

APPENDIX No. 14.

SANCTUARIES FOR WILD ANIMALS.

HAUTURU, OR LITTLE BARRIER, ISLAND. (Lat. 36° 12' S.; long. 175° 7' E.)

AFTER considerable difficulty and many vexatious legal delays the Crown at last obtained peaceable possession of the Island of Hauturu, or Little Barrier. This, however, was not carried out without the help of the Permanent Force, and the residence on the island for some months of one of the torpedo-men, and eventually the removal by a specially chartered vessel of all the live-stock on the island claimed by the Maoris. Having thus obtained possession, the next consideration was how to best carry out the object for which the island was purchased—viz., that of the preservation of native birds. This, it was felt, could best be done by the Auckland Institute, and it was agreed that the Government should grant £200 to cover the expenses of management for one year; that the Institute should appoint a resident curator; that the Government steamer, when making her periodical visitations to the northern lighthouses, should, when convenient, call at the island and land stores for the use of the curator. A sum of £250 was also granted for the erection of a house for the curator upon the island.

Since the island was formally handed over to the authorities of the Institute, Mr. Cheeseman, the secretary, reports: "The curator, Mr. Shakespeare, has maintained a strict supervision over it, and has taken care that no collectors have landed thereon. Rough tracks have been made to several of the highest peaks—some 2,000 ft. above the sea-level—and also to the eastern and western ends of the island. At present the northern side can only be reached by water, but it is hoped that during the coming summer a practicable track may be found across the centre of the island. Wild cats appear to be scarce, but a dog and several pigs have been killed—all of them, apparently, living upon the petrels and other sea-birds which visit the higher portions of the island for breeding purposes. It is satisfactory to state that land-birds are still plentiful. Mr. Shakespeare reports that the whole of those mentioned by Mr. Reischek in his memoir published in the 'Transactions of the New Zealand Institute' for 1886 (vol. xix., page 183) can still be found, with the exception of the saddleback (*Creadion carunculatus*), which he has not yet observed. The stitch-bird, which is now said to be found nowhere else except upon the Little Barrier, is not common, but a few pairs can always be seen near the foot of the higher peaks. Bell-birds and white-heads, which have altogether disappeared from the adjacent mainland, are abundant all over the island. Nearly every gully contains a few pairs of robins, while tuis, parrakeets, rifle-men, &c., are common enough. Material is being obtained for the preparation of a complete list of all birds found on the island, with remarks on their comparative numbers, nesting habits, &c. At the same time, a list of the indigenous plants will be compiled. A record will thus be obtained of the present position of both avifauna and flora. A large amount of the curator's time has of necessity been given to establishing himself upon the island. A garden has been formed, and stocked with vegetables. Preparations have been made for fencing some small paddocks, to prevent his cattle and sheep from roaming over the island. Improvements have been made to the landing-place, but much more is required to make the launching and drawing-up of a boat easy in even a moderately rough sea. The Institute would suggest that steps be taken to transfer to the island specimens of the huia, and other species not at present found thereon, and which there is reason to believe might be successfully acclimatised."

I have nothing more to add to this report of Mr. Cheeseman's as it goes fully into the whole situation up to the present date.

GERHARD MUELLER, Chief Surveyor.

RESOLUTION ISLAND. (Lat. 45° 40' S.; long. 166° 38' E.)

Dusky Sound, 31st March, 1897.

THE following is an outline of my year's work:—

Early last year I went to the head of the Sound and inland with Mr. Mackenzie's exploring party. In February my man went away for a holiday, and I went two trips to Cascade for birds. When he came back in May we camped out at Dry Point, Green Point, Mount Foster, Pickersgill, Fanny Bay, Beach Harbour, and several times at Cascade, generally staying about a fortnight to catch and transport birds, and then coming home to Pigeon Island for a shave and a drying and more "tucker." I enclose a tracing of the islands to show the position, number, and kind of birds liberated. We put out 273, making a total of 408 birds.

There are many shallow estuaries about Dusky. In Goose Cove, Cormorant, Cascade, Supper Cove, Duck Cove, and Fanny Bay there are considerable areas dry at low water, with abundance of tiny shells and crabs in the mud, and swarms of green shrimps in every little shallow; yet very few ducks—only about one pair of Paradise and a few teal and grey duck in each cove—which may be accounted for by the almost total absence of grass, for there are big streams of fresh water to form those mud flats.

With the wild weather here I foresaw we would be many a day idle at Pigeon Island, and decided to cut down bush and try a few acres of grass. The first year we were here there was a genial spring, and the neck of our peninsula grew splendid rye-grass, so that I was encouraged, though I could see the soil was peaty. Even now the grass grows fairly along our pathways, as if it required tramping, as well as more earthy matter. I hoped to have got goats for that purpose, but I find that I cannot bring goats here, and I am beginning to think that grass will not grow without the animals that need it. Moas may have acted that part on the East Coast. However, there