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Cover cut - kindness of Mrs. Blanche E. Dean

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

The proposed agreement with the Auburn University Library has been completed and will become a great help to Ornithology in Alabama. Be sure to read the following article by Dr. Julian Dusi, who has been appointed Library Committee Chairman, to fully understand its needs and benefits.

Official duties will keep me quite busy over at Sumpter Farms, Geiger, Alabama, most of the Winter. I'll be working on the deer trapping and transporting program. We have trapped about 30 deer so far and expect to handle about 300-400 this Winter. The Department of Conservation is undertaking this program to plant deer in all parts of our great state so that more areas can enjoy seeing the interesting wildlife.

Of course, I will be watching birdlife on every opportunity and hope to have some interesting data for the next issue of ALABAMA BIRDLIFE. May we urge you to send in your observations also.

Dues for 1963 are due January 1. However, our new members who joined after October 15 will be considered paid through 1963.

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year

BOB SKINNER

An A.O.S. membership makes a nice Christmas gift!

BIRDS HAVE TO EAT TOO!

THE ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY LIBRARY
AT AUBURN UNIVERSITY

by Julian L. Dusi

The Alabama Ornithological Society Library at Auburn University has been established as a service to the membership and Society and to further the study of ornithology in Alabama.

Through the agreement, any member of the Society will be able to use books or journals from this library by applying to his local library for their use through interlibrary loan service. The Library will grow through gifts of books and journals from the membership and from exchanges of Alabama Birdlife for other journals. The Library of Auburn University will house the stock of back issues of Alabama Birdlife, giving them the safe permanent storage that has been so long needed.

Under the agreement, a local Library Committee representative is necessary to coordinate its workings. President Robert W. Skinner has appointed the writer to this post. As a first step in this duty, the soliciting of books and journals for the library must be done. Many of us have books and journals pertaining to ornithology which we are using very little. Presenting these to the Library will help it to grow rapidly and be of greater service to us all. Gifts should be sent to me at the Department of Zoology-Entomology, Auburn University, Auburn, Alabama.

Following is the agreement in the form that is in the process of being signed by the principal parties:

PROPOSED AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE ALABAMA
ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY AND THE LIBRARY OF
AUBURN UNIVERSITY IN THE
ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ORNITHOLOGICAL LIBRARY

This Agreement, made this 20th day of November, 1962, between the Alabama Ornithological Society and the Auburn University Library:

Witnesseth, as follows:

Whereas, the above parties are mutually desirous of creating a library, to be known as the Alabama Ornithological Society Library at Auburn University, and;

Whereas, these parties have agreed upon the method of creating, maintaining and continuing such library;

Now Therefore, in consideration of the premises and of the mutual understanding of the parties hereto, it is expressly understood and agreed:

1. At the present time this library shall be known and referred to as the Alabama Ornithological Society Library at Auburn University. It shall be understood that the Alabama Ornithological Society may at any subsequent time alter and change the name, the present designation being considered temporary.

2. In order to provide proper administration it is agreed that the ownership of the Library shall be vested in Auburn University.

3. It is agreed that said Library be placed in the ornithological section of the Library of Auburn University but each item shall be marked separately by a special plate or stamp furnished by the Alabama Ornithological Society.

4. It is agreed that the said Library shall be available to the Staff and Students of Auburn University and to the members of the Alabama Ornithological Society under certain proper rules and restrictions common to libraries and suited to the peculiar requirements of this case. It is further agreed that certain rare, costly, or bulky works may be withheld from circulation at the option of the Library Administration.

5. It is agreed that items will be loaned to non-resident members of the University and the Society, through interlibrary loan service, and when items are loaned to non-resident members of the University and/or the Society the Library will mail and pay the transportation costs one way, the return charges to be borne by the borrower.

6. It is agreed that books and periodicals properly belonging in this Library shall be accessioned and cataloged

promptly upon their receipt, that periodicals will be bound in volumes or groups of volumes at proper intervals, and that annually or at such times expressly agreed, a catalog or list of items in the Ornithological Library shall be prepared by the University Library and published by the Alabama Ornithological Society for the information of its members.

