

WATER-FOWL.

Great concern is being evinced both by sportsmen and bird protectionists in Canada and The United States with reference to the great duck crisis in these countries. The controversy has placed the contentionists under two headings: Legitimate Sportsmen *versus* Duck-fiends. These latter consist of those who think how big their bag can be on the opening day, regardless of future seasons. This sort of people like to see their photographs along with a large number of dead ducks in the newspaper. If the ducks were armed as efficiently as their persecutors are, these duck-fiends would probably be found on the roll of conscientious objectors. The cowardly action of feeding the birds to attract them to the gun called "baiting" is one of the main causes of the great duck depletion. This baiting is very prevalent in New Zealand, and the results will be similar to those in the countries mentioned if the practice continues. Photographs of concentrations of ducks on specially baited grounds have been used by these duck-fiends for propaganda purposes in preventing close seasons and the further limiting of bags. This sort of people, after killing and maiming large numbers of ducks, blame anything but overshooting—hawks, pukeko, or anything—but never themselves. Some day, when we get better civilised, it will be recognised that ducks are our most valuable night bird, but there will probably be no ducks then. Sportsmen suggest the following remedies:—Close seasons, rigid limiting of bags to check overshooting, co-ordination in conservation, large scale acquisition and conservation of breeding areas, refuge grounds, sanctuaries, etc., re-construction of marshes and lakes now drained, better enforcement of conservation laws, research into diseases attacking the birds, and the co-operation of bird protection societies' and sportsmen's organisations with a view of preventing the extermination of water-fowl.

Let us hope New Zealand will be wise in time, as a similar crisis looms largely on the New Zealand horizon, or shall we too say taihoa, like the gentleman who said every morning: "I don't think we'll do much to-day, Bill, but we'll knock blazes off the job to-morrow." Especially if "to-morrow" happens to be the 1st of May.
