

WEKAS GO TO SCHOOL.

At our school away up here in the far north we have a couple of wekas which come to school every day. Certainly they do not learn the lessons we are taught but they are very wise all the same, and in some matters know more than we do. I suppose they get to know a lot because they are so inquisitive. They have wonderfully sharp eyes too, and the grub is lucky which escapes their strong beak. They first made their appearance early in October last when I saw them come round the corner and walk into our shelter shed. The teacher was told about the arrival of the new scholars and he went out to see them. Then he asked all of us to go out and make friends with them. The birds, however, were shy and bashful, as new boys often are, and ran away and hid. During the play interval pieces of bread were collected from our lunches and left in the shelter shed, and immediately we were back in school the wekas came out of their hiding place and seemed to enjoy the scraps of food very much. Now they come to school every morning, and before we start work each day a collection of food is made from our lunches which now the birds seem to look forward to. This shows that if we are kind to birds they soon recognise us as friends.

—F. J. TOCKER, Parua Bay.

VALUE OF NON-GAME BIRDS.

Through a very large amount of scientific research it is now known that the great majority of wild birds are highly beneficial to man, that many other species do much more good than harm, and that very few do more harm than good. This information forms the foundation of the laws for the protection of non-game birds which have been enacted in many States, not at the behest of sentimentalists, for aesthetic reasons, but upon the urgent recommendation of the Department of Agriculture, for purely practical reasons. So thoroughly is the economic value of birds now established that even Italy, where destruction of small birds was greatest, has enacted laws for their protection.—*The Practical Value of Birds*.

“An acquaintance with useful birds of the farm is as important to the farmer as is a knowledge of the insect pests which attack his crops. . . . Were the natural enemies of forest insects annihilated, every tree in our woods would be threatened with destruction, and man would be powerless to prevent it.”—FORBUSH.