

(d) *Destruction of Black Shags*.—Sixty-three black shags and 4 eggs were destroyed by departmental officers and 22 heads of these birds were presented by private persons for payment of the bounty. The birds were much scarcer in the district during the year than in former years.

(e) *Destruction of Eels*.—Eel-trapping was continued during the season and a total of 2,945 eels were caught, all catches being in the Lakes Wanaka and Wakatipu systems.

(f) *Introduction of Smelt*.—In an endeavour to provide more fish food in the lakes in the district, 7,000 smelt were brought from the Department's Rotorua Acclimatization District in February, 1949, and liberated in Moke Lake and in Glendhu Bay, Lake Wanaka. A further consignment arrived in March and was liberated in the same localities. Owing to the special provisions made for transport from Rotorua and to the care taken on the journey, the percentage of loss was very light. The liberation areas will be kept under special observation with a view to ascertaining whether the planting will succeed.

(g) *Ranging*.—Four offences were detected, prosecutions being taken in each case and convictions secured. The fines imposed amounted to £25.

### (3) *Animals Protection and Game Act*

(a) *The Game-shooting Season, 1948*.—The season opened in fine weather. Paradise and grey duck were numerous over most parts of the district, but very few birds were shot after the first few days of the season owing to the large expanses of water to which they migrate and remain in safety by day. Californian quail were plentiful in all parts of the district during the year. There was again a good breeding season, and future prospects are brighter than they have been for some time.

Chukor are increasing in most parts of the district other than the Te Anau area.

Canadian geese are still plentiful, mainly in the Hunter and Matukituki Valleys.

Pukeko are plentiful.

The sum of £284 10s. was realized from the issue of 228 game-shooting licences in respect of the 1948 open season. The tendency for the increase in sales noted in connection with the 1947 season continued in regard to the 1948 season.

(b) *Game Conservation*.—The table hereunder shows the number of various species on which bounties were paid under the scheme operated by the South Island Vermin Control Board :—

Stoats	..	..	..	..	..	747
Polecats	..	..	..	..	..	9
Ferrets	..	..	..	..	..	645
Hawks' feet (pairs)	..	..	..	..	..	2,114
Hedgehogs	..	..	..	..	..	660
German owls	..	..	..	..	..	179

### (4) *Absolutely Protected Birds*

Officers of the Department are vigilant in preventing the illegal taking of absolutely protected birds.

It is interesting to note that these birds are doing well in such areas as Paradise (Glenorchy) and in the Eglington Valley.

An orange-wattled crow, now a very rare species, was sighted in the area where the takahe were found by Dr. Orbell. Kakapo have also been seen by departmental employees in the Fiordland National Park.