

Noxious Weeds and Animals.

Pests of the latter kind are a negligible factor in the North Island scenic reserves, but in the South Island a small expense is annually required to keep rabbits in check. A few reserves in the North, and more in the South Island, require an annual expenditure to keep weeds in subjection; but the wholesale statement that some reckless people occasionally make, to the effect that scenic reserves are regular nurseries for noxious weeds, is an unwarranted exaggeration. In most instances where noxious weeds have invaded scenic and forest reserves they have spread there from adjacent badly farmed lands.

Fencing.

The most expensive item that has to be considered in connection with the preservation of scenic reserves is fencing. Reserves that are contiguous to settled lands, if not fenced, are always subject to trespass by stock, with the certain result that the bush gets so damaged and disfigured that, having lost its attractiveness, there is often an agitation to have the reservation removed. In most cases a cattle-proof fence only is necessary, as in dense virgin bush sheep will not penetrate. The reserves that want first attention in this respect are, of course, those nearest important highways, such as the Main Trunk Railway, Wanganui River, &c.

Native Birds.

In the vicinity of Waikaremoana I found that the following birds are still numerous—tuis, bell-birds (*korimako*), pigeons, kakas, whiteheads, black swans, grey duck, and widgeon; in the Ohura district tuis, bell-birds, pigeons, kakas, and kokakos are still plentiful; in the bush existing in all other places visited, fantails, native wrens, and black-headed tits are always to be found, though, with the exception of the fantail, they are not plentiful. The diminishing number of native birds is due chiefly, of course, to the advance of settlement, but also largely to the competition for food-supply caused by the increase in foreign birds; doubtless, also, stoats and weasels are to a large extent responsible. The huia was reported to have been seen in two widely separated districts, but searchers failed to find them. It is probable that the kokako (native crow) gets mistaken for the huia. The kokako, except in very out-of-the-way places, is now scarce in the North Island. I find that this bird is often miscalled the "bell-bird" by North Island bushmen, and this fact perhaps explains the misleading reports occasionally received as to the bell-bird having been seen. I noticed that the robin present on Kapiti Island is the North Island robin.

Mr. Bennett, caretaker of the Kapiti sanctuary, reports that the flightless ducks put on the island some years ago by Dr. Cockayne were seen last year.

Botanical.

As I stated at first, my field-work for this year was restricted, so I have little of botanical interest to recount. On Ngamoko Mountain I found *Quintinia acutifolia*, a rare tree in the North Island; at Waikare-iti I found the large-leaved celery-pine (*Phyllocladus glaucus*); at Waikaremoana *Angelica rosæfoliam*, a native aniseed; on Ngamoko Mountain *Nothopanax Sinclairii*, a small-leaved houhou; also in the same locality *Nertera setulosa*, a small herbaceous plant; at Waikaremoana *Urtica incisa* var. *linearifolia*, a flaccid, scrambling nettle; at Ngamoko Mountain *Asplenium lucidum* var. *anomodum*, a rare fern that grows on lime-containing rocks; also at the same spot *Azorella trifoliolata*, a weak prostrate herb; *Lycopodium densum* at Owhango; at the Mokau River the small bristle-fern *Trichomanes elongatum*; and in the neighbourhood of Ohura and Whangamomona *Nothofagus fusca* (the red-beech). It is rather interesting that at Mokau and (as far as I could find) at Ohura and Whangamomona the red-beech is the only beech found (it is plentiful at the three localities), whilst all along the right bank—the northern side—of the Wanganui River (in some places not more than ten miles away), where there is no appreciable difference in climate and where the soil is identical, the black-beech (*Nothofagus Solanderi*) is the only beech found. This abrupt division of the two species is very remarkable.

General Observations.

The formation of the National Society for the Protection and Preservation of New Zealand Forests and Bird-life is to be warmly welcomed. The society should prove a most valuable aid to the Government in carrying out the intentions of the Scenery Preservation Act. Each member of the society should consider himself an unofficial ranger, and should not content himself with the reflection that he is an advocate of forest-preservation; but he might report cases of burning or cutting-down of bush and trespass of stock in State reserves, and the destruction of protected native birds. It is only at a few of the most important reserves that the State can afford to keep a salaried Ranger; and in the guardianship of the unprotected reserves the members of the society can afford valuable assistance.

Some public-spirited Maori landowners—e.g., Te Heu Heu Tukino, Mrs. Nini Koro, and Waata Hipango—have generously given portions of their lands as public pleasure resorts; but generally the Maoris are opposed to the acquisition of portions of their lands for scenery-preservation purposes, even though they receive for the parts taken compensation that is assessed by Judges of the Native Land Courts. May it not be pointed out to the Maori landowners that these lands taken for scenery-preservation are taken for our mutual benefit and for the benefit of our successors—Maori as well as European. Do not the Maori inhabitants of this country take a pride in its beauty equal even to that which the newly arrived European takes? Do they not wish to see preserved for their heirs even small portions of that forest in which their ancestors for a thousand years have hunted, and every plant of which they knew with a familiarity superior to that of the most ardent modern garden-lover? In every Maori we should have a ranger who would defend the inviolability of a scenic reserve with a zeal double that of the European, who has not these associations, and who can be influenced only by its æsthetic and scientific value.

E. PHILLIPS TURNER.