

DEER-DESTRUCTION.

The Board desires to place on record its thanks and appreciation of the services offered by the Department of Internal Affairs in connection with deer-destruction operations. The Department mentioned that in connection with its plan of campaign on country to the north of the park an opportunity would be afforded of dealing with the deer in the park. Formal authority was issued to the officer in charge of operations (Captain Yerex) and the staff under his control to shoot deer within the boundaries of the park subject to special safeguarding conditions, and the result of the operations will be reported later.

FIRES IN THE PARK.

Fires continue to present a serious problem to the Board, and it is difficult to formulate practical measures to prevent damage to the vegetation of the park.

The Warden in his report again refers to several outbreaks during the dry seasons of the year. With such a large area to control, and the extensive road frontages, the formation of fire-breaks and regular patrol of boundaries appear to be the only remedies, and these questions are engaging the attention of the Board.

TRESPASSING STOCK.

A certain amount of trespass by stock occurs from time to time on lands of the park, and impounding of animals has been found impracticable. Representations have been made to the Government to have the provisions of the Tongariro National Park Act, 1922, strengthened to enable the Board to take appropriate legal action against the owners of horses, cattle, or other animals found trespassing in the park, and it is hoped that the necessary amendment will be made to the Act at an early date.

WINTER SPORTS AND EXCURSIONS TO THE PARK.

The following clubs have kindly submitted short accounts of visits of their members to the park during the year under review, and extracts from these accounts are quoted :—

The Ruapehu Ski Club (Inc.).—"The club's year as far as the National Park is concerned has been a very active one. Snow conditions between June and November were particularly good, the virtual absence of high winds being remarkable. As a result the snow above the 5,500 ft. level was in very good condition, although the fine weather played havoc with the lower slopes.

"The skiing season lasted from May to January, the official ski-racing season being opened by the Mitchell Cup races in July, which were followed by the club's usual major sports meeting in August and a Summer Ski Tournament at Christmas.

"The winter party at the Chateau was a complete success, though attendance was smaller owing to the absence of a ski-ing team in Australia and the fact that no Dominion championships were held this year. The club championships, as well as novice and novelty events, were run off without difficulty during the visit under excellent conditions, which also permitted more tuition to be given to beginners.

"The unusual warmth of spring and early summer brought about the early disappearance of the snow, and so the ski-ing season came to an end earlier than last year. By the end of January the snow had practically all disappeared and the glaciers were beginning to crevasse badly. Within a couple of months the whole surface of the larger glaciers had opened up into ice ridges separated by crevasses up to 25 ft. across.

"The unusual conditions, however, provided some good ice work and possibly were more or less responsible for more summer visits to the new hut. These members made some interesting trips in the Fell Field area and above to the west and south-west side of the mountain.

"Other parties visited Tongariro, Hauhungatahi, and the Ohakune, Maungatepopo, and Waiho-honu Huts.

"The new hut again proved a great boon. A great deal of ski-ing has been enjoyed there which would not have been practicable for members residing at the Chateau level. Late spring and summer ski-ing, though favoured by the longer day and milder weather, is, of course, only available on the higher levels. In the past, few members visited the park more than once a year. Now three and four visits are not unusual.

"It is a matter of great regret from the skier's point of view at least that the Scoria Flat Road was not proceeded with during a very favourable summer. In seasons of comparatively high snow-levels such as we have had recently many hours of ski-ing are lost and much energy is dissipated between the present terminus of the road and suitable running slopes."

The Tararua Tramping Club (Inc.).—"Forty-eight members of the Tararua Tramping Club visited the Tongariro National Park for the winter sports during the only official trip organized by the Tararua Tramping Club. The trip was for nine days, from 22nd to 31st August, 1937.

"The greater portion of each member's time was spent on the ski-grounds, but the majority of the members also visited all the places of interest in the vicinity of the Chateau. For the most of the time snow was not plentiful near Salt Hut, and a large number of the members of the party preferred to proceed higher up the slopes of the mountain and enjoy their ski-ing in the vicinity of the Ruapehu Ski Club's hut, where it was found that the snow conditions were better and the slopes gave better ski running. The major disadvantage in frequenting this part of the slopes of Mount Ruapehu is that there is no shelter available and there are no facilities for obtaining refreshment such as exist at Salt Hut.

"In addition to giving instruction to members of the party by the more experienced members of the club present, the Tararua Tramping Club held its annual ski championship races. The Slalom race was run on the course usually used for the New Zealand Championship races in poor weather, and the downhill race was run on an excellent course near the Ruapehu Ski Club's hut under ideal conditions."