7. It is agreed that the Alabama Ornithological Society will maintain a standing committee on the Library, or will as necessary appoint a special committee on the Library to cooperate with the University Library in solving current problems.

8. It is agreed that the Alabama Ornithological Society will frequently solicit the donation of journals and books to be incorporated in this Library.

9. It is agreed that the University Library will receive and store the Society's stock of back copies of ALABAMA BIRDLIFE, cost of packing and transport to be borne by the Alabama Ornithological Society. The University Library shall mail out copies of this reserve stock upon order of the Treasurer of the Alabama Ornithological Society, in envelopes and postage furnished by the Society.

10. This agreement is subject to the approval of the Director of Libraries of Auburn University and the Executive Board of the Alabama Ornithological Society.

In Witness Whereof, the representatives of the above parties have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first above written.

In the Presence of: Alabama Ornithological Society
By Robert W. Skinner, President
By Rosemary T. Dusi, Secretary
Auburn University,
By Clyde H. Cantrell, Director of
Libraries

Department of Zoology-Entomology
Auburn University
Auburn, Alabama

* * * * *

REGIONAL WINGBEATS

Decatur, Alabama - November 13, 1962: August through November was dry with only irregular showers, and little of the spectacular where birds are concerned. The cattle egrets that nested locally during the spring were not seen after July 26. Again, the Iranian pheasants stocked on the Swan Creek Public Hunting Area were reported to have brought off broods and, on November 7, Jim Keeler released 91 of these exotic birds on the White Springs islands, to give them the advantage of the additional protection offered by Wheeler Refuge. A few days later a similar group was added to those already present on the Swan Creek Area.

Few bird notes fell outside the range of those previously recorded. David Hulse noted least terns through September 8, a few days later than formerly. On September 21, a couple of knots dropped onto the levee of the Decatur boat harbor and were so ridiculously tame that they wandered into the concession building. On September 29, David spotted a lone Hudsonian curlew, pardon us -- a whimbrel -- poking along the shore line of the north river bank opposite Decatur. On November 7, Jim Keeler saw a Swinson hawk near Hartselle. There were no reports of Trichomoniasis among doves, and both dove and quail numbers seem up a bit.

Canada geese first circled Wheeler Refuge and slanted in for a landing on September 16, about on schedule. However, all waterfowl numbers reflect the continental shortage. Top counts to date stand at 23,000 Canada geese, 600 blue geese, 60 snow geese and 20,000 ducks of all species. Comparing these figures with Wheeler Refuge counts last fall indicates a drop of approximately one-third in both Canada goose and duck numbers, a 15 percent drop in blue geese and no change among the saintly-looking snow geese. However, migration is still underway, and the woes and snows of winter may yet send some record waterfowl numbers to the South in general and to Wheeler Refuge in particular.

For 24 years, Wheeler Refuge has bragged that it is the only National Refuge located in Alabama. Wheeler now has a younger sister, the Choctaw National Wildlife Refuge, located along the Tombigbee River, near Jackson. This new refuge - a four thousand acre area - may some day rival Wheeler in

the variety of its birdlife and may well be the objective of some of our meetings and field trips.

Thomas Z. Atkeson

Auburn - Most noteworthy is the occurrence of a Red-breasted Nuthatch at Auburn on October 21st. Also on the same day, I observed the first white-throated sparrows of the season. A cold front had moved into this area producing damp, chilly, misty weather and quite probably these birds had moved in with the front.

Dr. Good reports that the Red-breasted Nuthatch record is the first for the Auburn vicinity since April 1, 1926, at which time he observed both the white-breasted and red-breasted at Auburn.

It is interesting to note that the cold front on October 20 and 21 which moved into this area bringing with it a marked influx of birds occurred the weekend the A.O.S. meeting was held at Dauphin Island. Possibly a record comparison of species might indicate this front.

