

OPENING OF DUCK SEASON

The Fauna Protection Officer (Mr. H.B. Shugg), Research Officer B.K. Bowen, Fauna Warden S.W. Bowler and Mr. Cherrington, of Head Office, visited Gundaring Lake, near Wagin, on the opening day of the duck shooting season. They were accompanied by Mr. N.E. Stewart, of the Wildlife Survey Section, C.S.I.R.O. The purpose of the visit was to witness the opening and obtain information on the ducks shot.

Approximately 150 sportsmen were assembled at the lake for the opening, which from a shooter's point of view was not spectacular. Very few shooters obtained the bag limit of 15 ducks, the average being between six and seven.

The research party examined 132 ducks, most of which were weighed, sexed and aged into mature or immature birds. The birds examined represented about 15% of the total number shot. Of those examined, 64% were grey teal, 15% mountain duck, and 14% pink-eared duck. The remaining 7% consisted of black duck, wood duck, freckled duck and blue winged shovelers. As the ducks examined were selected at random, it is probable that these percentages closely approximated the percentages of each species in the total take.

The practice of weighing, sexing and ageing ducks shot will be continued as the opportunity arises, as eventually it will assist in identifying changes in the population structure.