

# HONOR ROLL OF DONORS



**Dauphin Island Sea Lab**

Alabama Center for  
Marine Education and Research

A group of divers in various colored gear (yellow, blue, black) are swimming underwater in clear blue water. They are holding up small white cards or signs.

# Thank You!

It is with pleasure that the Dauphin Island Sea Lab and Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation (DISLF) presents the annual Honor Roll of Donors. On behalf of the students and faculty who benefit from your generosity, thank you for making a gift to the Dauphin Island Sea Lab this year. The Honor Roll of Donors lists all donors who contributed to the Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation between October 1, 2024, and September 30, 2025. Your gifts enable us to attract extraordinary students and faculty, and to provide preeminent Marine Science education and research.

Thanks to you, this year, the DISL Foundation has achieved all our goals. As you know, your gifts are vital to the strength of the Sea Lab and the impact has been unprecedented. Your generosity allowed the Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation to provide the following:

- Scholarships to High School and College Students
- Funding for the ROV Competition – a regional competition attracting over 200 students
- Provided new microscopes for both University and Discovery Hall Programs
- Sea Stars Camp
- Alabama Aquarium Discovery Lab for our youngest visitors
- Alabama Aquarium Consultation for New Tech Room
- Aquatic Center Outdoor Classroom

Once again, I want to express my gratitude for you. Because of you, the faculty and marine educators have been able to provide the best experiences that will prepare these students to be environmentally conscious citizens of the world.

Thank you!!!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Helene Hassell".

Helene Hassell  
Executive Director Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation

Margaret Van Loock, Board of Trustees  
Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation

P.S. If you would like a behind-the-scenes tour of the DISL, please contact Helene Hassell to set it up at 251-307-5903.

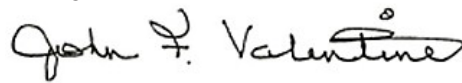
P.P.S. We are so grateful for the loyalty demonstrated by those who are listed in the Honor Roll of Donors. If your name appears in the Honor Roll, you have our heartfelt thanks. If you are not included this year, this is a great time to become a part of the exciting, boundless potential of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. Every gift is powerful



As we enter the holiday season, I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all who have supported our mission of education, research, and community service. Your generosity, combined with support from elected officials, has allowed us to enrich our educational programs and significantly improve our lab infrastructure. Enrollment in our educational programs and attendance at Alabama's Official Aquarium have both grown, fulfilling our founders' vision of delivering high-quality academic programs to students of all ages.

The impact of your continued support is evident across the Dauphin Island Sea Lab (DISL) campus, from the addition of the new pool last year and the soon-to-be-completed outdoor pool classrooms to the upcoming final renovations of the Aquarium exhibits. All of these enhancements are allowing us to expand our educational and research programs and enhance our campus. In the coming year, we anticipate breaking ground on a new dormitory, completing the construction of a new 65-foot research vessel, and the final Aquarium renovations will expand our undergraduate and K-12 programs. Additionally, your continued support for the Marine Environmental Sciences Luncheon and Cocktails for the Critters helps DISL promote our critical message of wise, community-driven environmental stewardship to record audiences.

Each of your contributions is vital to our efforts to protect the delicate balance of our local marine environments, promote the importance of marine sciences, and inspire future generations of ocean stewards. THANK YOU!



Dr. John F. Valentine  
Executive Director, Dauphin Island Sea Lab



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## Discovery Lab Opens at Alabama Aquarium



The Discovery Lab opened for exploration at the Alabama Aquarium on Discovery Day, held on April 5 of this past year. The dynamic hands-on play environment features an interactive boat, the ocean, and a lab-themed area. This renovation is made possible with funds from the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (GoMESA) and the support of ADCNR Commissioner Chris Blankenship.

Visitors of all ages can learn to build an underwater remotely operated vehicle (ROV), role-play as scientists, and explore underwater habitats. These hands-on exhibits help children learn about the Gulf of

America ecosystem and the vital work of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab, fostering empathy for the natural world and a lifelong appreciation for Alabama's coastal environment.

Mississippi coast artists Chris Stebly and Ben Prisk illustrated the mural for the room.