Other observations are:

1. first Myrtle Warbler - October 20 - 40 degrees F.
2. first Ruby-crowned Kinglet - October 16 - 85 degrees F.
3. Black-throated Green Warbler - October 14
4. March Hawk - first seen September 16
5. Chestnut-sided Warblers common - September 17
6. Tennessee Warblers common - September 19 - October 1. Popular trends indicated with cold fronts.
7. first Rose-breasted Grosbeak - September 25 (last seen October 9)
8. Swanson's Thrush frequent between September 21 - September 30.

All above observations noted within city limits of Auburn.

Charles W. Summerour
937 Old Mill Road
Auburn, Alabama

Grove Hill - The last of a large migration of Ruby-throated humming birds passed through Grove Hill November 4th.

Turk's Caps furnished late nectar to refuel them for their long southern trek.

Geo. Carlton

Mobile - Cold weather to the north increased migration during early November. Large flights of ducks and few Blue Geese rode in on a strong north wind.

Ten Avocets were back on Cochrane Causeway November 4th.

Lib & Henry Toenes

Doves are numerous along new Belt-line recently seeded in clover and grass.

A Western Tanager was seen on Spring Hill College campus by Fr. Dorn. Bob White are much more numerous.

Kathleen & Harry Johnstone

Talladega - Wood Thrushes seem to have been more abundant here this year, nesting in residential areas very close to business district as well as in woods.

Blue Grosbeak nested in a walnut tree in our yard in 1959. On June 20 this year, I found a Blue Grosbeak nesting in a box-elder just across the driveway from the walnut tree. I had put up a hammock between the box-elder and a gum tree which the children used quite often. On July 6 the Grosbeak was still on the nest, about seven feet from the hammock, but the nest was soon deserted due probably to the noise. Some weeks later when the leaves began to fall, I discovered a nest about six feet higher in the same box-elder. It was made of the same material as the Grosbeak's nest and the same size. So I think it is safe to assume the Grosbeaks gave up the first nest and built higher to obtain more privacy.

On July 10, a Veery flew into our bedroom window and was killed. Our hawk migration was disappointing this year although white-eyed Vireos and Bluebirds were plentiful.

Common crows are here in flocks of 75 to 125.

Cecil Hornady
The Talladega Daily Home

Dauphin Island - About 200 doves are feeding in Sanctuary food patches, including many White-winged doves.

Nine Blue Geese seen in lake and on new golf course.

Cattle egrets becoming common.

Hundreds of fat Robins feasting on ripe gum berries. Also Gray-cheeked thrush and veeries.

Eight Western Kingbirds passed through November 1.

Alice Patterson
Mary Gaillard
Fr. Dorn

More than 75 Bluebirds counted 11/18/62.

Joe Friedhoff
Max McGill
Wilson Gaillard

Pensacola, Fla. - "Dear Dr. Gaillard: Many thanks for your cordial invitation for our local group to join you on your land-sea-air Xmas Bird Count on Dauphin Island on the last Saturday in December. As it happens, that is the only day that we can get our whole group together for our Xmas Count here, and we cannot abandon our plans nor change them. Otherwise, I am sure that our whole group would gladly accept your invitation.

As for fall migration observations, I cannot understand how you would be interested in observations on this side of our State lines. I am the only one of our group that has made a trip into Alabama. I was on the Mobile Causeway last Saturday, November 3, and the only item of interest that I saw there was a single White Ibis - very late for that species. However, I see in Imhof's book that you have the White Ibis even later than that, so my observation would hardly interest you.

West-bound hawk migration was very poor this fall. Instead of flights of hundreds of birds that we usually see, there were only two very small flights -- 19 birds on September 25 and 10 birds on October 5 -- all of them Red-shouldered Hawks. They were seen here before noon on both days and undoubtedly crossed southern Alabama on the same days. There has been a notable flight of Western Kingbirds -- 10 birds yesterday, November 5, and 12 birds today, November 6. They certainly came to us after having crossed southern Alabama, and therefore may be of interest to you.

Francis M. Weston
2006 E. Jordon St.
Pensacola, Fla.

