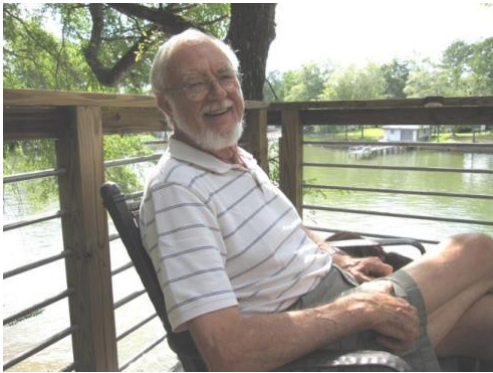


# John Finley Porter, Jr.



Unbeknown to many who knew of him, John Porter served as a captain in the US Army during the Korean War before returning home continue his studies first at the University of Alabama and next at Johns Hopkins University where he earned a Ph.D. in physics. He joined the faculty at the University of Alabama Huntsville, next served as executive director of the first Alabama Commission on Higher Education in Montgomery, and last completed his career as director of research at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa.

When he retired as Professor Emeritus in 1993, he began the next chapter of his very full life as an ardent conservationist and skilled birder.

When Dr. Porter and his first wife Jackie Porter (deceased 2001) retired to Dauphin Island, Alabama, they worked diligently to promote conservation of the island's habitat and traveled extensively throughout Mobile and Baldwin Counties to locate important coastal birding spots. In 1998, their work in collaboration with other pre-eminent Alabama birders, resulted in the widely used U.S. Fish and Wildlife pocket brochure, *The Alabama Coastal Birding Trail*. When the Alabama Ornithological Society embarked on a collaborative effort to publish [A Birder's Guide to Alabama](#) through The University Press, they asked Dr. Porter to edit the edition. The book was published in 2001 after meticulous work and research by Dr. Porter, Jackie, and other collaborators. Afterwards, John and Jackie worked together tirelessly to raise funds for land purchases to preserve and improve acres of island habitat as a rest and recuperation site for migratory birds as leaders the organization then known as Friends of the Dauphin Island Audubon Sanctuary (FODIAS).



As an avid birder, Dr. Porter worked to help establish and promote the Alabama Coastal Birding Trail, served as president of the Alabama Ornithological Society, and president/executive director of the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuaries (DIBS), formally known as FODIAS, for many years. Through this effort, he met another bird enthusiast – Mary Flint Porter – and

they married in 2006. John and Mary continued to work together to increase the acreage of protected habitat on Dauphin Island as well as promote awareness of the island as an important stopover location during Neotropical bird migration. In 2015, a plaque was erected at the Goat Tree Preserve on Dauphin Island honoring John Porter's conservation work – "Migrating songbirds and visitors alike will find refuge here due to John's dedicated and unselfish efforts, and for that we are forever grateful." When John Porter passed away in 2016, he had made a remarkable impact on Alabama birding and a significant impact protecting and preserving avian habitat on Dauphin Island.

