

2023-2024

Impact of Giving

Honor Roll of Donors



Thank You!

It is with pleasure that the Dauphin Island Sea Lab and Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation (DISLF) present 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, 2023, and September 30, 2024. 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 exceeded 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
- Much needed microscopes for both University and Discovery Hall Programs
- Sea Stars Camp
- Funding for a new Van to transport students into the field
- New Computers for the University Programs
- Four new sunshades on Campus
- Expansion of the Coastal Alabama Acoustic Monitoring Program (CAAMP) Network
- Funds to modernize two impactful spaces in the Aquarium for more experiential hands-on learning

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

Thank you!!!



Helene Hassell
Director of Development
Executive Director
Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation



Ben King
Chair, Board of Trustees
Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation

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

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 and strengthens the Dauphin Island Sea Lab now and into the future.

To Our Supporters,

As we enter the holiday season, I want to say THANK YOU to all of you who supported our mission of education, research and community service. Because of your support, and that received from our local officials, we continue to diversify our programs while improving our lab infrastructure across our aging, repurposed, U.S. Air Force early warning base. Enrollment continues to grow as does attendance in Alabama's Official Aquarium- all because of the help you provided. We are truly living up to our founders' intentions for us to deliver high-quality academic programs for students, and other interested parties, who come to Dauphin Island from across our state.

This past year we made great progress in improving conditions within our dormitories, increased the number of outdoor spaces for students, and moved forward on construction of an open air pool house. We also acquired the deed to the former USCG recreational property, directly adjacent to our campus, that will allow us to grow in the future. All of this happened, because of the support we received from you!



Dr. John F. Valentine

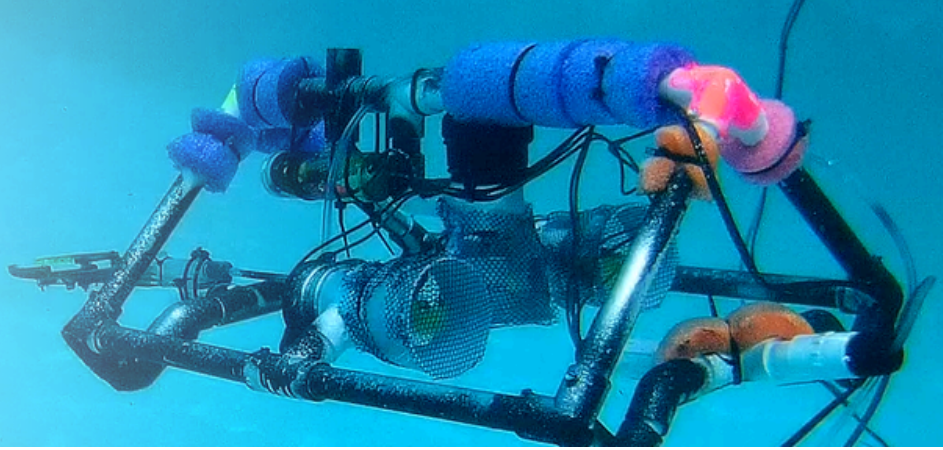
Executive Director, Dauphin Island Sea Lab

Sea Stars Camp Alumni



The Sea Stars Camp, hosted by the Dauphin Island Sea Lab's Discovery Hall Programs, celebrated its first reunion with over a dozen campers. The three-day buddy camp is held every two years. This weekend experience is designed for students ages 9 to 18 with developmental disabilities. Paired with their guardian, campers explored the incredible marine world in a hands-on and fun atmosphere. The 2025 Camp will be held September 26-28, and is made possible with donations from the Rotary Children's Foundation and individual donors.

Let's Fly!



This year marked a significant change for the Northern Gulf Coast Regional MATE ROV Competition, as the teams competed in the Sea Lab's new outdoor scientific pool on campus. The pool, completed in Fall 2023, was made possible by the 2020 Building Spaces for a Brighter Future Capital Campaign.

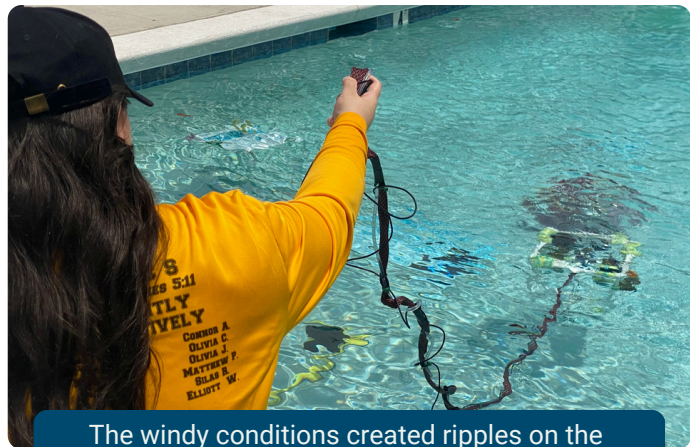
Sixteen teams from four states competed with their custom-built remotely operated vehicles (ROVs) in the 11th annual event. The competition is a part of the Marine Advanced Technology Education (MATE) network of 40 regional competitions held across the U.S. and worldwide. Sponsors for the competition included the Munson Foundation and Thompson Foundation.

The unique outdoor conditions challenged all the teams, testing their skills and adaptability.

"Our teams faced some natural weather conditions this year as it was quite windy. This impacted surface visibility and made it much harder to see all of the ROVs movement in the water. The other challenge faced by many teams was learning to waterproof a camera. Overall, it was great to see teams working together to complete tasks despite the challenging weather conditions and learning from their successes and 'failures'," Rachel McDonald, DISL ROV Competition Coordinator said.



A Gadsden Middle School student manages the team's ROV during the pool mission.



