

PHEASANT (*Phasianus torquatus*).

The pheasant will always constitute our most valuable game bird, but, unfortunately, owing to the number of enemies to be encountered, they are comparatively rare breeders, and as a result two to four birds constitutes a good day's bag. Artificial breeding has therefore been actively taken up under the management of the Ranger, Mr. A. L. Bertling, recently from the staff of the London Zoological Gardens. In order to improve the local strain, seventy-five pheasants were obtained from Wellington at the end of July, and were distributed as follows: Retained for breeding at pheasantry, 31; distributed to members of the local Rod and Gun Club, 13; liberated (cocks only), 31. A pheasantry consisting of six enclosures, each 30 square feet, was erected in a suitable paddock on the outskirts of the town, and one cock and six hens confined in each enclosure. The equipment has been kept as primitive as possible in order to limit the expenditure. It consists of a Tamlin's "Nonpareil" 200-egg hot-water-tank incubator, bone and grit crushers, fowlhouse, and chicken-coops. Between the 26th October, 1907, and the 3rd January, 1908, 647 eggs were laid, of which 91 were unfertile, 65 addled, and 491 hatched. Of these, 410 young pheasants were successfully reared, and liberated as follows:—

December	5,	Utuhina	...	...	...	...	15
"	9,	"	...	...	...	...	11
"	13,	"	...	...	...	...	9
January	5,	Wairoa	...	...	...	...	25
"	10,	Ngawaro	...	...	...	...	25
"	20,	Rotoiti	...	...	...	...	20
"	23,	Ngongotaha	...	...	...	...	20
February	3,	Okere	...	...	...	...	18
"	15,	Rotoehu	...	...	...	...	16
"	15,	Rotoma	...	...	...	...	18
December	20,	Utuhina	...	...	...	...	13
"	31,	"	...	...	...	...	11
January	2,	"	...	...	...	...	9
"	4,	Hamurana	...	...	...	...	25
"	5,	Utuhina	...	...	...	...	17
"	7,	Ngongotaha	...	...	...	...	27
"	17,	Mamaku	...	...	...	...	25
"	20,	Te Toroa	...	...	...	...	23
February	4,	Te Ngae	...	...	...	...	17
March	8,	Rangipiri	...	...	...	...	21
"	20,	Waiotapu	...	...	...	...	25
"	25,	Okareka	...	...	...	...	20
Total							410

Considering the late start that was made, and the small expenditure on apparatus, these results are very satisfactory indeed, and should be easily doubled or trebled during the coming season. In addition to these birds, the thirteen that were distributed to three members of the local club, Messrs. Iles, Crowther, and Naden, resulted in thirty-one birds being returned to the pheasantry, which are being retained to increase the number of stock birds for next season.

QUAIL.

The quail, both Californian (*Callipepla californica*) and Australian (*turnix varia*), continue to give good sport, and it has not been considered necessary to take any steps to increase their numbers. It is some years since fresh blood was introduced, and, though numerous broods are hatched, the clutches are small, due, no doubt, to inbreeding. A fresh strain would probably improve the sport to a considerable extent, as they are generally much appreciated by the visiting sportsmen.

GREY DUCK (*Anas superciliosa*).

Duck are fairly plentiful on the lakes, but important work is yet to be done in increasing their numbers. From the birds kept in the enclosure in the Gardens fifty-two grey duck, fifteen white call-duck, and three Canadian geese were hatched in the incubator, reared, and liberated. In addition, forty-five unfertile eggs were obtained. This large proportion is, no doubt, due to the disturbance of the birds in the enclosure in the Gardens by visitors, and much better results will be obtainable at the water-fowl enclosure which has been built during the year on the lake-shore near Picnic Point, as it is almost entirely concealed amongst the reeds and manuka.

MALLARD DUCK (*Anas boscas*).

In addition to grey duck, a special effort is being made to introduce the mallard duck, which will prove a very valuable acquisition to the sport of the district. Five of these birds were already in the Gardens, and two pair were received from Mr. Benn. From these, eight ducklings were hatched during the season, and twenty-eight adult birds were received from Wellington, making forty-five in all, which will give a good start for next season's breeding.