

APPENDIX B

KAPITI ISLAND

Climatic Conditions.—Throughout the year the weather has, on the whole, been mild, and in particular there has been an absence of violent southerly storms. It is considered that these favourable weather conditions are the reason for the flourishing nature of the flora and fauna on the Island.

Birds.—In certain directions there has been a definite increase in the bird population. Kakas, whiteheads, bell-birds, tuis, robins, and red-fronted parakeets have been more in evidence than during the past two years. Wekas are plentiful everywhere. For this increase, favourable weather conditions and the gradual extension of the forest covering with the consequent increase in food-supplies are, no doubt, responsible. A colony of red-billed gulls nested on the point at Rangitira. At the height of the breeding season more than fifty nests were in use.

Trees.—The bush continues to encroach rapidly on to the grassed area, and it will not be many years before the sanctuary is completely covered with bush again. Seedling miro, maire, and matai, with many smaller forest trees, are gradually extending the range of the main forest, and are even extending on to the coastal forest slopes. The manuka areas have passed their climax and are ceasing to regenerate. Small plantings of trees exotic to the island have been made, comprising southern rata, rimu, and kahikatea. One noticeable feature of the year was the complete failure of the rata to flower, not a single tree in flower being seen. It is thought, in the immediate future, planting should be concentrated mainly on trees which will provide food for bird-life fairly quickly.

Vermin.—There is no evidence of an increase in the number of opossums, which remains relatively small. Likewise there is no sign of an increase in rats, although they are still too numerous. Observations tend to establish the fact that they are mainly concentrated along the edges of the beaches and bush.

General.—There have been an exceptional number of visitors during the year, some of the most interesting being overseas members of the recent Science Congress. Photographic and sound records of the island and birds have been made by the National Film Unit and the National Film Studios. It is felt that the sanctuary is fulfilling the purpose for which it was created, and that, as time goes on, greater public interest will be taken in its welfare.

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