

deer allowed to be killed, in either of Rotoiti-Okareka or Waikaremoana herds. In consequence of the heavy shooting that has taken place over the various herds, the deer are not nearly so numerous as they were a few years ago, and many of the stags sighted were quite young animals whose years have been too few to allow of their developing a heavy growth of antler. The finest heads, as usual, were taken in the heavily timbered country, and even in those remote places there is evidence that the stags are deteriorating as far as contour and spread of antlers is concerned. It is suggested that fresh blood should be again introduced, as no liberation of fresh deer stock has been made for eight years past.

*Mahia Herd.*—Several good heads were shot in this herd by Messrs. Ormond Brothers (four), but nothing was got that approached the twenty-four-pointer obtained by Sergeant Wade, of Wairoa, three seasons ago. The area and numbers of deer now in this herd are getting more limited, and the heavy culling operations is resulting in a better type of animal being evolved. There is very little heavy-forest country about the peninsula, and it is only owing to the heavy scrub shelter, isolated patches of bush, and abundance of food that deer do so well there. Messrs. Ormond and sons are to be congratulated on their efforts to improve the standard of this herd.

*Waikaremoana Red-deer Area.*—Some twenty-nine licenses were issued for this herd. Owing to the heavy shooting of the last five seasons, of both stags and hinds, the deer are not nearly so plentiful, but good sport was reported. Two thirteen-pointers shot by Messrs. McKinnon and Tapper, six twelve-pointers by Messrs. Murphy, Kalenberg, Albright, and Boyes, and one eleven- and two ten-pointers by Messrs. Ormond, Hodgson, and Campbell, of Wairoa, were the best secured. Many of the other stags were only young animals that would have been better left for later-season sport. An endeavour was made to get more stalking-ground taken from the adjoining sanctuary area, but this was not agreed to. It remains for the stalkers to conserve the deer in this herd for themselves, and in the interest of future sport, by asking for some restriction upon the number of stags that can be shot next year, and stop the present wanton destruction of the fine hinds. It is obvious that without a good herd of hinds there cannot be a fair proportion of good young stags bred.

*Whakatane Herd.*—All the license-holders in this herd got their limit of heads, the best one secured being a sixteen-pointer shot by a Whakatane sport. Two twelve-pointers were also shot around Mount Edgecumbe.

*Galatea Herd.*—This herd has not recovered from the intensive shooting and culling operations of several seasons past, and new country requires to be traversed to get the better class of heavy heads. The best head for points was a seventeen, secured by Mr. H. Harding, of Matamata; while two fourteen-pointers, seven twelve-pointers, and fifteen others ranging to ten points were shot by Messrs. Strange, Bell, Brown, Kneebone, McDonald, Hine, Roach, and Wells. The afforestation operations about the Galatea area are resulting in the deer being compelled to seek more undisturbed shelter in the heavy native forests further away. Some of the older stags in this herd are pushing gradually towards and beyond Ruatahuna, and will in a few years join up with the deer on the outskirts of the Waikaremoana herd.

*Rotoiti-Okareka Red-deer Herd.*—This herd has been very heavily shot over, and some thirty licenses were issued. Owing to the facilities of good roads and the use of motor-cars, license-holders were enabled to scour almost every portion of this area, and some very fair heads were obtained from the bush-covered portions about Rotoiti, Tarawera, Okataina, and Rotoehu. Several good heads were seen in the Kaituna River valley and about the Rotoma bush. Mr. J. Keeley, of Whakatane, got the pick with two fine fourteen-pointers. Messrs. Rowland Brown, Borick, Fielding, Emmett, Hirst, Hawkins, Moore, Johnston, and Spencer Brothers all got heads of from ten to thirteen points each.

*Tokaanu Herd.*—The red deer in this herd were open to a limit of six licenses only, each licensee being entitled to two heads. Owing to timber-cutting operations and closer settlement, this herd is beginning to scatter. A stag is reported as having been seen on the summit of Ruapehu (an altitude of 9,175 ft.) during the stalking season. Messrs. Stanley Gillies and Milligan secured very fair twelve- and eleven-pointers, and two fourteen-pointers were shot by another party of sportsmen. This herd still requires to be limited in regard to the number of deer shot and licenses issued; and it is also suggested that an interchange of new blood would be an advantage to the class of heads in a few years. Where this fresh blood is to be obtained to improve the various herds is quite another matter, owing to the abolition of the two principal sources of supply—viz., that of Paraparaumu Deer-park, near Wellington, and the Werribee Deer-park, in Victoria.

*Taupo Herd.*—This herd was again opened to take two of the species of deer liberated there. First-class sport was obtained from both the Japanese deer and the red deer. This herd will be the mainstay of deer-stalking sport in the Rotorua Acclimatization District for years to come, by reason of its splendid isolation over the whole of the Kaimanawa Ranges, where there will be no close settlement for many years, and where the heavy forest areas are almost unlimited and abundance of feed and water to support a large herd of deer is continual. Roads are few, and motor-cars can only be used as bases to work out from, and to flying-camps. The possibility of shooting deer out of a motor car or truck, as has been done in other places, is a very remote one so far as the Kaimanawa Range is concerned. Most of the stalkers found the Japanese bucks very hard to approach, and quite a few had a strenuous time in getting the two Japanese bucks and two red-deer stags allowed under each license. The following gentlemen obtained particularly fine specimens: Mr. J. G. Holmes, of Te Awamutu (two Japanese bucks); Mr. G. S. Casey (one red stag and one Japanese buck); Mr. M. Dunningham (one red stag and one Japanese buck); Mr. H. L. Rose (one red stag and one Japanese buck); Mr. J. Byrt Jordan, Auckland (two red stags and two Japanese bucks); Mr. P. Seabrook (two Japanese bucks); Mr. T. S. Ormiston (two Japanese bucks). The heads secured by Mr. Holmes were equal to the world's record head for the Japanese species (obtained the previous season by Mr. J. B. Jordan, about three miles from where Mr. Holmes bagged his specimens this year).