Editor's Note: To better trace flights of migrants which come down Alabama's great river system, cooperation was requested of our fine birders in Pensacola and the Mississippi coast. Large flights of geese and ducks reach our Gulf coast and finding little food and safety move either eastward to St. Marks Refuge or westward to Louisiana. Our neighbors can assist by checking these coastal movements.

likewise, these observers can alert us of western migrants, as was the case of a flight of Western Kingbirds. On October 30, Western Kingbirds were seen near Pascagoula. On November 1 eight W. Kingbirds were checked in one area on Dauphin Is. and on November 5th, ten Western Kings - presumably the same group - were reported in Pensacola, Fla. Thank you good neighbors!)

* * * * *

1963 A.O.S. dues are due January 1st. Dues paid by new members joining at, or since, our October Fall meeting will be considered as 1963 dues.

* * * * *

Did you secure a new A.O.S. member last year?

* * * * *

OBSERVATIONS OF A BLACKBIRD ROOST

Of special interest was a blackbird roost, in an area of bamboo study plots, with an estimated 800,000 individuals. The composition of the group using this roosting area was made by carefully observing the smaller groups of birds as they came into the roosting area, determining the composition of these groups and then arriving at a total by counting the number of groups that came in to roost. It was a carefully made estimation, not just a guess.

On January 25 through 29, two Fish and Wildlife Service biologists, Robert T. Mitchell and Don Frankhauser, who are part of the group of biologists currently studying the blackbird depredation problem, set up their trap-net in the roost area and trapped and banded a portion of the roosting population. Over the several day period, more than nine thousand birds were captured and of these 4,108 were banded. Of those caught: 6,505 were Starlings, 152 Redwinged Blackbirds, 1,650 Brown-headed Cowbirds, 733 Grackles and 408 Rusty Blackbirds. Starlings and cowbirds are apparently most greatly attracted by the lights in the night-operated trap-net and the capture figures bear this out. Thus even though a pretrapping estimate indicated a large number of Redwinged Blackbirds present, only 152 were captured.

From the numbers captured, banded, and recaptured, an index to the total population was computed. This indicated that the population contained 252,119 Starlings, 3,672 Redwinged Blackbirds, 613,608 B.-h. Cowbirds, 104,600 Common Grackles and 20,210 Rusty Blackbirds: a total of 974,209 individuals.

The difference between the estimates and those from the trapping and banding figures shows considerable variation for the Starling, Cowbird, and Redwinged Blackbird populations. These may be explained by several factors. The difference in time, while not great, is enough for a small flock composition variation. The placement of the trap-net might have been such that it was centered nearer the areas occupied by Starlings and Cowbirds and was away from the other bird concentrations. This would have increased the probability of catching many Starlings and Cowbirds as was done and make more difficult the capture of Redwinged Blackbirds. Finally, the light attraction factor is an important

consideration. It alone could account for the apparent increases in the Starling and Cowbird populations and the decrease in the Redwinged Blackbird populations.

It is hoped that repeated experimentation in 1962-63 will shed additional light on the problem.

Julian L. Dusi
560 Sherwood Drive
Auburn, Alabama

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We extend our sincere thanks to our out-of-state friends who attended the Fall A.O.S. meeting on Dauphin Island. We were honored in having excellent birders from Louisiana, Mississippi, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and Florida. Let's return their visit whenever possible.

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We all see unusual birds or bird behavior worth passing on. Send it to BIRDLIFE editor.

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Interesting facts about our members should be sent to NEWSLETTER editor, Mr. James Robinson, Rt. 1, Box 91, Brownsboro, Alabama.

THE BANDERS CORNER

1961 Banding Report

During the year 1961, I banded 1109 birds of 70 species. Of these, 518 were banded at Cornell University; the remainder at my home in Birmingham, Alabama. By far the great majority of birds were captured with mist nets, but traps were also used at various times. At the time of their capture, all birds were banded, measured, weighed, and checked for the deposition of fat. In addition the presence or absence of molt, parasites, etc., was also noted.

Those species captured in greatest numbers were: Wood- Thrush, 109; Common Grackle, 108; Slate-colored Junco, 100; and Song Sparrow, 122.

