

(6) *Private Commercial Hunters*

The destruction of deer by private commercial hunters for the purpose of recovering the skins has been undertaken at varying rates of intensity since the commencement of operations by this Department in 1931. During the year under review the high value of skins has been enhanced, resulting in an intensification of the operations conducted by the free-lance hunters in the more easily accessible areas from which it was possible to recover the skins of the animals destroyed.

This commercial hunting has been the means of filling the gap in official party operations occasioned by man-power limitations and has enabled this Department to concentrate on the more inaccessible areas. To assist private hunters this Department has for a considerable number of years purchased .303 in. calibre ammunition in bulk from the Army Department and has retailed it to them at cost. The increased activities of private hunters has led to a very considerable increase in the amount of ammunition used, and 842,000 rounds were disposed of during the year. The Army Department is now prepared to dispose of ammunition in bulk to dealers, and it was decided to terminate sales by the Department as soon as existing stocks of ammunition are exhausted.

The following table shows the numbers of deer-skins from all sources exported during the period 1st April, 1939, to 31st March, 1946 :—

Year ending—						Number of Skins exported.
31st March, 1940..	..	..	..	..	..	28,361
31st March, 1941..	..	..	..	..	..	38,477
31st March, 1942..	..	..	..	..	..	45,382
31st March, 1943..	..	..	..	..	..	53,190
31st March, 1944..	..	..	..	..	..	51,300
31st March, 1945..	..	..	..	..	..	100,935
31st March, 1946..	..	..	..	..	..	95,788

D. ROTORUA ACCLIMATIZATION DISTRICT

(1) *The Fishing Season*

While some good fishing was obtained, especially in the Lake Taupo region, in the early part of the season, the setting-in of hot dry weather had a detrimental effect on both the sport obtainable and the condition of the fish during the latter portion of the season.

The long-continued eruption of Ruapehu Mountain and resulting deposit of volcanic silt in the Tongariro River and its tributaries also had a detrimental effect on fish and fishing.

A very large number of anglers visited the district and there was an increase in the number of licenses issued as compared with the previous season.

In spite of adverse climatic conditions and the consequent poorer fishing generally, a number of fine fish were taken, as shown by the following recorded weights :—

Rotorua Area.—10 lb. (4 fish) ; 11 lb. (1 fish) ; 11½ lb. (1 fish).

Taupo Area.—10 lb. (5 fish) ; 11 lb. (7 fish) ; 11½ lb. (2 fish) ; 12 lb. (4 fish).

(2) *Fisheries Conservation*

(a) *Hatchery Operations.*—Ova were recovered and laid down in the two main hatcheries for “eyeing” or complete incubation as under :—

No. 1 (Ngongotaha) Hatchery (Rotorua Area) : 4,472,000.

No. 2 (Tongariro) Hatchery (Taupo Area) : 6,967,500.