

Quails in Victoria.

THE Council of the R.A.O.U., in February, 1912, issued circulars concerning Quail to a number of members in the several States. The circular stated:—"In Victoria, the experiment is again to be made by the game authorities of opening the shooting season for Quails on the 15th February—earlier than in any other State. The Council of the R.A.O.U. would esteem it a favour if you would kindly send them a report as to the condition of Quails—young, &c.—in your district on the opening day." The questions asked were:—Were birds numerous? What species chiefly? Were young or eggs noticed? With due regard for the birds, when do you consider the season should open? The reports received have been tabulated as follows:—

Locality.	Were Birds Numerous?	Kinds.	Were Young or Eggs Noticed?	When Should Season Open?
Werribee ..	No	Stubble	Yes, young	15th Mar.
Noorat ..	No	Stubble	Yes, young	1st Mar.
Mortlake ..	Fairly	Stubble	Yes, young	1st Mar.
Maryborough ..	No	—	Yes, young	—
Seymour ..	No	Stubble	Plenty young	During Mar.
Essendon ..	No	Stubble	No	1st Feb.
Benalla ..	No	Brown, Stubble	No	15th Feb.
Hexham ..	No	Stubble	Plenty young	1st Mar.
Bacchus Marsh ..	No	Stubble	Few young	1st Mar.
Dimboola ..	No	Stubble	None	15th Feb.
Scoresby ..	No	Stubble	Lot half-grown	1st Mar.
Winchelsea ..	No	Stubble	Lot half-grown	1st Mar.
Camperdown ..	No	Stubble	Young	1st Mar.
Apollo Bay ..	No	Brown, Stubble	No	15th Feb.
Murrumbena ..	Fairly	Stubble	Eggs & young	1st April
Trafalgar ..	Scarce	Stubble	Half-grown seen	1st Mar. or later; advise year's protection
Werribee ..	Fairly	Stubble	Young	1st April
Nhill ..	Scarce	Stubble	No	1st Mar.
Geelong ..	Yes	Stubble	Yes, young & eggs	1st Mar.
Colac ..	Fairly	Brown	Lots of young	—
Skipton ..	No	Stubble	Lots of young	1st April
Rokewood ..	Fairly	Stubble, Little	No	1st Mar.
Drouin ..	Scarce	—	—	15th Feb., but advise two years' protection
Dingee ..	Fairly	Stubble	—	15th Feb.
Sea Lake ..	No	Stubble	Young	1st Mar. or later
Maffra ..	Yes	Stubble	Yes, in all parts of district	1st Mar.
Warragul ..	Yes	—	Yes	1st Mar.
Weerite ..	No	Stubble	Yes, plenty	1st Mar.
Lindenow ..	Fairly	Stubble	No	1st Mar.

Locality.	Were Birds Numerous?	Kinds.	Were Young or Eggs Noticed?	When Should Season Open?
Yea	No	Stubble, Brown	No	1st Mar., but protected wholly for year
Gisborne ..	No	Stubble	No	1st Mar.
Toora ..	Fairly	Stubble	No	1st Mar.
Wedderburn ..	No	Stubble	No	15th March; year's protection
Terang ..	No	Stubble	Young seen	1st Mar.
Rosebrook ..	No	Stubble	Young seen	1st April
Woodside ..	No	Stubble	Eggs & young	1st or 15th Mar.
Nhill ..	No	Stubble	Eggs & young	1st Feb.
Edenthorpe ..	No	Stubble	No	—
Healesville ..	No	Stubble, Brown	No	15th Feb.
Warrnambool ..	No	Stubble	Yes, few	1st Mar.
Somerville ..	Fairly	Stubble, Brown	Young Brown seen	1st Mar.
Beaconsfield ..	No	Painted	—	15th Mar.

1st Feb., 15th Feb., 1st Mar., 15th Mar. and later,
2 6 24 7

42 returns, 39 give dates. 4 request a year's rest for birds.

OTHER STATES.

Locality.	Were Birds Numerous?	Kinds.	Were Young or Eggs Noticed?	When Should Season Open?
Fulham, S.A. ..	Fairly	Stubble	Young seen	1st Mar., as is the case in S.A.
Kalangadoo, S.A.	Scarce	Stubble	No	1st Mar.
Yungaburra, Q.	No	—	Young seen	31st Mar.
Cobborah, N.S.W.		None seen for some years		
Corowa, N.S.W.		None seen for some years		
Bundaberg, Q. ..	Scarce	—	Yes, young	31st May
Cunnamulla, Q.	None	—	—	31st Mar.
Tayendale, Q. ..	No	—	—	—
Rockhampton, Q.	Fairly	—	Yes, young	1st Mar.

Major J. M. Semmens, Chief Inspector of Game and Fisheries for Victoria, held a conference at his office, Melbourne, on 16th December, 1912, to determine the proper date for opening the Quail season. Delegates were present from the Field Naturalists' Club, Bird Observers' Club, R.A.O.U., gun clubs, and other associations. After debate, the delegates were unanimous in the opinion that the 1st of March should be recommended as the opening date. The conference elicited one most important fact—namely, that the Painted Quail (*Turnix varia*) and Brown or Swamp-Quail (*Synœcus australis*) were becoming alarmingly scarce, and complete seasons of rest were suggested for these species.