

It is pleasing to report that the negotiations between the New Zealand Marching and Recreation Association and the New Zealand Marching Union have now been successfully concluded and the two bodies have agreed to form one organization to control marching. The Department took a leading part in these negotiations.

STAFF TRAINING AND PHYSICAL WELFARE OFFICERS' CONFERENCES

Following the dictum that work in adult recreation requires specialist training, the Branch is trying to ensure that replacements and additions to field staff are made with fully trained personnel. Nine junior officers are at present undergoing training in Head Office, an increase of four over last year. In addition, young or relatively inexperienced officers are placed under direct supervision in the larger district offices and undergo systematic training in practical work.

Physical Welfare Officers' conferences, which are largely refresher and training courses for all field officers, were held again this year and valuable assessment of past work was carried out, as well as deliberation on policy for future activities.

V. WILDLIFE BRANCH

A. STAFF

Some success has attended the efforts made to fill the gaps occasioned by recent losses and to meet the staff requirements of the Branch's recently increased functions. Recruitments have been largely of young men desirous of making a career of the Wildlife service, and from a long-term viewpoint this augurs well for the future provision of highly qualified technical staff.

Progress has been made in the training of junior officers by a system of job rotation, which will produce the essential background knowledge of the whole of the diversified nature of the Branch's field activities and ensure the eventual assignment of officers to the specialized duties for which they have demonstrated the greatest aptitude and interest.

A start was made with a system of the seconding to the Marine Department of technical trainees for a thorough two to three-year course of training in fresh-water fisheries work.

B. FIELD INVESTIGATIONS AND RESEARCH

(1) *Waterfowl*

The investigation commenced in 1947 in the Manawatu district was continued there. The greater part of the year was devoted to the following :—

- (a) Study of nesting cycles and population densities and movement of the two main local species—viz., the native grey duck and the exotic mallard duck.
- (b) Study of interspecific competition for food, cover, and nesting sites.
- (c) Trapping wild birds for banding and age and sex determination. A most successful trapping technique was evolved, 602 ducks being taken and reliberated. The data already accruing from this research will, in time, be of great value as a guide to proper conservation measures.

The success attending this project has been largely contributed to by Mr. T. Andrews (Ranger), whose services were made available by courtesy of the Wellington Acclimatization Society; by shooters, in returning leg bands and by forwarding blood smears and measurements from birds shot; by property-owners, who freely made facilities available, and by well-wishers, who contributed damaged grain for baiting traps.