

the tui (*Prosthemadera*) and the bell-bird (*Anthornis*) into the middle of some of the larger towns to feed at the flowers of the introduced Australian *Eucalyptus* tree. Buller once believed the latter of these two honey-eaters to be extinct on the mainland; yet it is now common in many suburban gardens.

2. INTRODUCED ANIMALS.—Here is undoubtedly the second greatest factor in the decrease of New Zealand birds; a factor, however, of far less importance than (1). Cats, dogs, stoats, weasels, ferrets, rats, pigs—some introduced accidentally, others intentionally—all are taking toll of the native birds, and no measures of any kind whatsoever are being employed to check them. As usual, of course, man himself is one of the most destructive of these introduced animals, either in his capacity of hunter or of collector. The opinion is still widespread that the native birds are doomed, and that we may as well take our share of them, whether for the pot or the museum, before it is too late. But this is a grossly exaggerated view. After a stocktaking of the endemic species, I wrote in 1923 that "eight endemic species have either increased in one or more localities, or appeared in places in which they were hitherto unknown; five have definitely decreased since 1905; and thirty are either easily and obviously maintaining their ground or in no worse position than in 1905. Four species were extinct long before 1905, chiefly through fires and collectors." Of the remaining species there was insufficient evidence of former or present status, or both, to venture an opinion.

In addition to the weasels, some 26 species of foreign birds are naturalised in New Zealand. Research is needed into the effects of their competition, direct or indirect, on the native birds.

3. FIRE.—This is the chief weapon of the farmer in the conversion of forest into grassland, and as such is the chief agent in (1) above. But, in addition, there is considerable evidence that grass fires on the original tussock plains of the South Island were the principal factors in the total extinction of the New Zealand quail.

It remains now to indicate what is being done to protect the birds which are left, and what ought to be done to preserve them more effectively. There are two kinds of bird-protection—passive and active. So far as the first is concerned, New Zealand probably leads the world; for under the Animals Protection and Game Act of 1921 almost every native bird is absolutely protected, while a small number is placed on a game schedule which permits their being shot at certain times and under very restricted conditions. It is now the policy of the Government to refuse collecting permits to non-residents, and in the event of specimens