

STRANDING OF L.F.B. "THELMA"

About 10 p.m. on December 15 the L.F.B. "Thelma" (F91) ran on the northern reef of the south passage at Lancelin Anchorage. Assistant Inspector Bruce Boyd immediately went aboard L.F.B. "Trimmerwheel" (skipper F. Connell) who moved his boat, which is fitted with a powerful searchlight, close to the "Thelma" and played his light on the stricken vessel, which was hard and fast astern about 50 feet from Lancelin Island, with a fairly heavy sea running. L.F.B. "Carmen", with Cadet Inspector John Milne aboard, also went out to the anchorage in the hope of putting a rope aboard the "Thelma," but the rope was too short. Sixteen-year-old Cadet Milne in the meantime had gone over the side into "Carmen's" dinghy to see whether he could board and assist "Thelma". Eventually a longer line was secured and with the help of Cadet Milne and his dinghy, made fast to the "Thelma." "Trimmerwheel" then towed her off.

"Thelma" had thrown overboard a number of heavy objects, including 21 bags of crays, but when morning broke 18 of the latter were recovered, the contents of only 2½ bags having died overnight. Despite the pounding she took "Thelma," which is 31' in length, incurred only slight damage, although she was compelled to return to Fremantle for such repairs as were necessary.

Mr. Boyd says that high praise has been given to Cadet Milne by all at Lancelin for the fine job he did in passing the line from "Thelma" to "Trimmerwheel". He adds that he fully deserves all the praise he has received.

WILD DUCKS

(a) Duck Banding: After many disappointments at various lakes and swamps in the South-West, Technical Officer J. Traynor achieved some successful trapping at Lake Mears in the Brookton - Quairading area in November. A total of 137 birds was banded - mostly

grey teal with a few mountain duck, a black and a pink-eared duck. A further 45 ducks were banded last month in the Meckering district at swamps on private land: again grey teal predominated.

The number of ducks banded since Mr. Traynor resumed operations last spring is 294 to the end of December, bringing the total banded since the inception of the scheme to 2113 birds. The individual species totals are as follows -

Black Duck	1511	Mallards	14
Grey Teal	497	Coot	14
Mountain Duck	49	Blue bald Coot	2
Maned Geese (Wood Duck)	21	Moorhens	5
Blue Wing Shoveller	1		
Chestnut Teal	2	TOTAL ...	2113
Pink-eared Duck	3		

In addition 16 coot and 1 crow have been banded with used duck bands previously returned.

(b) Recoveries: Although the duck-shooting season opened two weeks ago there has been a singularly low number of bands returned. Only 5 were received to the end of December and these were all from grey teal - four from birds banded within 3 weeks of opening day and one from a bird banded on February 16, 1953, at Wardering Lake, near Woodanilling. The birds are believed to have been shot in the Brookton district, and as four of them were banded at Lake Mears they had not got very far. The persons who sent the bands in are being asked to supply the exact date and location and details will be published in the next issue of this Bulletin if received by then.

(c) Opening Day: Reports so far to hand indicate that many shooters this year had a light Christmas dinner so far as wild ducks were concerned. Good shooting was had at Taarblin Lake near Toolibin (east of Narrogin)

where most of the 60 shooters were able to secure the maximum bag. In the coastal areas between Mandurah and Bunbury the results were poor and at Chittering not much better. Gundaring Lake, though drier than last year, provided reasonable opportunities for shooters, as did Lake Mears north of Brookton, but generally these lakes represented isolated good spots.

Black ducks are reported to be scarce from most centres - they only comprised about 2% at Taarblin - and at least one Brookton shooter would like to see them protected for two years to give them a chance to build up again. We would be very pleased to receive notes of the occurrence of this species - especially if they are seen in great numbers or in districts where they are not normally in quantity.