

SANCTUARIES FOR THE PRESERVATION OF AVIFAUNA AND FLORA.

Little Barrier Island.

"Very unsettled weather was experienced during the first part of the year. The commencement of the breeding season in the early spring was cold and windy, but later on the weather improved, and the birds were then to be seen in numbers in the gullies and on the flat engaged in their building operations. Fantails and wrens were amongst the first to begin nesting. Bell-birds (*Anthornis melanura*, korimako), white-headed canary (*Orthonyx albigilla*, popokatea), pied tits (*Petræca toitoi*, miromiro), fantails (*Rhipidura flabellifera*, piwakawaka) and tuis (*Prosthemadera novæ-zelandiæ*) have increased considerably. The number of young birds seen this year are in excess of what we have noticed in former years, the birds in many instances rearing two broods during the season. In manuka and bush growing within fifty yards of the house we found the nests of bell-birds, whiteheads, warblers, and fantails, and a pair of bell-birds safely hatched out their broods in manuka over-shadowing our meat-safe within ten yards of our back door.

"This year, owing to favourable climatic conditions, the blossoms of various flowering-shrubs were in great profusion, there being a beautiful display of white tea-tree (*Leptospermum scoparium*), rata (*Metrosideros robusta*), various kinds—red, white, and yellow—pohutukawa (*Metrosideros tomentosa*), cedar (Kohekohe, *Dysoxylum spectabile*), *Olearia cunninghamii*, mahea (*Melicytus ramiflorus*), *Coprosma robusta*, and rangiora (*Brachyglottis repanda*), and this, no doubt, conduces in a great measure to a successful breeding-season.

"Tracks.—The track to the top of Mount Herikohou, which had become somewhat overgrown, was cleared again last month, and whilst working there a few wood-robins (toutouwai, *Petræca longipes*) and stitch-birds (hihi, *Pogonornis cincta*), both old and young, were seen, besides numbers of tuis, bell-birds, pigeons (kukupu, *Carpodaga novæ-zelandiæ*), tits, and whiteheads.

"During the year several other tracks connecting the various ranges have been opened up and widened.

"Oil-launch.—Our launch so far has safely weathered the gales. She has made sixty-five trips (extract from log), and covered under sail and oil-engine 1,965 miles during the year. She has been three times to Auckland for repairs to the engine, painting, &c. Being constantly in the water, she requires to be frequently cleaned and painted, and there is no means of doing anything of the kind down here. The engine at present works satisfactorily."

The caretaker, Mr. Shakespear, reports that there is no sign of any unauthorised persons having landed, or the birds having been in any way molested.

Some photographs of nests of the bell-bird, whiteheaded canary, and fantail, probably the first of the two former that have ever been photographed, are reproduced in this report.

Resolution Island.

Mr. Richard Henry, the Government custodian of Resolution Island, the avifauna sanctuary in Dusky Sound, South Island, reports encouragingly on the native-bird life on the island. He states, however, that fishermen and others visiting the Sounds have given him a good deal of trouble by destroying the ducks and other birds. When visiting neighbouring localities, such as Chalky and Preservation Inlets, he says he "did not see a duck of any kind, but dogs and guns at every camp, and a litter of kaka and pigeon feathers." He was told that this was the result of havoc caused by ferrets and weasels, but he could not believe that these animals were to blame for all he saw. It is very desirable that stringent regulations should be made, providing heavy penalties for persons landing in the Fiordland district with dog or gun; until this is done the native birds will inevitably be decimated.

Mr. Henry now has a motor-boat in which he patrols the shores of Resolution Island whenever the weather permits, and visits the neighbouring mainland in search of wingless species of birds—kiwi, roa, and kakapo—many hundreds of which he has, during his residence in the Sound, transferred to Resolution. In the latter part of last year he liberated seven more kakapo or ground-parrot on the island. Kaka and pigeon, according to Mr. Henry, are still numerous, and he found native robins (which he had thought were all gone) on one of the small islands. The beautiful paradise duck breeds close to Mr. Henry's place at Pigeon Island, and in his report he places on record some interesting observations with regard to their habits.

Sounds National Park.

It has been reported that, owing to the invasion of stoats and weasels from the eastern district, the native-bird life is diminishing, more especially the kiwi and kakapo. Good work for the preservation of these birds is being done on Resolution Island, but the question of obtaining a small island of the Stewart Group for this purpose might be considered.