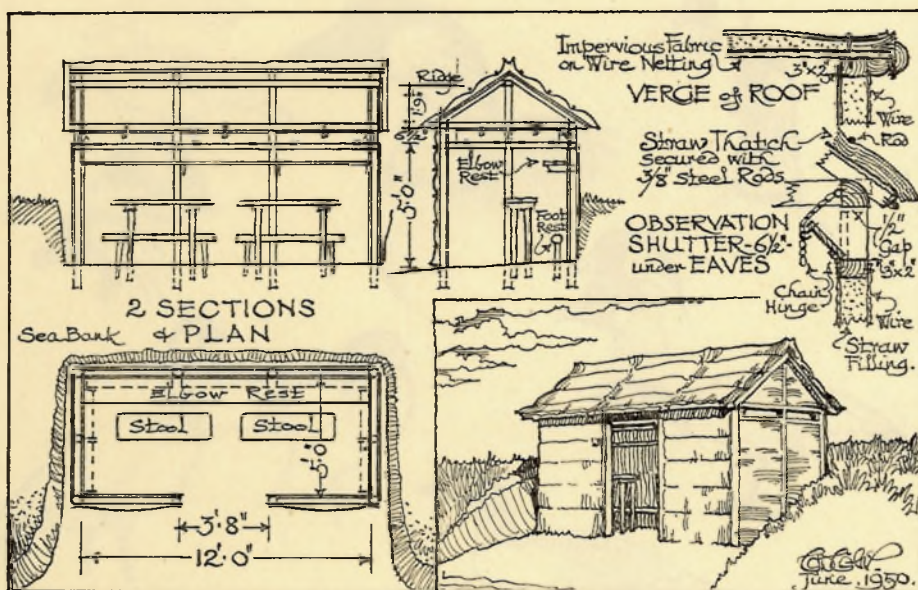


OBSERVATION HUTS



THE type of observation hut which has been developed at the New Grounds for watching the geese on the Dumbles and the ducks in the decoy has now had several seasons' trial, and it is felt that the experience gained in this field may be useful to other ornithological societies. Similar huts could with advantage be built on the banks of reservoirs and in many other sanctuaries or regular haunts of birds. The advantages of being able to approach unseen and enter a hut with a commanding view do not need enumeration.

The construction of the huts is shown in the drawing. The roof and walls can be made either of wood or of straw. If straw is used it should be contained in wire-netting and packed very tightly in the walls. The hinged shutters, hanging on a chain have given good service at the New Grounds and have the advantage of simplicity in construction and maintenance. If there are to be shutters on more than one side they should be placed at different levels, so that the birds cannot see daylight through the hut and the movements of the observer against it. Fixed seats of a stool-like type have proved to be the best. An elbow-rest extending not less than 12 in. from the front wall is essential for keeping binoculars steady and a foot-rest is very desirable. Lengthy observation is very greatly helped by a lay-out which gives reasonable comfort. Ideally there should be a door which makes the hut less draughty and ensures darkness, but this is not absolutely necessary, and a piece of sacking can be hung over the doorway instead. The materials for a hut accommodating six to eight observers should cost approximately £15.