

## DESTRUCTION OF WILD CATS.

The Department of Internal Affairs has offered the assistance of one of its officers in laying down a system for the trapping and destruction of wild cats and other vermin in the park. The action of the Department in this connection is much appreciated, and the thanks of the Board are recorded.

## DEER DESTRUCTION.

Further operations were carried out by officers of the Department of Internal Affairs during the past year. The reports received indicate that there are not a great number of deer in the bush lands of 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 Alpine Sports Club (Inc.).*—My club during the last year has had an organized party of nine members (increasing to twenty at both week-ends) for a ten-day skiing trip to the Whakapapa Huts in August, 1939, and a party of twenty-five members at Ohakune Hut during the Easter holidays of 1940, from 22nd to 25th March. The latter party climbed the Ruapehu peaks and visited Maungaturuturu and other valleys in the vicinity.

Explorations were continued in the Wangaehu district in connection with the proposed hut. In addition, numerous private parties have visited various parts of the park.

*Tararua Tramping Club (Inc.).*—During the year ended 31st March, 1940, two trips to the National Park area were organized by the Tararua Tramping Club. For the twentieth annual winter sports trip in August there was a total attendance of fifty-four members of the club. The fine weather prevailing gave every member of the party a most enjoyable time. Several members competed with success in the New Zealand Ski Championships.

During Easter, 1940, a party of nineteen members camped near the Ohakune Hut. During this period members made ascents of the various peaks of Mount Ruapehu, including Ruapehu, Parateaitonga, and Girdlestone, and obtained excellent views extending from Lake Taupo to the Spencer Range in the South Island. In addition, members of the club visited the National Park area on various occasions during the year, some on the "Snow Trains" and others during the Christmas vacation. During the Christmas period a small party climbed all three mountains in the park area.

*Ruapehu Ski Club (Inc.).*—The snow was late in coming at the National Park, but the precipitation was unusually heavy and on many occasions the foothills as well as the high slopes were well covered. Largely owing to the relative absence of wind during the falls, the snow remained on the mountain.

During July and early August weather conditions were not conducive to much activity, and the very deep loose snow made travel difficult even on skis. Later, however, conditions improved greatly and excellent skiing and touring were obtainable. Reasonably good skiing conditions were obtainable on the Whakapapa face of the mountain practically right through the balance of the year.

There was a noticeable absence of the crevasses on the Whakapapa Glacier, which were such a feature of the past two seasons.

The Club's Winter Sports Tournament, which was held in August in conjunction with the Dominion Championship, was the largest to date, some one hundred and twenty members taking part.

Although the incidence of war and later the petrol restrictions somewhat reduced club activities, large parties were on the mountain on every holiday, and many small parties based on the hut visited the mountain on other occasions. Exploration in detail of many parts of the mountain was undertaken. In particular, work was undertaken on the mapping of the summit ridges, and an investigation was made of the outlets of the Crater Lake.

## EGMONT NATIONAL PARK BOARD.

(W. C. WESTON, Chairman.)

I have the honour to present the Egmont National Park Board's report for the year ending 31st March, 1940.

Under war conditions it is felt that the Board's activities must be confined to essentials. The main work is the destruction of goats in the reserve, the protection of the forest from straying cattle, and the prevention of poaching.

The year has been a busy one for the Ranger, Mr. N. P. Gibson, who reports that for the year ending 31st March, 1,050 goats have been destroyed, 233 of this number being shot by the Board's honorary Rangers. There were 3,250 opossums trapped under royalty; also 450 rats, 187 weasels, and 6 cats trapped. Fourteen head of wild cattle on the southern slopes and deep in the forest were destroyed. Where beasts get into the reserve through fences broken down by fallen trees or other causes, the Ranger assists settlers to remove their cattle rather than destroy them. Where cattle are deliberately allowed to trespass, they are shot. Two maimed kiwis were doctored, and released back again into the reserves in a healthy condition.

At the commencement of the war the work of pruning and thinning the *pinus insignis* forest of about 300 acres was stopped. This work must necessarily be postponed until the termination of the war.

During the year, and acting under the advice of the Taranaki alpine clubs, the Board has placed in each of the three mountain hostels a complete alpine equipment to be used only in emergency. This equipment is in the special charge of the hostel-managers.

The question of the upkeep of the roads within the reserve is still unsettled. This is a responsibility which the Highways Board might well and should assume.