

Lizards and the larger insects, such as cicadas, grasshoppers, and crickets, furnish it with some portion of its provender. To the introduced rodents, rabbits, rats, and mice, it is winged destruction; pick up some of the castings from one of its favourite haunts, these will tell of its doing in checking undue increase in the number of the animals mentioned. The writer has some of these castings, which are compact masses of rabbit fur. . . . ; these harriers are daily, hourly, on and about the ricks of oaten hay, keenly alive to the expediency of making rats and mice contribute to their support.

"They usually select a breeding-place in a low-lying situation, among swamps or by the margins of lagoons; . . . . The nest, nearly always built on the ground, is made of coarse grasses, such as *tohe-tohe*, or the leaves of raupo form part of the material; . . . . When its breeding place is approached, it makes not a resolute defence of its eggs, like the falcon, but, if incubating, with shrill squeal of alarm, darts off with its long legs dangling below during the first few beats of its wings.

"... . Above the gorge of the Ashburton we have found the nest partly built with sprays of the thorny discaria, and the dead flower-stems of the large alpine form of *Aciphylla Colensoi*; above this dreadful bed of thorns, grass was carefully placed . . . . ; the eggs, usually four in number, are not glossy, but of a pure white; . . . . The months of November and December appear to be the height of the breeding season. . . .

"Nothing extenuate,  
Nor set down aught in malice."



WEKA.

The policeman of the forests. A wise and extremely valuable bird economically.

[Photo by Mrs. P. Moncrieff.]