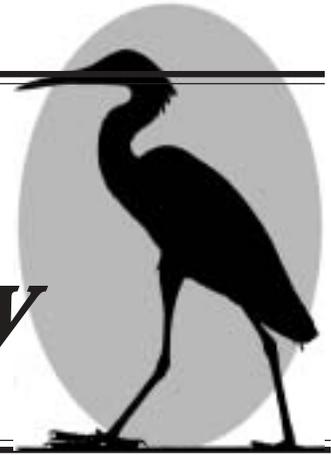


Mobile Bay Audubon Society

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIONAL AUDUBON SOCIETY SINCE 1971



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There's beauty in island's new "birdiest" designation

Dauphin Island has taken flight among bird watchers, which bodes well for south Alabama.

The visionaries who have worked to establish birding trails, set up birding events and generally raise Dauphin Island's visibility as a coastal birdwatching haven have contributed significantly to environmental protection and commercial activity in south Alabama, particularly in Mobile County.

An informal bird count on Dauphin Island in April recorded an astounding 185 species, earning the city the title as the "birdiest coastal city." The number was 60 birds higher than a recent count in Brownsville, Texas, which allowed Dauphin Island to seize the "birdiest" title from that Texas city.

The prominence of Dauphin Island among birdwatching enthusiasts draws tourist to the town each year in the spring and fall, when they come to catch sight of numerous species that migrate across the Gulf of Mexico.

Local officials estimate a \$2-million-a-year economic impact from birdwatchers who flock to the island in search of the 384 species thought to inhabit or visit it.

Birdwatching has become big business nationwide, accounting for a multibillion-dollar outdoor activity, and Alabama is wise to go after those dollars.

The 164-acre Audubon Bird Sanctuary on Dauphin Island provides birding trails and swamp walkways, and there are plans to expand the sanctuary.

Dauphin Island's nearest competitor for birding enthusiasts is Fort Morgan in Baldwin County. Gulf State Park, Weeks Bay National Estuarine Reserve, Meaher State Park, Mobile Tensaw Delta Wildlife Management Area, USS Alabama Memorial Park and Bellingrath Gardens fill out the birdwatching paradise of south Alabama.

Birdwatching rivals hunting as an outdoor activity and deserves the attention of local and state officials. Dauphin Island, the birdiest coastal municipality in America this year, proves its importance.

Board of Directors 2004

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Protecting south Alabama's viability as a birding capital safeguards the environment and capitalizes on the economic, social and cultural value of south Alabama's natural resources.



Two Audubon members taking a break and birding the easy way at Dauphin Island during this spring's migration, Cookie Darowich and Nancy Hora.

New Roadless Rule Puts Water at Risk, Puts Burdens on Taxpayers

The new rule weakening protection for national forest roadless areas will put drinking water sources at risk, waste taxpayers' money, and leave fewer wild places where families can enjoy a quiet, natural experience, said REP American, the national grassroots organization of Republicans for Environmental Protection.

"No resource is more important than clean water. Clean drinking water will be at a premium as our nation's population grows. More than 350 areas in 39 states have national forest roadless lands that are free sources of clean water. It doesn't make sense to put those clean water sources at risk by opening roadless areas to industrial logging, mineral or energy production," said REP American Policy Director Jim DiPeso.

"Roadless areas are roadless for a reason. Many of them are located in remote, steep country. Punching roads into these backcountry areas can cost up to \$15,000 per mile. The Forest Service doesn't have enough money to take care of its existing network of nearly 400,000 miles of roads, let alone build new roads," DiPeso said.

"The first rule of fiscal responsibility is to stop digging when you're in a hole. Instead, a supposedly conservative administration wants to hand the Forest Service a bigger shovel. At a time when the Forest Service has a \$10 billion roads maintenance backlog and when it is closing campgrounds and other recreation sits nationwide, it makes no sense for the Forest Service to build more roads that it can't afford. The taxpayers

shouldn't have to put up with such reckless mismanagement," DiPeso said.

The new rule is not fair to the millions of Americans who prefer low-impact recreation. "Under this new rule, many of our remaining wild forests will be lost to road-building. More than half of our national forest lands already are roaded and open to high-intensity and motorized recreation. Why can't we leave our remaining wild forests alone so that millions of hunters, fishermen, birders, paddlers and cross-country skiers can continue enjoying a quiet, natural experience, away from roads, noise, and pollution?" DiPeso said.

The rule change eliminates a national protection standard for 58.5 million acres of roadless areas that was adopted in 2001 following extensive deliberation and public input. Instead, governors would have to petition the Secretary of Agriculture for protection of roadless areas in their states.