The only unusual capture was that of a Broad-winged Hawk, which apparently tried to take a captured Hooded Warbler from the net. For the third successive year, all four species of Empidonax were banded in Birmingham during the first half of September.

Of those birds which I had previously banded, 524 were recaptured during the year. Of these, 121 were classified as returns (90 days since their previous capture). These are listed below by species and by the number of years since their initial banding.

Red-bellied Woodpecker 1 (1 yr.); Downy Woodpecker 1 (1 yr.), 1 (3 yr.); Blue Jay 2 (1 yr.), 1 (2 yr.); Black-capped Chickadee 1 (1 yr.); Carolina Chickadee 5 (1 yr.); 1 (2 yr.), 1 (3 yr.); Tufted Titmouse 13 (1 yr.), 2 (2 yr.), 2 (3 yr.), 2 (4 yr.); White-breasted Nuthatch 4 (1 yr.), 1 (2 yr.); Brown-headed Nuthatch 1 (2 yr.), 1 (7 yr.); Carolina Wren 1 (2 yr.), 1 (5 yr.); Mockingbird 1 (1 yr.); Wood Thrush 2 (1 yr.), 1 (2 yr.); White-eyed Vireo 2 (2 yr.); Kentucky Warbler 1 (1 yr.), 1 (2 yr.); Yellow-breasted Chat 1 (1 yr.), 2 (3 yr.); Hooded Warbler 1 (1 yr.), 1 (2 yr.); Common Grackle 4 (1 yr.), 9 (2 yr.); Cowbird 5 (1 yr.), 2 (2 yr.); Summer Tanager 1 (1 yr.); Cardinal 15 (1 yr.), 3 (2 yr.), 3 (3 yr.); Purple Finch 4 (2 yr.), 1 (4 yr.); Rufous-sided Towhee 2 (1 yr.), 1 (2 yr.); Chipping Sparrow 1 (1 yr.); Field Sparrow 7 (1 yr.), 2 (2 yr.); White-throated Sparrow 3 (1 yr.), 2 (3 yr.); Song Sparrow 1 (2 yr.).

Eleven recoveries (banded birds recaptured at a distance of five miles or more, or found dead) were recorded during the year. They are:

562-13048 Starling. This bird was banded on December 6, 1958, at Ithaca, N.Y., and found dead there October 25, 1961.

562-13091 Grackle. This bird was banded on May 15, 1959, at Ithaca, N.Y., and found dead there April 26, 1961.

623-32866 Grackle. This bird was banded on April 24, 1959, at Ithaca, N.Y., and shot there on July 4, 1961.

643-14819 Grackle. This bird was banded on April 9, 1960, at Ithaca, N.Y., and shot there on May 14, 1961.

643-14824 Grackle. This bird was banded on April 13, 1960, at Ithaca, N.Y., and found dead there April 26, 1961.

58-172581 Cowbird. This bird was banded on April 22, 1960, at Ithaca, N.Y., and found dead in Sumter, South Carolina, on December 27, 1960.

58-172578 Cowbird. This bird was banded on April 20, 1960, at Ithaca, Y.Y., and shot there on July 8, 1961.

59-172021 Cowbird. This bird was banded on April 21, 1961, at Ithaca, N.Y., and shot there on July 8, 1961.

59-172020 Cowbird. This bird was banded on April 21, 1961, at Ithaca, N.Y., and was found dead there on July 5, 1961.

59-172030 Cowbird. This bird was banded on May 3, 1961, at Ithaca, N.Y., and was found dead there on June 24, 1961.

29-111061 White-throated Sparrow. This bird was banded on December 31, 1960, in Birmingham, Alabama, and was found dead there in January, 1961.

J. Bolling Sullivan, III
3416 Sherwood Road
Birmingham 13, Ala. 11/13/62

* * * * *

RESUME OF THE FALL MEETING OF A.O.S. 1962

By Rosemary Dusi

The Fall Meeting was held at Dauphin Island, Alabama, October 19, 20 and 21, 1962.

The main theme of the meeting, aside from ornithology,

was the celebration of the tenth anniversary of the Society. A group of more than 75 persons attended the meeting and the banquet. It was the largest A.O.S. group ever to assemble on Dauphin Island.

