benefits including:

- A 1-year subscription (6 bi-monthly issues) of our chapter newsletter.
- Automatic membership in National Audubon Society, and a 1-year subscription (4 issues, one per quarter) of Audubon, its award-winning magazine.
- Admission to Audubon Centers across the country.
- A 10% discount on products at select Audubon Nature Stores and more!

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 Yes! I want to join Mobile Bay Audubon and National Audubon Society!

\$20 - 1 year Introductory Rate \$1,000 - Individual Life Membership
 \$15 - 1 year Student/Senior Rate \$1,500 - Dual Life Membership
 \$30 - 2 year Special Rate
 My check is enclosed Please bill me

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City/ST/Zip: _____
 Telephone: _____

Make check payable to National Audubon Society and mail to: National Audubon Society,
 Membership Data Center, P O ox 52529, Boulder, CO 80322-2529 Chapter Code: A01 7XCH

What would man be without woman? Scarce, sir . . . mighty scarce," Mark Twain.

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