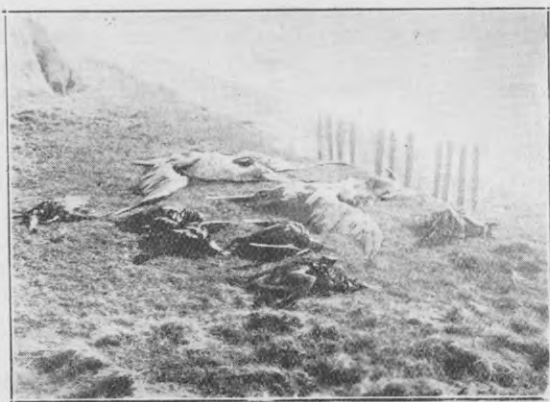


however, not quite wide enough as the opossums are now very limited in number on Kapiti, and further any lessening of bird food supply must axiomatically be at the expense of the birds, especially in the winter months. There is also the grave danger of the routine of bird food supply being upset where exotic plant-eating animals are present. For instance, opossums are reputed to be very fond of the young shoots of the Kotukutuku (or konini bearing tree), and by repeatedly removing the spring shoots of this deciduous tree cause the deaths of many trees. The konini is a particularly valuable bird food berry, and the loss of many of the trees which bear this berry will undoubtedly result in the depletion or extermination of some species of birds because the necessary food is not available at the particular time of need. The destruction of many other berries or trees, such as the Houhou or Five-finger must similarly have like results. Opossums are showing up in localities where they have not been legally introduced, and vastly greater precautions and penalties than those at present in vogue are essential to prevent illegal action by some of those monetarily interested in the skins of these animals.

There has been much talk but no decision has yet been arrived at with reference to an improved means of catching opossums than the present inhumane, cruel, and bird-destroying trap. A spreading of the agitation already commenced in some parts of the world against the wearing of furs, as was successfully done with feathers, will surely result if less cruel means of killing fur-bearing animals are not devised and strictly enforced.

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BIRDS KILLED BY OIL, FRESHWATER, ISLE OF WIGHT—GANNETS AND GUILLEMOTS.

[Photo by R.S.B.P.]