The activities of the meeting started early on the 19th, with field reconnaissance of the Island. Mist Nets were set up in several places and banding activities began. A group assembled at James and Margaret Robinson's apartment in the evening for a program of slides contributed by the members.

On the 20th, activity began with registration, including members from Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky and Florida, followed by field trips to the several habitats of the Island. Lunch was followed by more field trips and birdbanding. The evening banquet was held at the Holiday Inn Restaurant. The Mobile Chapter presented the group with a birthday cake, decorated with birds and ten candles. A.O.S. insignia patches were presented to the Past Presidents, Honorary and Charter Members. Seven of the eight Presidents of the society were present. Dr. Henry Stevenson from Tallahassee, Fla. was the banquet speaker.

Sunday, the 21st, began with field trips and then a compilation of the list of 141 species of birds seen, concluded the formal part of the meeting. Rain clouds were forming and we left the Island, wishing that we could stay to see what the north wind would bring to the Island.

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BIRDS SEEN ON DAUPHIN ISLAND
DURING AOS MEETING
October 19 to 22, 1962

It is the writer's regret that he could not be present for the whole compilation. However, a final list of species observed well and substantiated south of the Dauphin Island toll gate comes to 139 species. Rather than give the entire listing, it was decided to show the number of species listed from the more prominent families with the comment "good", "average", or "poor" to show the writer's opinion of their representation for the time of year for Dauphin Island. Following that is a list of the most interesting records.

Hérons, 7 (average); Hawks, 5 (average); Shorebirds, 15 (average); Woodpeckers, 5 (good); Swallows, 3 (poor); Brown Thrushes, all 5 (good); Warblers, 24 (good); Tanagers, 2 (average); Waterfowl, 4 (poor); Rails, 3 (poor); Gulls and Terns (average); Flycatchers, 4 (poor); Wrens, 4 (average); Vireos, 4 (average); Blackbirds, 5 (average); Finches, 13 (good).

These comments indicate the quantity and quality of migration taking place in the vicinity of Dauphin Island during the period, and also the main effort of the people in the field.

The most interesting records in the writer's opinion were as follows: Am. Bittern, 20th (Austin); Blue Goose, 22nd (Imhof); Fulvous Tree-duck, 19th (Holliman); Peregrine Falcon, 21st (many); White-winged Dove, 20-21 (many); Ground Dove, 21-22 (Imhof); Black-billed Cuckoo, 21 (many); Chuck-will's-widow, 20 (many); Whip-poor-will, 20-21-22 (Imhof); Western Kingbird, at least 5 birds, 2021 (many); Scissor-tailed Flycatcher, 20 (many); Brown Creeper, 22, banded (Imhof); Golden-crowned Kinglet, 22, banded (Imhof); Philadelphia Vireo, 20 (many); Blue-winged Warbler, 22 (Cook); Nashville Warbler, 19-20-21-22, banded (many); Yellow Warbler, 20-21 (many); Prairie Warbler, 21, collected (Stevenson); Bobolink, 20, collected (Austin); Painted Bunting, 20 (Haberyan); Dickcissel, 20 (Dorn).

On the 19th through the 22nd, Imhof banded 5, 19, 14 and 42 birds for a total of 80 birds of 26 species including 13 species of warblers.

Thomas A. Imhof
1036 Pike Road
Birmingham 8, Ala.

* * * * *

Have you planted any fruit or seed-bearing trees in your yard?

THE EDITOR'S CORNER

DUCKS UNLIMITED

Back in 1936-37 the duck population on this continent dropped so alarmingly, it seemed they would soon become extinct. With few exceptions, the shortage was blamed on the duck hunters. Appeals to close duck hunting were widespread. It was thought to be the only remedy. But in those pessimistic days, the voice of an eminent Canadian biologist, Professor William Rowan, offered a strange contrast. In 1937 he said:

"In the last 10 years or so in the western provinces and state, countless thousands of good marshes, sloughs and feeding grounds have disappeared. They have dried up. This alone would account for a tremendous duck shortage even if there were no shooting at all.....During the nineties (he referred to the 1890's), when gunners were comparatively scarce even in the eastern United States and hardly any duck hunters in the west, there were periodical duck shortages. Each of these shortages were preceded by long droughts..."

