

REARING OF PINK-EARED DUCKS

The Department's Waterfowl Research Unit has been attempting to rear Pink-eared Ducks (*Malacorhynchus membranaceus*). Forty eggs were taken from nest boxes at Moora and incubated at the research centre at South Perth.



Ducklings on a pond at the Department's Research Centre at South Perth.

The incubation was very successful and three clutches totaling 32 ducklings were hatched. The major problem in rearing this particular species is the diet because the birds are "filter feeders"—sucking in water and filtering out the minute particles of food. Various artificial foods were tried but the first two clutches all died of impaction of the intestine within a short while.

More success was experienced with the third clutch; these were fed on daphnia collected from the metropolitan lakes, and survived for about 10 days. Despite these setbacks the research staff now feel that the initial problems have been overcome and expect greater success in 1973.



Pink-eared duckling—five days old.