"The weakness of this proposal is two-fold. One, citizens who want roadless areas protected could not be assured that governors would devote their states' limited fiscal resources to doing the federal government's job, and two, there is no guarantee that the Secretary of Agriculture would approve the petitions," DiPeso said.

"The new rule, for all intents and purposes, abolishes one of the most popular conservation initiatives the federal government has ever undertaken. The rule is an insult to American citizens who wrote millions of letters and attend hundred to hearings to speak up for protecting roadless areas in our national forests. Apparently, their wishes fell on deaf ears in the administration," DiPeso said.

Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries

International Migratory Bird Day Celebration April 8-10

IMBD was created in 1993 by visionaries at the Smithsonian Migratory Bird Center and the Cornell Laboratory of Ornithology. Now under the direction of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, IMBD continues to focus attention on one of the most important and spectacular events in the life of a migratory bird — its journey between its summer and winter homes. Today, it is celebrated in Canada, the U.S., Mexico and Central America through bird festivals and bird walks, education programs, and Bird Day! In earlier years the day was scheduled for the second Saturday in May, but since the connection to migrants is so geographically dependent, local groups have been given the freedom to choose their day for celebration between April 1, and May 30 to get the most opportune time for migrants in their area. The Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries (DIBS) chose an early date, Saturday April 9, 2005 for Bird Day and celebrated with a festival running April 8-10.

A highlight of the weekend was the sharing birding experiences with our sister site partners from Ria Celestun, Yucatan, Mx. Eduardo Galicia, Coastal Program Coordinator, Pronatura Peninsula de Yucatan and Los Peregrinos, five former fishermen who have been trained as professional birding guides. After wine and cheese and musical entertainment by Cajun Dave and the Accordion Man, Eduardo gave us a report on Pronatura conservation activities.

IMBD was formally recognized Saturday, 10am to 2pm, with conservation exhibitors, children's activities, bird walks and more music from the strolling musicians at Cadillac Square. Saturday night after a barbeque buffet we were privileged to hear from Scott Weidensaul, author of "Living on the Wind" the "Ghost with Trembling Wings" and the not so well known "First Field Guide, Birds" an excellent beginner's book. Scott took time off from banding with the Hummer Bird Study group to be with us.

The main event of the weekend was the birdathon competition for America's Birdiest City/County. Compiled by Phil Pryde, San Diego Audubon, this is an informal competition to determine the city/county reporting the most species in a 24 hour period between April 1 and May 31. Each sponsoring organization chooses a 48 hour window in which their teams will compete, each team choosing a 24 hour count time. DIBS chose from 12noon Friday to 12noon Sunday as the window and 12 teams participated. All birds counted must be seen from land within the prescribed city/county limits. John Stowers and Terry Hartley ferried birders over to Pelican Island to take advantage of that part of Dauphin Island... The Peregrinos compiled 135 species, with 3 required rare bird reports, followed closely by Dwight Cooley, Bill Summerour and Dick and Linda Reynolds with 131 species. The Dauphin Island total was 188 species as reported below.

John Porter



Gulf State Park

Gulf State Park is a 6,158-acre Alabama State Park with over three miles of beachfront for visitors to enjoy. The Park was severely damaged by Hurricane Ivan and a complete renovation of the Park is set to be completed by 2006.

The Department of Conservation and Natural Resources is planning the following enhancements and preservation efforts at Gulf State Park:

- **Natural environment restoration and preservation within the Park:**
 - Wetlands preservation
 - Maritime Forest preservation
 - Restoration of dune structures and natural vegetation
 - Beach re-nourishment
 - Clean-up of storm debris from all fresh and saltwater waterways
 - Increase habitat management for birds, fish and other wildlife
 - Enhancing the protection of wading bird rookery sites
- **Recreational efforts:**
 - New nature trails will be constructed to allow for additional recreational opportunities including birding, hiking, walking and general enjoyment
Increased birding sites will result from nature trails being constructed
 - More pathways and landscaped open spaces will allow for park visitors to experience the natural environment
 - Additional beach access is being planned with additional walkovers, parking areas and bathhouses
- **Educational initiatives:**
 - An interactive, hands-on Conservation Interpretive Nature Center
 - Informational learning kiosks
 - Expanded research and teaching opportunities through Auburn University and Faulkner State Community College including marine biology, architecture, engineering, hotel and restaurant management and forestry
- **Accommodations:**
 - A nature-based family-friendly adventure hotel is planned for Gulf State Park that would be a smaller-footprint of the old Lodge, thus giving back additional beach frontage
 - Construction of 496 campsites and 30 cabins is also being completed for additional accommodations within the Park
- **Other improvements include:**
 - Partnership with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to continue to protect the endangered beach mouse and sea turtle

The Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources promotes the statewide stewardship and enjoyment of Alabama's natural resources to ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy them. The department also advises the state government on management of freshwater fish, wildlife, marine resources, waterway safety, state lands, state parks and other natural resources. This includes the administration, management and maintenance of 22 state parks, 23 public fishing lakes, three freshwater fish hatcheries, 34 wildlife management areas, two waterfowl refuges, two wildlife sanctuaries, a mariculture center with 35 ponds and 645,000 acres of trust lands. Other departmental functions include maintenance of a State Land Resource Information Center and administration of the Forever Wild land acquisition program. For more information, visit www.outdooralabama.com.