Plans are also being made to refresh the aquarium tech room with a new exhibit, "Into the Darkness: A Journey to the Deep Sea." The exhibit will explore the depth of the Gulf of America and beyond.

## Record attendance for Sea Stars Camp



The Sea Stars Camp, hosted by the Dauphin Island Sea Lab's Discovery Hall Programs, celebrated record attendance in 2025 with 19 campers plus their guardians. The weekend experience is designed for students ages 9 to 18 with developmental disabilities. The group explored the incredible marine world in a hands-on and fun atmosphere.

About half of the campers were new to the Sea Stars Camp, and many of them had never been to a camp before. Donations and sponsors, including the Rotary

Children's Foundation, of the three-day buddy camp allow us to offer the weekend experience at no cost to the participants.

The campers were treated to a muddy adventure in the salt marsh, a chance to navigate Mobile Bay, and a private evening in the Alabama Aquarium. The camp provided them with an up-close look at fish, shrimp, and other marine animals that call the beach and Mobile Bay their home.

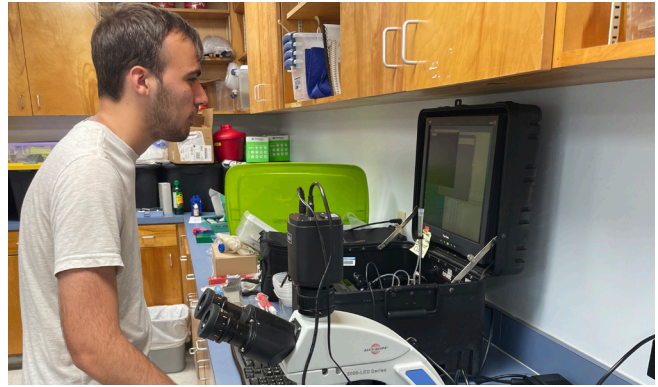
## Zooming Into the Marine World



The view is much clearer for students taking courses at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. Since 2019, funding from donors has enabled the replacement of dozens of microscopes used in graduate and undergraduate classes.

It's been a goal of Undergraduate Coordinator Dr. Jessica Lunt to enhance the view for students in classes such as Marine Botany, Invertebrate Zoology, and Plankton Biology. Her goal has been to have ten compound microscopes and ten stereo microscopes in each class so that students can work in pairs rather than larger groups.

Compound microscopes are used to view small, translucent specimens, such as diatoms, and a stereo



microscope enhances the surface details of three-dimensional objects.

Thanks to donor support, 29 new compound microscopes and 34 stereo microscopes are now available for students to use during class. There is also a new teaching scope of each type with camera attachments and six boom stands for the stereo zoom bodies to allow for larger specimens to be viewed.

The upgrade in microscopes means that students can see the spines on diatoms or the mouthparts of a seastar. The teaching scopes also allow for pictures and measurements to be taken of specimens. The boom stand also allows students to get a closer look at the anatomy of sharks and fish.

## Class Almost in Session



The spaces for a brighter future are almost complete. Construction is wrapping up on the outdoor classroom adjacent to the scientific pool.

This addition provides space to house diving equipment and marine technology tools, thereby enhancing the applicability of ocean technology classes.

The scientific pool and outdoor classroom together will provide a unique learning experience and spark

enthusiasm for science, technology, engineering, and math. Students will be able to build, test, and adjust their designs without losing time between each stage.

The Pool and Classroom Capital Campaign was supported by the following generous supporters: Alabama Power Foundation, the Mobile County Commission, John Adams Steely Foundation, J.L. Bedsole Foundation, the Ben May Charitable Trust, Crampton Trust, The Daniel Foundation, C. D. Helen & Jeff Glaze Foundation, The Hearin-Chandler Foundation, the Dr. Monte L Moorer Foundation, the DISL Foundation Board of Directors and many individuals.

# HONOR ROLL OF DONORS

The Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation values each and every gift from alumni, parents, friends, and other generous supporters. Your charitable contributions make a difference to the students, faculty, and marine environmental research. The DISL Foundation Honor Roll of Donors is one way of recognizing our donors. The Honor Roll is organized into a system that represents a hierarchy of levels of current and cumulative giving.

