

helping with special displays of physical exercises. The association's activities, which increased steadily during the year, culminated in a very successful championship meeting at Hastings.

RECREATION FOR FIRMS' EMPLOYEES

A successful experiment at Christchurch has set a good example for other cities and towns. The Christchurch Firms' Recreation Association, which the Department's officers helped to organize, completed a successful year. The annual report states: "The C.F.R.A. came into being in response to a demand for a solution to the problem of having firms' employees make profitable use of the increased leisure time brought about by the adoption of the forty-hour week." The association is comprised of forty-nine of the city's largest firms which have a total of about eleven thousand employees. The pastimes include basketball (indoors and out), table tennis, swimming, athletics, and billiards. An extension of activities has been planned to meet the needs of all age groups.

LEARN-TO-SWIM CAMPAIGNS

The Branch co-operated with swimming associations and specialists of the Physical Education Branch of the Education Department in successfully conducting learn-to-swim campaigns in Wairarapa, Canterbury, Otago, Wellington, and Southland.

V. WILDLIFE BRANCH

Some progress has been made in building up a trained staff to enable the Branch to function effectively, but still more requires to be done to enable it to meet its responsibilities. With the setting-up of the Fresh-water Fisheries Advisory Council, on which the Branch is represented, arrangements have been made for close liaison with the Fisheries Branch of the Marine Department, which is carrying out a basic programme of research that will be of great service regarding the important fishing waters administered by the Department.

A. FIELD INVESTIGATION UNIT

(1) *Opossums*

A commencement was made with a field investigation into control methods affecting the opossum. The opportunity has, at the same time, been taken to record data relative to the general habits of these animals in an area of mixed forest in the Orongorongo Valley. The information being recorded will assist in the compilation of a popular bulletin for issue to those persons who have to cope with the serious problem caused by the increase and spread of opossums. In addition, a special survey was made of the Poverty Bay Catchment District, the report on the nature of the problem in this area being made available to the local Catchment Board.

(2) *Waterfowl*

In January, 1947, an officer of the unit commenced, in the Manawatu area, the field studies of a fact-finding investigation in regard to the present position of our native species of duck.

B. ADMINISTRATION OF ANIMALS PROTECTION AND GAME ACT, 1921-22

(1) *Amendment of Act*

During the year legislation was enacted cancelling existing appointments of Honorary Rangers under the Act as at 31st March, 1947, and limiting the currency of new appointments to a period of three years.

(2) *Absolutely Protected Birds*

The preservation of native birds, the great majority of species of which are absolutely protected by law, was actively pursued and several suspected cases of infringement of the law were investigated.