Breakthrough in Fight Against Global Warming

Yesterday (June 22, 2005), the U.S. Senate defeated the McCain=Lieberman amendment to the Energy Bill that would have reduced global warming pollution and provided critical funding to help wildlife adjust to changing climate. If you were one of the thousands of NWF supporters who contacted your Senators urging them to back this important legislation, we thank you.

Although this amendment failed to pass, pressure from the American people prompted the Senate to pass a new amendment calling for mandatory reductions in global warming pollution. In other words . . .

For the first time ever, the U.S. Senate has recognized that global warming is a real problem requiring real solutions.

We must use this positive momentum to keep pressure on Congress until it adopts legislation that includes effective solutions that confront global warming.

Scientists predict that if no action is taken to reduce global warming, the temperature changes we experience this century could be as much as **TEN TIMES** more severe than last century, spelling major problems for people and wildlife. If our generation intends to leave behind a cleaner, healthier and naturally richer world for our children

and grandchildren, we must curb global warming pollution before it's too late.

There is no time to lose. Please contribute generously to support NWF's efforts to bolster our work to educate the public—and our leaders in Congress—about the real and present dangers of global warming and other threats to America's wildlife. I'm convinced that if we stand united, we can break the deadlock on this issue and pass meaningful legislation that will tackle global warming once and for all.

Let's keep the momentum going!
Sincerely,
Larry Schweiger
President & CEO
National Wildlife Federation

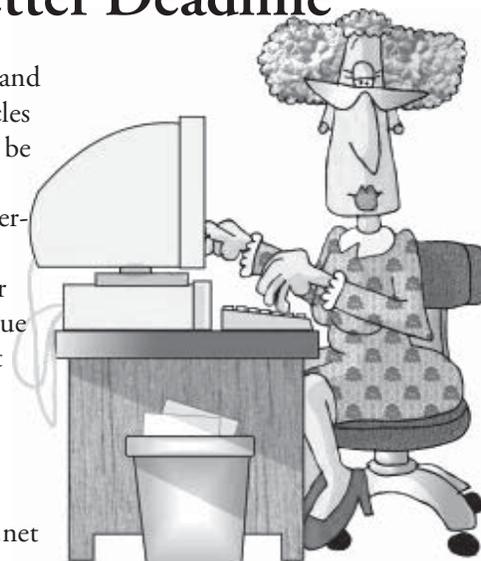


Happy Birthday
AMERICA

Newsletter Deadline

Any member is welcomed and encouraged to submit articles for the newsletter. I would be happy to include anything you think would be of interest to the membership. Please send your articles for the September/October issue to Delane Small by August 20th.

Address:
1 Fiesta Drive
Spanish Fort, AL 36527
Email: dhs9700@bellsouth.net



Proceed with caution on Causeway condo

A proposal to build a 20-story-high arch linking two towers of condominiums on the Causeway places Spanish Fort officials at the threshold of the future.

What they decide to do about the plan—submitted by two local attorneys who say they will invest \$190 million in the project—could decide the fate of the Causeway for decades to come. . . .

Since winning the right to annex the Causeway in early 2003, Spanish Fort has shown signs of recognizing its responsibility as steward to the natural and cultural resources associated with the roadway. City officials' initial rejection of taller billboards along the roadway in the fall of 2003 revealed good instincts toward protection of the Causeway's unique attributes. . .

The above is an excerpt from an announcement on June 12 in *The Mobile Register* concerning a proposal for building high-rise condos on the Causeway. Below is a letter from one concerned citizen:

I was sick at heart to hear of the high-rise condominium recently proposed for the causeway in Spanish Fort. As an field ecologist who has conducted research in the bay and delta for the past 12 years, I have become intimately familiar with the beauty, complexity, and value of the Mobile-Tensaw delta and causeway. The lesson of ecology is that plants, animals, air, soil and water, etc. are all interdependent...even things that we might not appreciate or even fear (such as snakes and alligators). The causeway is a unique, priceless treasure that provides homes to many diverse species of wildlife. It is not "wasted space." There are those who deny that we need to allow natural organisms a place to live, however the causeway should be preserved for our and future generations. There is inestimable value of serenity, refreshment and wholesomeness in natural habitats (wildflowers, marshes, grassbeds, birds, etc.). We must be good stewards of our natural heritage. Without a vision, people and the causeway will surely perish.

