

"The rewarewa was covered in blossom, much to the delight of the honey-sucking birds. It is now covered with its canoe-shaped seed-pods, and parrakeets are already sampling the seeds.

"The birds seem to have had another good season.

"Pigeons again nested close to our house, one nest being within two chains. The young were reared successfully in the three nests we had under observation. The kaka that nested in the tree, occupied a few years ago by a morepork, never came back to the same place again.

"Several nesting trees that have been used for years by the parrakeets were again made use of by these pretty little birds, and a family reared in each case. That introduced pest (as far as the native birds are concerned) the starling, ousted parrakeets out of two nesting-places. Starlings not only interfere with the nesting-places of the parrakeets, but rob the other birds of a great deal of fruit. Sometimes great flocks of them haunt the bush when ngaio berries are ripe. It does not take long for a flock of even a hundred starlings to strip a ngaio of its fruit.

"Tuis and korimako nested and reared the usual number of young.

"Robins are about all over the sanctuary. They certainly have increased during the last few years. We have a pair that come about close to the house.

"For some reason tomtits are not so much in evidence about Rangatira this season, although they are plentiful on other parts of the sanctuary.

"Whiteheads are still amongst the commonest birds on Kapiti. In January last we had a whitehead's nest under observation in which the longtailed cuckoo had deposited its egg. It was interesting to see the whitehead feeding the young parasite. By the time it was ready to leave the nest it was twice as big as the foster parent. When it was ready to fly I put an aluminium band on its leg. The band was marked, "Kapiti, N.Z., 1936." We were able to get one or two good photographs of the young bird being fed by the whitehead.

"Fantails are more plentiful this year than for years past. Several nested quite close to our house.

"Kiwi seem to be doing well. It is difficult to estimate the number of kiwi on Kapiti, but that they are plentiful is proved by the finding of their feathers caught up in the hooked grass (*Uncinaria*) all over the sanctuary.

"I have seen no trace of the kakapo for some time now. Neither have I seen nor heard the saddlebacks, but it is quite possible to pass close by them and not see or hear them. Except in the springtime they are fairly quiet birds. They have certainly shifted from where they were seen feeding young ones a few years ago. There are any number of places where they could be.

"Moreporks are about in their usual numbers. So are harriers. I saw a sparrow hawk flying over Rangatira in March.

"The petrels are breeding in ever increasing numbers, not only along the cliffs of the western side, but in the bush in different places along the side facing the mainland. It is quite likely that at least four species breed on Kapiti.

"The pretty little banded dotterell was much in evidence on the flax near Okupe Lake. The stilt was also to be seen in considerable numbers at the north end.

"The shags are increasing. Outlawed and destroyed in so many parts of the country, in spite of the help they give anglers by preying on eels, they at least find sanctuary here. They breed in inaccessible places at the south-western corner of Kapiti. The spotted shag—a rare visitor—was seen about in the middle of March. The blue herons nested in the usual places, but there seems to be no more than usual. The old ones drive the young away after they are reared. I have seen them flying to the mainland.

"The torea, or oyster catcher, were again about the small islets. They reared two young.

"The paradise ducks did well. Three pairs reared young. I saw a flock of fourteen by my boat-shed a few days ago. Grey ducks nested in many different parts of the sanctuary as well as in the swamp in front of the house. At the present time, March, the lake at the north end is black with ducks that have come over from the mainland.

"The little blue penguin was just as plentiful as ever, in spite of the heavy mortality amongst these birds a year or so ago through oil having been cast on the waters of Cook Strait.

"I saw an interesting sight at Christmas time. Fourteen blue penguins were rounding up fish in the bay near my boat-shed and the birds were swimming backwards and forwards in almost a straight line across the bay, seemingly driving the fish into the corner. When satisfied that the fish were trapped, the penguins all started diving at once. The team work was splendid. Penguins are now ashore at nights and the noise they make is sometimes appalling.

"Gulls and terns nested as usual on Tokamapuna and around the island. A pair of black-backed gulls built a nest on Rangatira point.

"During the year I found a fern growing in the Rangatira bush that has not hitherto been recorded from this island. It is called *Blechnum nigrum*."

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