

The extermination of goats is considered to be one of the most important works at present being undertaken on the island, and the caretaker has spent no fewer than sixty-three days hunting these animals. Out of this number of days, on thirty-two occasions the caretaker did not see any goats, as they are now taking to the most inaccessible places. He estimates the number still at large to be seven. During the year eighty-three goats were destroyed, making a total of 216 since Mr. Wilkinson took over the care of the sanctuary.

The destruction of wild sheep is also a problem. Ten sheep were shot whilst eating young trees planted out by the caretaker. Arrangements have been made with neighbours to shoot out the sheep for the skins.

Fifteen wild cats were destroyed during the year. Apart from the young birds taken by cats, the robin, whitehead, and saddleback are easy prey, more especially the robin, as it gets practically all its food off the ground. Rats are very numerous, and are being destroyed as quickly as possible. The opossum-trapper has done good work, although the wet winter interfered with his work.

A considerable amount of time was spent during the year putting out plants both on the fence-line and in other suitable places. About 8 chains of the fence-line were planted with seeds and plants. Two hundred ngaio and twenty taupata given by Mr. Webber were planted on the boundary, but the dry weather killed a number of them. Some 450 plants not found on the island were put out in different places from the fence-line to the basin. With the exception of fifty pohutukawas, one whau, and several species of veronica, which were sent by the Wellington City Council, nearly all the seeds and plants were sent by Mr. K. W. Dalrymple, of Bull's. Mr. Dalrymple had apparently gone to much trouble and expense to procure the seeds and plants, as they arrived in beautiful condition.

About one hundred plants of *Dawsonia superba* and a packet of seed of *Podocarpus dacrydioides* were also set out. A number of plants from the Hen Island were put out and are surviving, while some have made considerable growth. One totara, for instance, has grown 18 in. since August last.

During October, 1925, the caretaker was away at the Hen Island catching saddlebacks for the island sanctuaries. The required number was caught, and those birds liberated on Kapiti have taken to their new home admirably. The majority of the birds on the island have prospered, especially the tui. The long-tailed cuckoo was prominent during the early part of the nesting season, and no doubt interfered considerably with the domestic affairs of the smaller birds. Dozens of nests were robbed, the principal victims being the robin, tomtit, whitehead, and the fantail. Even the pigeon did not escape, as one nest under observation was robbed of its only egg. Several of these parasitic birds were noticed by the caretaker being fed by the little whitehead. Several nests of the red-headed parrakeet were found, and numerous young birds were seen about. Two nests of the morepork were found. The young moreporks were fed on full-grown rats, so that these birds are doing some good. In December last an interesting visitor in the shape of a black fantail arrived, and has been noticed on several occasions since. Another bird, rare in these parts, the yellow tufted penguin (*Eudyptis chrysocome*), came ashore in January, and after going through the moult put to sea again.

The Kapiti Island Sanctuary under the capable management of Mr. Wilkinson is sure to be a success. Mr. Wilkinson is an enthusiastic worker, and takes an intelligent interest in all matters relating to the flora and fauna of the island.

H. W. C. MACKINTOSH,
Commissioner of Crown Lands.

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