The causeway is a very low, fragile habitat that is extremely susceptible to disturbance, runoff, siltation, sewage and contamination, (insecticides, herbicides, fertilizers and many other chemicals that invariably accompany human development). Although much of the causeway was originally man-made, it is surrounded by many natural areas that are inhabited by a rich variety of native plants and animals.

The causeway is routinely closed by heavy rains and storms (not just hurricanes). A high-rise condominium is not practical for such a low, limited, delicate wetland. Monitoring roadkill along the Mobile Bay Causeway for the past five years has documented that the most abundant reptile encountered is the Alabama red-belliedturtle--an endangered species that happens to be the official state reptile. The turtle may be more abundant on the causeway than anywhere else. The diversity of other wildlife communities on the causeway is biologically impressive.

The human impact of construction and maintenance on the causeway will cause irreversible damage. Siltation, sewage and chemicals will enter Mobile Bay where shrimp, oysters, crabs, fishes, plants, etc. try to make a living. Look at the disaster of D'Olive Creek in Daphne. The status of the Mobile Bay is indeed precarious. As a resident of Spanish Fort, I sincerely hope that the city will not be seduced by the tempting prospect of more tax dollars. Truly, it is not worth it. We must be cautious about setting a precedent for unlimited development, or we may lose it all (for ourselves and our progeny). Why not severely restrict building size and limit structures to 1 or 2 floors? Why not establish a responsible sign ordinance? Why not prohibit bill boards? There is a limit to how many cars, parking lots, people, signs and buildings that the causeway (or any habitat) will tolerate. There needs to be a thoughtful plan for the responsible preservation and management of the extraordinary causeway habitats. Let us not sell our birth right.

David H. Nelson, Ph.D.
Vertebrate Ecologist
5 Watch Tower
Spanish Fort, Alabama 36527

New Members

Welcome to the Mobile Bay Audubon Society, the local chapter of the National Audubon Society. We thank you for your support. A few facts about our chapter: Monthly meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday from September thru May at 7:30 PM alternately in Fairhope and Mobile (See calendar for details of programs and locations.) Programs of interest are planned for each meeting and field trips are scheduled regularly. We are a non-profit organization—all donations are tax deductible. A list of officers is listed in the newsletter; feel free to call any of them for information. Join us as often as you can—we want to get to know you.

Ottilie Halstead, Membership Chairman

Daphne

Lee Yokel

Eight Mile

Mary Morton

Elberta

Helen Faust

Fairhope

Cherly Fulton

Eva Funke

Eric M Hart

Rimsa Michael

Betsy Sable

Renata Scott

Foley

John G Blaze

Tony G Peterman

Ms R A Smith

Jean Sprouse

Genevieve P Zimmermann

Gulf Shores

Jim Posey

Irvington

Michael Bosarger

Lillian

Jean Bauer

K E Moyer

Mobile

Margaret P Roark

Marion W Valentino

Carla D Amico

Rebecca Barnett

Larry M Borg

Joyce H Farr

Mary D Gilbert

Robert E Parker

Robert Rasch

Beverly Richards

David Balke

Gwendolyn A Leo

Orange Beach

Kathleen A Kean

Robertsdale

Calvin Johnson

Semmes

Alice Baker

Silverhille

NormaJean Ross

Spanish Fort

Bonnie McDona

Summerdale

L S Thayer

Theodore

Ben M Buerget

Tillye Semple



Ian Woodrey's first bird banding experience. Ian is the 6 month old son of Dr. Mark Woodrey—the Research Coordinator at Grand Bay NERR and a bird researcher.



Which came first the chicken or the egg?

The Christian bible says that the chicken came first. God said, "Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven." Genesis 1:19-20. Chickens are a type of fowl; so, according to the bible, the chicken came first.

Scientists say that reptiles were laying eggs thousands of years before chickens appeared. The first chicken came from an egg laid by a bird that was not quite a chicken. According to scientists, the egg came first.



Guide Roger Clay of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, shares his knowledge of Gaillard Island with the group attending the Audubon field trip on May 27th.

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!

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

\$20 – 1 year Introductory Rate

\$15 – 1 year Student/Senior Rate

\$30 – 2 year Special Rate

My check is enclosed.

\$1,000 – Individual Life Membership

\$1,500 – Dual Life Membership

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.Box 52529, Boulder, CO 80322-2529

ChapterCode: A01

7XCH

"There is nothing in which the birds differ more from man than the way in which they can build and yet leave a landscape as it was before." Robert Lynd (1892-1970)

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