

DUCK SHOOTING

Use of Power Boats:

A press release issued last month by the Minister for Fisheries, Mr. Ross Hutchinson, referred to the contentious question of the use of power boats in association with duck shooting. Quoting reports received by the Department, Mr. Hutchinson said feeling was running pretty high in some districts where a few irresponsible boat-owners had threatened to use power boats to flush ducks from the larger expanses of water where they were expected to congregate to shelter from shooters.

It was beyond question, the Minister said, that the deliberate use of boats to disturb such flocks would constitute an offence against the Fauna Protection Act and Regulations. He pointed out that offenders would be liable to prosecution and, upon conviction, to a fine of up to \$50 and the boats used could be confiscated to the Crown. He added, that for the information of all concerned, the following restrictions were pertinent:-

- (1) No person shall drive any bird over shooters by means of motor vehicles, aircraft, power boat or other means.
- (2) No person shall take any wild duck by any means other than with a shotgun. Among other things, the meaning of "take" includes to disturb, to injure, to pursue and to hunt.

The Minister appealed to all shooters to respect the tradition of their sport and to abide by the official opening.

Reports on Opening:

The opening of the 1963-64 season for wild ducks, according to all reports, brought its usual varying degrees of success for the thousands of participant sportsmen. Generally, ducks were found to be plentiful but the shooters' lament was that last winter's heavy rains had produced exceptionally high water levels throughout favoured shooting areas. Consequently the ducks were able to remain outside the range of shooters' guns.

Prior to the opening, patrols and surveys of the principal duck lakes in the South-West Land Division were

carried out by Fauna Wardens S.W. Bowler and N.E. McLaughlan, and Cadet Research Officer J. Jacoby. The levels of almost all these were found to be higher than in recent years and, indeed, some were exceptionally high. The wild duck populations, on the other hand, were found to be most disappointing. Mr. Bowler said that it was the least number of ducks he had seen on many of the lakes for five years. Contrariwise, duck populations on some lakes in the Midlands and South-West were quite good. Calls were made on all honorary wardens and duck season notices were posted at most vantage points.

Fauna Protection Officer H.B. Shugg, accompanied by Fauna Warden N.E. McLaughlan, attended the opening shoot at Walyormouring (Oak Park) Lake in the Goomalling district. They reported that the shoot was not really a good one as the water level was very high and the ducks were able to remain out of reach of the guns on the wide expanse of water. A number of power boats were kept under observation but were well-handled and no breach was committed. Approximately thirty shooters took part in this shoot and the highest tally counted was twelve ducks to one gun.

Fauna Warden S.W. Bowler, Inspector D.P. Gordon and Cadet Research Officer J. Jacoby, attended the opening shoot at the swamp on the Stirling Estates, near Capel. There the shooters had more success, but so, too, did the wardens. They apprehended eleven persons engaged in the alleged unlawful use of spotlights. The spotlights were seized and the Crown Law Department has been requested to prosecute those involved. Although many reports had been received in the past of the sporadic use of spotlights in this area, and many patrols had been made, this was the first occasion on which the alleged users have been apprehended. The Department's success will be noted with considerable satisfaction by the majority of shooters who respect and observe the law.

A Benger game warden, Mr. Reg. Taylor, reported that in his area the opening of the duck season was the best ever. Ducks were plentiful, he said, and provided a lot of good shooting although they were flying high. He added that about two hundred shooters took part in the best organized shoot in years and that not a single shot was fired before opening time.

In the Beverley district, although a large number of shooters assembled, they did not cover all the lakes and after the first few barrages many of the ducks took refuge in the quieter areas and remained out of reach. Neverthe-

less, wrote Mr. H.G. Hall, who sent us this report, some good bags were taken in the Dangin area and quite a lot of shooters obtained their bag limit. Even the less experienced shooters, he said, bagged three or four.

SALARY INCREASES

A circular from the Public Service Commissioner advises that a new agreement covering the salaries of certain officers within the limit of the justiciable salary range has been entered into with the Civil Service Association of W.A. The new rates apply retrospectively from May 3, 1963, and are payable to all Clerical and General Division officers. Typical increases to be enjoyed by our staff are set out on the table hereunder:-

Category	Age or Year of Service	Margin over the Basic Rate		
		Old Margin	New Margin	Increase
Cadet and Assistant Inspector	24 years or 4th year service	345	355	10
Inspectors Class G-11-1	Minimum	527	565	38
	Maximum	577	622	45
Inspectors Class G-11-2	Minimum	627	679	52
	Maximum	677	736	59
Senior Inspectors etc, Class G-11-3	Minimum	737	798	61
	Maximum	797	860	63
Class G-11-4	Minimum	857	922	65
	Maximum	917	984	67
Class G-11-5	Minimum	977	1047	70
	Maximum	1037	1110	73

It will be noticed that there is no increase for Cadet and Assistant Inspectors prior to the age of 24 or earlier than their 4th year of service. The margin over or percentage of the basic wage in those categories have not been altered.