Professor Rowan's words started a new line of thinking among a few avid duck hunters. If the vast duck breeding areas in our northwest and the Canadian Prairie Provinces could be protected from destructive human methods, perhaps our duck could make a comeback. Accordingly, on January 29, 1937 Ducks Unlimited, Inc., a non-profit membership corporation, was formed.

A nation-wide membership drive was undertaken, aimed largely among duck hunters. Results were astounding. Today Ducks Unlimited has had more than a quarter of a century of experience with breeding ground restoration and, in that time, it has protected more than 1,500,000 acres of water and breeding habitat and over 5,000 miles of shoreline which might have been lost and which certainly would have been impaired without this work.

At first, much of this protected land was leased, and as expected, later lost to pressing human requirements. Where possible, it is now being bought so that it will be permanently retained as duck habitats. However, experience has

shown that having land available is not the entire answer for more ducks -- it must have an assured water and food supply. Cycles of severe drought, such as we have had during the last three years, nullifies years of duck population gains. Therefore, Ducks Unlimited has embarked on another ambitious and sensible project. It is the building of dykes to impound melting snow and seasonal rains for future use instead of seeing it run off as swollen rivers, taking with it millions of tons of rich top soil and leaving dry flats instead of food-producing ponds.

This water impounding program for land owned or protected by Ducks Unlimited will certainly assure a future duck population, but it will cost millions of dollars. Organizations such as our Alabama Ornithological Society should join with the much abused hunters by making annual tax deductible contributions. If we want to watch birds, we must help produce birds! Let's do our bit. Give whatever amount you wish, but give!

* * * * *

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNTS

Auburn, Ala. - Sunday, December 30, 1962

Everyone is invited to help.
Contact Dr. Julian Dusi if
you plan to assist.

Dauphin Island- Saturday, December 29, 1962

Plans - Organization meeting Friday, 8:00 P.M.
at Holiday House. Parties will travel by land,
sea and air, according to preference.

Compiler - Father J. L. Dorn, S.J., Spring Hill
College. Contact Wilson Gaillard if you can
assist.

(Fr. Dorn has been confined in the Providence
Hospital, but expects to be out before Christ-
mas.)

NATURE AT WORK

Recently, we had a phone call from a local citizen asking what he should do with a large sick bird he had found. I drove by his home and was presented with a Red-tailed Hawk, which I released in the Dauphin Island Bird Sanctuary. Having fasted several days, he lost little time in taking off in search of food, which happened to be a flock of robins.

In a swift dive, he knocked one bird to the ground but before he could retrieve his kill, he was driven away by a well-meaning deputy sheriff. However, hunger forced the hawk back for another kill. This time he carried the luckless robin to a nearby tree and satisfied his digestive needs while the more alert robins gathered nearby to continue feeding.

The question might be raised as to the propriety of releasing hawks in a bird sanctuary. The answer, we believe, is emphatically YES! Nature has its checks and balances of species abundance and usually operates more wisely than does man. This has been graphically demonstrated in quail hunting preserves. In most cases, it is the sick or weaklings that are caught by predators. Therefore, it was found that when all hawks were destroyed, the quail population dwindled rapidly from disease, as well as from breeding inferior stock.

Again, the laws of Nature take into account an expected mortality rate and produce accordingly; conversely, it will not produce abundantly where there is limited space and food.

If the destruction of this robin by our Red-tailed hawk seems cruel to you, we hope you may understand that such is the plan of the Great Creator, and the less we interfere the better. In this particular instance, man's effort to be helpful cost the death of two instead of just one robin.

We feel there might be a lesson in this small incident and so pass it on to you. This was the working of Nature and has continued since the beginning of time.

ALABAMA ORNITHOLOGICAL SOCIETY
Founded May 17, 1952

O F F I C E R S

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