

lawyer provides the birds with a great deal of food when the small raspberry-like fruit is ripe. The kohia, or passion fruit, was also covered with flowers. Although not so conspicuous in the flowering-stage as the other two vines I have mentioned, it makes up for this when it bears its lovely fruit like a small orange in late autumn. Parrakeets are particularly fond of the seeds contained in the orange-coloured cases, so are blue wattled crows, but we have none of these charming birds on Kapiti. The kareao, or supplejack, flowered as usual and will provide some much-needed food in winter, but few birds care much for the berries. It is generally left to the last. The same applies to the berries of the porokaiwhiri, or pigeon-wood. Pigeons are often seen eating the leaves and young shoots of other plants in winter and early spring, even though there are plenty of berries on the pigeon-wood.

"Another plant that has done well this year is the turutu (*Dianella intermedia*). Although a common plant in many parts of the country, it is only seen to advantage when growing in a warm, sheltered place. The flowers are nothing much to look at, but when covered with the exquisite fairly large berries like small blue-bags hanging in graceful clusters, one of the gems of the bush is before you. The slightest breeze shakes off the berries, otherwise this plant would be in great demand for rock gardens. The weka is the only bird I have seen eating the berries of the turutu.

"Generally speaking, the birds have had a good year. Pigeons are numerous. All the pairs near our house reared, or are rearing, young. Kakas seem about the same; several pairs of them work about amongst the dead trees near Rangatira, tearing the rotten wood to pieces after grubs. Parrakeets have done exceptionally well, especially the red-headed species—they are to be seen everywhere. Three different flocks of yellow-headed were seen during the year. They are much more retiring than the red-headed. Tui and korimako are very plentiful; some are always about our house after syrup. It was only during the flowering of the rata and pohutukawa that we missed them. The wet season has been ideal for the robins and tomtits. They were never short of grubs. Both can now be seen in places where they were absent years ago. So much growth has come up, thus providing these bush species with plenty of cover on nearly every part of the Island.

"The saddle-backs were neither seen nor heard by myself during the year, but Mr. Hughes, the recently appointed trapper, heard bird notes that were strange to him. He is well acquainted with the commoner birds, but does not know the saddle-back. He heard the strange notes in the same place where the saddle-backs were last seen, so it may have been the call of this bird that he heard.

"The blind kakapo was seen once during the year quite a mile away from where he was last observed some six years ago. As the bird was in good condition, this proves that food is plentiful and easy to obtain. The little whiteheads are as plentiful as ever. Young ones can be seen everywhere.

"The sea-birds were able to nest this year without the usual gales. Often the gulls and terns have a lot of their nests destroyed in November and December and have to start all over again. The usual nesting-places were occupied, as well as several new sites. Two large colonies of red-billed gulls nested on the cliffs at Paripatea, and dozens of young were reared.

"The large black-backed gull which nests all round the island and on the adjoining islets again reared the usual number of young. The little white-fronted tern also did well. Hundreds bred on Tokomapuna. It is a beautiful sight to see a flock of these graceful little birds working over shoals of fish. The fish that the terns get is a small silvery creature a few inches in length. It is chased to the surface by larger fish. The tern floating along with slowly flapping wings a few feet above the water constantly searching the surface catches a glimpse of silver. Like a flash it darts down, splashes into the water, and is seen to rise with a small fish in its bill. Then it flies swiftly in the direction of its nest, which is perhaps a mile away. During the breeding-seasons hundreds of them are doing this all day long. It is at this time of the year that they suffer great annoyance from the parasitic jaeger, a bird that does not hunt for himself, but steals from other birds. Darting amongst the hard-working terns this northern interloper singles out a tern that has caught a fish, pursuing it with relentless fury until the tern is so hard pressed he has to drop his catch. This the jaeger adroitly seizes and swallows before it reaches the water. The jaeger breeds around the shores of the Arctic Ocean. It appears about Kapiti in October and leaves again in March. The little blue penguin nested about the island in great numbers as usual. The thick-billed penguin from the south was seen on two occasions.

"Shags are about in the usual numbers. Blue herons never seem to increase, in spite of the fact that they rear young every year. There are no more now around Kapiti than there were ten years ago. All the adults must go to the mainland. Grey ducks nested along the shores of the island in at least four places, and several broods of young were noticed. The paradise ducks reared three broods. Some of the adult birds make across to the mainland, where I am afraid many are shot.

"Stilts and banded dotterel frequented the north-end during the breeding-season."

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