

Appeals were made by circular to all directly concerned and to appropriate persons and organizations for help in—

- (a) The preservation of the flora and fauna of Stewart Island; and
- (b) Saving the North Island weka in its last remaining strong-hold, the East Coast District.

From several persons who volunteered for the duty, an appointment was made of a part-time Bird Warden (Mr. J. C. Aitken) for Otago Peninsula. This and further action to be taken by the Department in this region is in continuance of much work and great interest by Mr. L. E. Richdale, of Dunedin, the Otago Harbour Board, and local residents.

Suitable notice-boards were erected at several sanctuaries and the nesting-places of protected birds.

## (2) Sanctuaries

A sand-dune area at Waikato Heads and the Blue Lake, near Takaka, were declared sanctuaries. Island sanctuaries were inspected and action taken towards declaring others, notably the Snares Islands.

## (3) Imported and Native Game

Animal protection warrants were issued containing the following provisions:—

- (a) The definitions of the mallard duck (imported game) and the grey duck (native game) contained in the Second and Third Schedules to the Animals Protection and Game Act, 1921–22, respectively, were extended to include any cross between these birds or between either of them and any other species of duck.
- (b) Guinea-fowl in the Taranaki Acclimatization District was declared to be imported game in that district.

Open shooting seasons were declared in all acclimatization districts.

The continued decrease in the wild-duck and pheasant population is occasioning much concern amongst sportsmen, and for this reason the Department is pursuing vigorously a programme of research in an endeavour to discover the causes of and means of checking the decline.

On the other hand, an up-surge of the black-swan population in recent years has permitted of larger legal daily bag limits.

## (4) Importations of Animals and Birds

All applications for permission to import were closely scrutinized in order to ensure that acclimatization of further noxious species does not occur. Especial vigilance is necessary also owing to the fact that a number of species which exist in other countries are known carriers of certain virulent diseases of danger to human beings or to poultry and stock. To this end close collaboration is maintained with the Agriculture, Health, and Customs Departments and the Dominion Museum.

## (5) Opossums

The Opossum Regulations 1947, which came into effect on the 1st. May, 1947, define the means by which the animals can be taken, and make it an offence to harbour or liberate opossums in any part of New Zealand. The low ruling prices for opossum-skins continued, throwing into sharp relief the extreme difficulties to be faced where the sole normal means of population control is directly affected by fluctuations in the commercial skin values.