

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.