The windy conditions created ripples on the pool surface, making visibility difficult.

Each year, MATE creates a scenario to inspire and challenge the students to apply science, technology, engineering, and math to solve real-world problems. For the 2024 competition, teams competed in four mission tasks with their ROV focusing on ocean monitoring.

The GEARS from Eastwood Presbyterian Church School in Montgomery, Alabama, earned the opportunity to represent the Northern Gulf Coast Region in the MATE World Championship this year. Pensacola Catholic School's Crubotics team also had a ticket punched to the World Championship.

"I believe opportunities like this really expand student horizons as they connect with a global community of entrepreneurs like themselves and see where the skills they learn and the connections they make in this competition can take them.," McDonald said.

The 2025 Northern Gulf Coast Regional will take place April 25 through 27 at DISL.

Tracking Fish

Tracking fish species can be a challenge. However, researchers have learned a few ways to follow fish without having them on a leash.

Fish tagging is one powerful tool researchers use to learn about behavior and boundaries, populations, and migration patterns. For almost 17 years, the Fisheries Ecology Lab at the Dauphin Island Sea Lab has monitored fish movements with the Coastal Alabama Acoustic Monitoring Program (CAAMP). The long-standing monitoring program has tracked the movement of Red Drum, Spotted Seatrout, Tripletail, and Southern Flounder.

This year, the CAAMP received support from the Dauphin Island Sea Lab Foundation and the Alabama Power Foundation to tag Red Drum and Tripletail as well as add eight new receivers to the monitoring infrastructure.

“We are in the process of expanding the system now and it is currently supporting tagging studies on red drum and triple tail. It also allows us to collaborate with investigators throughout the Gulf operating such acoustic hydrophones,” Senior Marine Scientist and University of South Alabama Stokes School of Marine Sciences Director Dr. Sean Powers said.



Ph.D. student Dylan Kiene releases a tagged Southern Flounder.



Research coordinator Crystal Hightower holds on to a hydrophone that she will deploy in Fowl River.

The CAAMP uses acoustic monitoring receivers throughout Mobile Bay and its tidal rivers. These acoustic monitors are known as hydrophones and act as underwater listening devices. When a fish with an acoustic tag comes within range of the hydrophone, a frequency is emitted, logging the tag's information. Fish can be tracked for months or even years, depending on the size of the tag.

The data is then used to map habitat use and seasonal movement patterns. Fish tagged in Alabama waters have been tracked to Louisiana, Mississippi, and Florida, and fish tagged in other parts of the Gulf have been tracked in Alabama coastal waters.

Each tag is unique to the fish and often carries an external dorsal tag with a website, tags.usouthal.edu, to report if the fish is caught. Anglers who catch a tagged fish are asked to follow the instructions on the tag, which helps compile data. The data gathered can inform migration pathways, define appropriate management areas, estimate fishing mortality and catch-and-release mortality, and identify habitats that need restoration.

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, 2023, through September 30, 2024. 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, PO Box 82151, Mobile, Alabama 36689 - 251-307-5903 - admin@sealabfoundation.org



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Summer Learning



Alexis Cleveland (Alabama State University) and Alex Barnes (Jacksonville State University) take a break from their dolphin watch during the Marine Mammals summer course for a photo.

Barnes is one of two Jacksonville State students to receive the George Cline Memorial Scholarship this summer. George Cline was a professor at Jacksonville State University and a strong ambassador for biological sciences in Alabama.

Macie Henson was the second recipient of the memorial scholarship, which helps with summer fees.

Visit sealabfoundation.org to support a scholarship program.

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Your Support Matters

Your support helps keep the Dauphin Island Sea Lab accessible to all ages and gives them an educational experience that will prepare them to be exemplary ocean stewards.

Each donation supports research, education, and the DISL campus. With your help, we continue to expand and enhance the delivery of world-class programs.

Your support has impacted many areas of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab over the last five years when the DISL Foundation was expanded. Fifty-six students have received scholarships to help offset the cost of University Programs summer courses and the residential Marine High School course. The Sea Stars Camp and the ROV Competitions have also been enriched through your help.

Five new vessels have been added to the DISL's fleet through generous donations to the DISL Foundation. Boats serve as a classroom on the water to enhance the student's ability with hands-on marine science experiences

The Baymobile, DISL's traveling classroom has garnered support as well. It treks across the state to share the ocean with students in all 67 counties.

In the technology arena your support has helped add 50 new microscope and replace all of the computers in the University and Discovery Hall Programs.

Lastly, through the Building Spaces for a Brighter future Capital Campaign a new scientific pool was built and adjacent to it an outdoor classroom is under construction where the students will participate in ocean technology classes.

Each gift impacts Marine Science education, research and the DISL campus. Thank you for your generous support.

Scan the QR code to make your gift today.



Coming in 2025

The Dauphin Island Sea Lab is excited to announce more improvements for the Alabama Aquarium. The latest renovations include a dynamic hands-on play environment called Little Billy Goat Hole. It features an interactive boat, the ocean, and a lab-theme area. This renovation is made possible with funds from the Gulf of Mexico Energy Security Act of 2006 (GoMESA).

The funds allocated to the Alabama Aquarium will enhance the Little Billy Goat Hole experiential learning area. The redesign includes opportunities to remotely operate vehicles (ROVs), role-play as scientists, and explore underwater habitats. These hands-on exhibits will help children learn about the Gulf of Mexico ecosystem and the vital work of the Dauphin Island Sea Lab at an age-appropriate level, fostering empathy for the natural world and a lifelong appreciation for Alabama's coastal environment.

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 Mexico and beyond.



Aquarium Docent Kathryn Twilley holds a horseshoe crab at the touch table exhibit for guests to get a closer look at these amazing fossils.

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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.

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