

ANIMALS PROTECTION AND GAME ACT.

Acclimatization Districts.—The Conference of the New Zealand Acclimatization Societies Association discussed the question of reducing the number of acclimatization districts and the question of more adequate ranging. Discussions are taking place between a number of acclimatization societies as to the possibility of bringing about amalgamations, and the results are being awaited with interest.

Birds.—Black teal was added to the list of absolutely protected birds. There is little doubt that bell-birds are definitely on the increase in many localities.

Importations.—Owing to Psittacosis (parrot fever) having been detected in some Australian parrots, permission is not being granted for the importation of parrots and members of the parrot family from Australia. A number of birds have been added to the list of prohibited birds, owing to the fear that if they should escape they might establish themselves in the Dominion, and the general policy is to allow importation only in the case of birds that are unlikely to survive otherwise than in captivity. Representations are still being made from time to time that fur-bearing animals should be introduced, but they have been definitely not agreed to.

Shooting-seasons.—Open shooting-seasons were declared for native and imported game in various acclimatization districts. Concern is being expressed at the decrease in numbers of grey duck, and the question of declaring periodical close seasons for these birds is to be considered shortly. It is evident that a policy of conservation of the grey duck has to be faced.

ROTORUA ACCLIMATIZATION DISTRICT.

In summarizing the activities of the past year in connection with acclimatization matters in the Rotorua and Taupo districts it is again very gratifying to report that operations were carried out most successfully. The number of overseas anglers who visited the district must have created a record.

Fisheries.—During the exceptionally hot and dry months of December, January, and February, fishing at Lake Taupo was difficult. A cool spell occurred in the latter part of February, and many excellent-conditioned rainbow trout were taken. Condition has been maintained and good fishing obtained.

The fishing in Rotorua was exceptionally good at Waitete, Awahou, and Hamurana during December, January, and February. Many anglers, both overseas and local, considered that it had not been as good for the past twelve years. In fact, many stated that it was the best they had ever experienced.

The rainbow congregated in thousands at the mouths of the streams. One very noticeable feature was their fine condition. Many specimens were examined, and it was found that at least 85 per cent. were in excellent condition. Another marked feature was the number of young fish up to 3½ lb. taken showing all the characteristics of the Tongariro rainbow. This can be taken as an indication that the recent plantings of fry have been successful.

With the exception of Rotorua, fish in all other lakes in the Rotorua district were wary up to the end of March, 1935, but anglers had good sport in Rotoiti during the last eight weeks of the 1933–34 season, the average weight of the fish being 6 lb.

Ova and Fry.—An exchange of 250,000 rainbow eggs for 250,000 brown-trout eggs was for the third year arranged with the North Canterbury Acclimatization Society. The exchange was again successful, and many young brown trout have been seen in the streams where the fry from these eggs were planted.

The operations in connection with the collection of ova were confined to the Waihukahuka Stream, Turangi, and 6,400,000 eggs were taken, an increase of 545,000 over the number taken during the 1934 season.

Fry to the number of 2,747,000 were planted in various lakes and streams in the Rotorua and Bay of Plenty areas, 1,588,000 in various streams flowing into Lake Taupo, and 400,000 in Lake Waikaremoana and rivers in the Wairoa area.

Food-supplies for Trout.—It was found that there was an abundance of trout-food in all lakes and rivers in both districts. Investigations were made at Tarawera and Okareka, and there is now no doubt that the smelt has been established in both these lakes. A small consignment of these fish taken to Taupo were seen there six weeks after liberation. With a view to establishing the smelt in Taupo, other lots will be taken there at suitable times. An effort has been made to establish the toitoi and smelt in the Blue Lake.

Improvements were continued on the Taupo Landing Reserve, and all available boat-shed sites were taken up.

Birds.—Bird life, both native and imported, has been well maintained throughout the district. In referring to the native birds there has been a decided increase in the numbers of korimako (bell-birds), particularly in the vicinity of Rotorua. The little grebe is now to be seen on all lakes excepting Rotorua.

A very large increase has been noticed in the number of poaka (white-headed stilt) on Rotorua, Rotoehu, and Lake Taupo. Tuturiwhatu (banded dotterel) were very plentiful on the Government golf-links during February. Black teal are not so numerous at Hamurana as in other years, but are to be found on all other lakes in slightly increased numbers.

The breeding-season was favourable for grey ducks, and black swans were seen in good numbers at Hamurana. Californian quail have increased. Pheasants are reported to be in fair numbers in various localities, but it cannot be said that there is a general increase.

Scientific Operations.—In Rotorua the annual mortality amongst the toitoi, although not serious, was heavier than the previous season. In all other lakes in the Rotorua district the mortality was of no consequence.