

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
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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!

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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.