

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 Tararua Tramping Club (Inc.).—"During the year ended 31st March, 1939, the Tararua Tramping Club organized two trips to the Tongariro National Park area.

"The first of these was during Easter, 1938, when twelve members of the club stayed at the Ohakune Hut. During the whole of the four days the weather was bad, but climbs were made to the top of Ruapehu and to most of the well-known points on the south side of Mount Ruapehu.

"The second trip was the club's annual winter sports visit for nine days from 20th to 29th August inclusive. Fifty-nine members of the Tararua Tramping Club took part in this trip. The six perfect days during this period allowed members of the party to indulge to the fullest in ski-ing, and the whole party took advantage of the expert ski-ing instruction which was provided. As a direct result of this instruction the standard of ski-ing has greatly improved. In addition to ski-ing, climbs were made by some of the party to the Crater Lake on Ruapehu and also to the top of Ngauruhoe and Tongariro. In addition, a party visited the Ketetahi Springs."

The Alpine Sports Club (Inc.).—"Easter, 1938: Some twenty-two members camped in the Mangaturuturu Valley, reaching this place by bush tram from Horopito and thence crossing the Mangaturuturu Stream and proceeding up this for some distance to approximately the Pole track. The fine days were spent in a climb of Ruapehu Peak from this valley and in visits to points of interest in the vicinity. This proved an excellent camping-site, and could easily be made more accessible by a little track-cutting. There is a tram-track for some six miles from Horopito Station, thence about 20 chains of bush to the stream, and about half a mile more bush up the stream leads on to the clear ridges above. The club erected a temporary bridge over the stream to facilitate the crossings by the large party and their gear, the river being then in flood. This bridge has probably, however, not stood the winter. Several members completed this trip by traversing round the mountain to the south-east ridge of Girdlestone and thence out via the State Forest at Karioi.

"During the Christmas vacation a small party spent a fortnight proceeding from Karioi State Forest to the Chateau via the Wahianoa, Wangaehu, and Waikato valleys, exploring for possible sites for a mountain hut. This party made a prismatic-compass survey of the eastern side of the mountain, and a map on a scale of 1 in. to the mile, based on their measurements, is in course of completion. While in the Wangachu Valley opportunity was taken of exploring as fully as possible the outlet stream of the Crater Lake; descent was made to the ice-cave at the edge of the lake through which the water flows under the ice and over a waterfall below the summit icefall; a further waterfall under the ice in the valley between Ringatoto and Cinder Peak not hitherto recorded was inspected and photographed; and the ice-cave at the foot of the Wangaehu Glacier was also entered. At a later date this last cave was penetrated for a distance of about 20 chains on the floor of the glacier, under the ice, to a large waterfall in an ice-cave some 50 ft. high and 50 ft. wide. The explorations of this party leave no doubt as to the course of the Crater Lake stream in its journey beneath the ice, a matter previously the cause of much speculation."

Ruapehu Ski Club (Inc.).—"The club's activities have been well maintained during the past year.

"From a ski-ing viewpoint the season has been a most successful one. Snow commenced to build up early in June, and by the middle of July the upper snowfields were in their winter condition in spite of the heavily crevassed surface left by the previous summer.

"Compared with previous years the season was comparatively windless, allowing true powder snow to form on the upper levels. One effect of this was that there was little formation of snowfields of any degree of permanency below the 6,000 ft. level owing to the freshly fallen snow remaining on the upper slopes instead of as usual being blown off and to be deposited later lower down.

"Good ski-ing conditions prevailed from June to the end of January, after which the glaciers became too lumpy for safety. However, but little crevassing took place—practically none except a series of *schrunds* at the base of the peaks on Whakapapa, but a fair amount on the Waikato and Wangaehu. This latter was localized, however.

"During the summer quite a lot of parties worked over the north-east and south-west sides of the park.

"The hut again proved of great value as a base for parties both during the ski-ing season and later for climbing and tramping parties.

"The extension of the Scoria Flat Road will be of considerable use to frequenters of the park, and its progress is watched with pleasure.

"It is to be regretted that further signs of the depredations of deer are evident, and it is to be hoped that steps will be taken to poison out or otherwise rid the mountain of these pests, which, if not checked, will do irreparable damage to the unique flora of the upper levels."

EGMONT NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(W. C. WESTON, Chairman.)

I have the honour to present the Board's annual report for the year ended 31st March, 1939. The year has been an uneventful one, but it can be said with confidence that the state of the Egmont National Park has steadily improved.

The Board's Ranger, Mr. N. P. Gibson, has continued the destruction of goats, and during the year the number destroyed exceeded 900. Since that date the Board has had the help of honorary Rangers, who at week-ends form shooting parties. A tally is being kept of their activities, and it will be found that valuable work is being done.