



Dauphin Island

Located at the mouth of Mobile Bay, Dauphin Island serves as a barrier between Mobile Bay and Mississippi Sound and the Gulf of Mexico. The island marks the point where the brackish waters from the Bay/Sound meet the saltwater of the Gulf. Dauphin Island is subject to the meteorological conditions from both directions as well as the strength of the Gulf waters. The Island was constructed by the constant flow of sand eastward from the Florida Panhandle. The movement of this sand has caused the island to build from east to west and in such a location that its character has been shaped by the impacts of the waters, the winds and weather into what we see today; although as a barrier island, it is constantly changing. A dominant feature of the Island is a ridge of dunes, running east-west. Distribution of plants through deposition of seeds from both winds and by birds has resulted in the formation of different ecological features, from maritime forests to the semi-tropical nature of the coastal plain you will find here.

Within this geography are wetlands, creeks and lakes supporting different species of animal and plant life. Sea turtles also utilize Dauphin Island's sandy beaches for nesting, permitting the preservation of several species. Dauphin Island is the first and last landfall for migrating birds on their long journey across the Gulf of Mexico. The species of marine creatures, from both brackish and saltwater, have provided food and recreation for residents of the Island for centuries. As a barrier island, the nature of Dauphin Island is unique. It was colonized by Native American tribes, explored by many European discoverers, and was instrumental in the Civil War. Now we are the stewards of this colorful heritage and these natural treasures. Preservation of the community's unique nature while sharing all the various aspects of the island with both residents and visitors is the responsibility of all of us who live and visit here. Let's continue to work together to ensure that its distinct character will be maintained for generations to come.



BIRDS AND FISH OF DAUPHIN ISLAND



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ADULT BALD EAGLE FEEDING JUVENILE

Photo by Nancy Selgen

DAUPHIN ISLAND BIRDING

Dauphin Island is designated as a globally important bird area by Birdlife International. This unique and important location contains a variety of topographies including the Tupelo Swamps Maritime Forests, Coastal and Inland Wetlands, Coastal Dune areas, and Live Oak Woodlands. These habitats are particularly important as Dauphin Island is the first and last landfall for migrating birds on their long journey across the Gulf of Mexico.

Excellent birding opportunities exist at the Audubon Bird Sanctuary 211 Bienville Boulevard, the Shell Mound Park, the Airport Marsh, and several habitat conservation areas on the south shore and west end of the island.

In addition, and with the support of the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), as well as thousands of private donors, there are now more than 60 properties protected in perpetuity by Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries Inc. (DIBS). Volunteers also maintain a regular presence at the local welcome center where they distribute maps and additional printed information and give advice about local sightings and recommended DIBS properties for birding.

Details available at www.dauphinislandbirds.com.



SCARLET TANAGER

(Piranga olivacea)



HOODED WARBLER

(Setophaga citrina)

SHORE FISHING ON DAUPHIN ISLAND

A great fishing experience awaits you on Dauphin Island, even without a boat. In fact, fishing from the shoreline is the most common mode of fishing in the United States. Whether fishing from our sandy beaches, near rock jetties or piers you'll be able to catch some of the post popular saltwater fish. If it's warm, don't be afraid to wade into the waters for even better surf fishing.

Below is a brief guide to aid in the identification of common fish that can be caught on the shoreline. Be sure to purchase an Alabama saltwater fishing license if you are 16 or older. For rules and regulations as well as additional photos and information, please visit www.outdooralabama.com/fishing/saltwater-fishing.

SHORE FISHING IDENTIFICATION GUIDE

- **Hardhead catfish**

are a very common species caught. The species is not good to eat, and be careful releasing the fish as the spines are sharp.



- The **Gaftop catfish** can

get much larger than hardhead catfish and put up a good fight. As with all catfish, be careful when handling it because of the spines.



- **White or sand trout**

are a common fish found near piers and docks. Fishing under the lights for these fish can be very rewarding.



- **Speckled trout** are

often found in the same areas as white trout. They can be much larger and wade fishing near the shoreline can lead to a good catch.



- **Northern kingfish or ground mullet** is

another very abundant fish caught from the shore and piers.



- **Red drum or red fish**

are one of the most sought after fish along the coast. It's common to catch very large (20+ lb.) fish from the shore.



- **Southern flounder** can be

caught by rod and reel or by giggering in the evenings on sandy bottoms in shallow water.



- **Florida pompano** are

one of the most desirable fish on the island. They're a fish that is best targeted from the sandy outer beaches.



- **Spanish mackerel** is

another fish that can be easily targeted from our sandy beaches both in front and behind the island.



- Found around the pilings, rocks and jetties, **Sheepshead** can put up quite a fight.

