

night fishing. This year the limit was continued, but the hours of night fishing were extended from 9 p.m. to 12 midnight. This gave general satisfaction to most licensees, who agreed that a catch of twenty-five trout a day was enough for any true angler. The trout caught showed further improvement, and the condition of those taken in both streams and rivers was far above the average of the two preceding seasons. This season the lake trout were in very fair order in the opening month of November, but owing to late spawning the trout in the Lower Whakatane River were not so forward as formerly, and the Whakatane Club has requested this Department to put back the opening of the season from the 1st October to 1st November in that county, making the date uniform throughout the whole of the district. The limit basket was taken frequently by local anglers in various lakes. Rotoiti Lake is visited particularly by East Coast and Gisborne anglers, who have fine fishing-huts in some parts, and camp for days on end. This lake and Rotoma, Okataina, and Rotoehu lakes produced good catches, some of the largest weighing 12 lb.; while Okareka, Tarawera, and Rotokakahi lakes also yielded trout up to 7 lb. weight. The local streams were early depleted, the fish going down to lake-waters before the end of December.

*Trout-stocking.*—This year this Department stocked the waters of Lakes Rotorua, Rotoiti, and Tarawera for the first time since the Department of Internal Affairs discontinued its netting operations. It is now the intention of this Department to thoroughly stock up the whole of its waters and lakes.

The angler's interests in the Wairoa-Waikaremoana area have been well looked after. The result of putting back the date of opening the season from the 1st October to the 1st November, on the representations of the Wairoa Rod and Gun Club, was a move in the right direction, and the wisdom of this was amply proved by the very excellent condition of the brown and rainbow trout caught in Waikaremoana Lake and the Ruakituri and Waikaretaheke Rivers. The policy of extensive stocking with both species of trout-fry by Ranger Cobeldick over a period of eight years from the Waikaremoana hatchery is now justified by the present good fishing obtainable, and the same policy will be continued. This year this Department has removed the old hatchery plant, and built a small hatchery at Waimako, below the lake-outlet. This is in a much more accessible position, and a portion of the ova from Lake Taupo trout was hatched and distributed from here by Assistant Ranger Kean; the balance of ova was hatched by Messrs. W. Richards, C. Mills, and McKain at their private hatching-plants, and the surviving fry liberated in the Ruakituri and Nuhaka Rivers. Some trouble was met with in the construction of the dam at the new hatchery, through the soft bottom blowing out under pressure, but this was overcome. A larger consignment of ova will be forwarded this year to meet the requirements of ever-increasing number of anglers annually visiting these waters, and the completion of the new Waikaremoana-Ruatahuna Road through virgin bush and trout-streams will bring many more. Many reports have been received of the fine baskets of trout caught by anglers, trout from 2 lb. to 5 lb. being taken in the river and lake waters. Lake Waikareiti is one that will receive more attention from fishermen in the near future, as it contains many fine rainbow trout. They are in splendid condition owing to abundant feed, but hard to catch. Some research work is to be instituted, and data collected, to improve the present limited knowledge of the life-history of Salmonidæ in the thermal waters of the Rotorua district, and this year the rangers will tag several hundred trout in certain lakes to further such investigation. The co-operation of all anglers is requested by the return to the ranger at Rotorua of any trout with a tag affixed, or some of its scales, together with the tag and particulars of capture.

*Pheasantry.*—During the year 158 pheasants have been liberated from the Rotorua pheasant-pens, and 19 birds from the Wairoa pheasantry, a total of 177 birds. The views of the Rotorua Rod and Gun Club were given effect to in their request for a number of pheasants to be liberated in certain localities within easy range of the town. The wishes of the Whakatane and Wairoa Clubs were complied with as far as practicable, and the balance were distributed over the rest of a wide area of suitably wild country. It may be most desirable in the near future to develop this Department's new site, which is ideally situated and most suitable for the combined purpose of rearing both game and trout. The old pens have been sown down with green feed for the young birds expected for this season's liberation. Purchase will be made of all birds offered to this Department at a reasonable figure for liberation. Some thirteen stock birds are now on hand at the Rotorua pens.

*Mallard Ducks.*—Some fifteen mallard ducks were reared and liberated from the Rotorua pens, and the same number from the Wairoa pens, a total of thirty. As compared with our indigenous duck it is questionable whether the mallard, or English wild duck (*Anas boscos*), is proving of sufficient importance as a game bird to warrant continuance of breeding and liberation. Their readiness to hybridize with the native grey duck, the pugnaciousness of the drakes in the mating season, and their habit of congregating on farmyard ponds and streams, does not favourably compare with our own wild grey duck as providing sport. The mallards have been liberated over twenty years in the Rotorua Acclimatization District, but they have not naturally increased to anything like the extent they should have done. It appears, therefore, of more importance, both to the sportsmen and the future population, to foster the further increase of our native species, which for several reasons are steadily decreasing in numbers year by year.

*Trout-fry.*—A fairly extensive liberation of rainbow trout fry was made this year throughout the district with some 386,500 fry purchased from Internal Affairs Department. These were all reared at the Waikuta hatchery, Ngongotaha Road, from ova stripped from Taupo Lake trout near Tokaanu. The fry were in good order, and should improve the present stock of existing trout in a few years' time, being fresh blood from trout extolled the world over as the very finest known to anglers. This amount added to the 200,000 ova sent to Wairoa County was all that could be obtained this year. The places of liberation and numbers, briefly, are—Wairoa County, 200,000 ova; Whakatane County, 94,000 fry; Rotorua County, 263,500 fry; Taupo County, 20,000 fry: total, 586,500 for 1928 season.

*General.*—The thanks of the Department are extended to the police for assistance rendered to the rangers in poaching cases, and to those enthusiasts in Wairoa County who again assisted the Department with their cars to liberate both trout-fry and pheasants in that area. This principle might well be followed in other parts of the district.