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Recognizes individuals who demonstrate a long-term commitment with a legacy gift.

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*Lists included in this report reflect gifts from October 1, 2024, through September 30, 2025. The proper recognition of charitable gift donations to the DISLF is important. Please contact Helene Hassell immediately if your gift was not listed properly or has been omitted.*

DISLF, P.O. Box 8215, Mobile, Alabama 36689 - 251-307-5903 - [admin@sealabfoundation.org](mailto:admin@sealabfoundation.org)

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# Fundraising Support and Connecting with Students

You are the key to the success of our annual fundraising events. The Marine Environmental Awards Luncheon, held in November, and Cocktails with the Critters, held in May, support the programs and facilities at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab. They also give you a chance to learn more about the programs you support through donations.

At MEAL, we presented Chris Blakenship, Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, with the inaugural Sessions-Brown Conservation Leadership Award. The Dauphin Island Sea Lab created this award in 2023 to recognize Alabama Senator David Sessions' and Representative Chip Brown's advocacy for conserving the land and waters in the Mobile-Tensaw Delta and Alabama watershed.

Dr. Mimi Fearn and Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries were also recognized for their outstanding contributions to marine environmental sustainability.

Table sponsors provided the opportunity for more than a dozen students to be present as keynote speaker Dr. Larry Madin shared his experience as one of the first



biologists to use SCUBA diving and submersibles to study oceanic animals in situ. The students attend the Alabama School of Math and Science and Fairhope High School. Dr. Madin is the Deputy Director Emeritus of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute.

Each year, the Cocktails with the Critters fundraiser provides a relaxed atmosphere to share the success and potential of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab with supporters at the Blue Gill Restaurant on the Causeway. An online auction precedes the event. In total the evening and the auction raised \$92,000 for programs, scholarships and facility upgrades.

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Hillcrest Optical  
History Museum of Mobile  
The Holiday  
The Hope Farm  
Stacy Howell  
John B. Howell IV  
Hummingbird Way  
IP Casino Resort Spa  
It's Inviting  
Ivy Cottage

Susie James  
J-Ray Shoes  
JubileeScape  
Ben King  
Knot Just Beads  
Mark Langan  
Lyons Share  
M.A. Simons  
Dr. Madelyn King  
Maids A la Mode  
Marshall Marine Supply  
MB Greene  
McAleer's Office Furniture  
McCoy Outdoor Co.  
Middle Bay Boat Company  
Mobile Bay National Estuary  
Program  
Mobile Carnival Musuem  
Mobile Symphony  
National Maritime Museum  
of the Gulf of Mexico  
The Noble South  
Noja  
Jay O'Brien  
Osprey Initiative, LLC  
OWA Amusement Park

Charles Phillips  
PMT Publishing  
POST  
Pour Baby  
Recovery Room  
L. Craig Roberts  
Round But Square Studios  
The Silver Pearl  
Skinner's Seafood  
Softwasherz  
Soiree Signatures  
Sophiella Gallery  
Southern Aerial Soft Wash  
Spring Hill Ace Hardware  
Taco Mama  
Tankless Water Heater  
Service Pros  
Alan Tolson  
University of South Alabama  
Via Emilia  
Valerie Vick  
The Visitation Shop  
What A Stitch  
Zimlich's Patio & Garden  
Center  
Zundel's Jewelry

# How to Give

You choose your best way to support the Dauphin Island Sea Lab with a one-time gift or by leaving a legacy gift in your will or estate through the Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation. Here's how you can continue the impact of giving.

Online Gifts	Planned Gifts	Recurring gifts
Donating online is a simple, secure way to invest in the DISL's future. Our online giving form gives you the ability to make a gift from anywhere at <a href="http://sealabfoundation.org">sealabfoundation.org</a> .	Become a part of the future with a planned gift to serve as a reminder of your appreciation and love for the DISL. These gifts can offer financial benefits through income and estate tax savings and arrangements that provide lifetime income.	Recurring gifts are an easy way to make a big impact that works for your budget and schedule. Set your gift up one time for a monthly, quarterly, or annual pledge to have your gift automatically deducted from your credit card.

A special thank you to



Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation  
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