

STOATS AND WEASELS.

A pleasing feature from this Department's point of view was the total removal of protection on stoats, weasels, &c. Undoubtedly these rodents play havoc with bird-life, and it behoves all bird-lovers to do everything possible to assist in dealing with the pests. With the removal of protection there are now no restrictions on the sale of skins.

ROTORUA ACCLIMATIZATION DISTRICT.

Fisheries.—The fishing in the Rotorua and Taupo fishing districts attracted many overseas anglers. A noticeable feature was the number who were making their first visit to New Zealand for the fishing and who have expressed their intention of returning again next season.

For some years the prohibited hours of fishing have been from midnight to 4 a.m. and the season from 1st November to 31st May. In the interests of conservation it was decided that the 1936-37 season should close on 14th May and the prohibited hours of fishing be fixed at from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

For the greater part of the season adverse weather conditions prevailed, and probably this resulted in fewer fish being taken than in previous years. Quite a number of anglers, both overseas and local are of the opinion that this is desirable and in the interests of conservation. A very pleasing feature was the generally fine condition of the fish. In the Rotorua district the condition was of a very high standard both in rivers and lakes. In Lake Rotoiti rainbow trout weighing 15 lb. and 16 lb. were taken. A rainbow of 16½ lb. was caught in Lake Okataina. Lake Tarawera again fished well, specimens up to 12 lb. being taken. The heaviest fish caught at Taupo was a rainbow of 15½ lb.

The Bay of Plenty rivers were subjected to many floods, which naturally interfered with the success of anglers. From Waikaremoana large numbers of young rainbow, averaging about 3 lb. were taken. In view of suggestions that the fish in the Tongariro River comprised a fair proportion of degenerate fish it was decided to make a very full investigation during the time the fish were in the upper reaches and tributaries. The investigations were carried out during the greater part of the winter and they established quite definitely that there were no grounds whatever for the contentions. The fish were found to be in excellent condition, and the large congregations in the tributaries went to prove that there was no shortage of fish. The following are particulars of some large fish taken during the season and coming under the notice of departmental officers:—

ROTORUA FISHING DISTRICT.		TAUPO FISHING DISTRICT.	
Weight.	Locality in which taken.	Weight.	Locality in which taken.
16½ lb.	.. Lake Okataina.	11 lb. ..	.. Grace's Pool (Tongariro River).
12½ lb.	.. "	11 lb. and 10½ lb.	Delta and River (Tongariro).
12¼ lb.	.. "	9½ lb. ..	Delta (Tongariro River).
Four at 12 lb.	.. "	10 lb. (brown) ..	Tongariro River.
11½ lb.	.. "	9¾ lb. ..	"
8½ lb. ..	.. "	9½ lb. ..	"
16 lb. ..	.. Lake Rotoiti.	Two at 9 lb. ..	"
15 lb. ..	.. "	15½ lb. ..	Waitahanui River.
11 lb. ..	.. "	11½ lb. (brown) ..	"
10 lb. ..	.. Lake Tarawera.	11½ lb. ..	Waitahanui River (Main Road Bridge).
9½ lb. ..	.. "	10½ lb. ..	Waitahanui River (outlet).
10 lb., 9¾ lb., 9½ lb., and 9 lb.	.. "	10 lb. ..	Waitahanui River.
9½ lb. ..	.. "	9½ lb. ..	"
11½ lb. ..	.. Lake Waikareiti.	Four at 9 lb. each	"
10¼ lb. ..	.. Waikato River.	14 lb. ..	Hatepe River.
10 lb. ..	.. Waikato River (near Aratiatia Rapids).	11¼ lb. ..	Mission Bay.
9½ lb. ..	.. Waikato River.	11 lb. ..	Whangamata Bay.
9 lb. ..	.. "	9¼ lb. ..	Rangataua and Mine Points.
9 lb. ..	.. Waikato River (below Huka Falls).	9 lb. ..	Lake Taupo.
Five at 9 lb. each	Waikato River (between Huka Falls and Aratiatia Rapids.)		
8 lb. ..	.. Ditto.		
9 lb. 13 oz. ..	.. Waimana River.		
9 lb. (brown) ..	.. Ngongotaha.		

Ova and Fry.—The total number of eggs collected at the hatchery on the Tongariro River was 6,562,000. Of this, 1,945,000 were sold to New Zealand acclimatization societies, 250,000 were exchanged for brown-trout ova, and 55,000 hatched fry sold to the Tauranga Acclimatization Society. The liberations of fry were 2,685,500 in Rotorua and Bay of Plenty waters, 1,400,000 in streams flowing into Lake Taupo, and 410,000 in Lakes Waikaremoana and Waikare-iti and the Wairoa rivers.

Steps are being taken for the erection of a new fish-hatchery at Ngongotaha, near Rotorua.

Food-supplies for Trout.—The fine condition of the fish does not suggest any shortage of fish food. Nevertheless, a good deal of attention has been devoted to further augmenting the fish food in Lake Taupo. Consignments of koura and smelt have been liberated in the lake. The experiment of introducing the smelt into Tikitapu (Blue Lake) was successful, and it was found that the fish had multiplied and could be seen in large shoals. Amongst one lot netted were found specimens larger than any previously seen in the district.