

tame, quite different from the other species. The note of the large variegated cuckoos could be heard frequently, and at times bush-hawks would perch on the topmost branch of a dead rimu in the clearing. Woodhens were very numerous, but I never heard (as I used to on my brother's farm in Okoke, Taranaki) the kiwis' note. Great flocks of parraquets were feasting on the fuchsia berries. With the lovely tree-ferns bending over the river, the rangiora and wineberry in bloom, here and there the crimson blossom of the rata, or of the honeysuckle, the waving branches of the rimus or kahikatea, with the birds everywhere singing at the top of their voices, it made a scene I shall never forget.

"As to your Society, however, I fear you are too late on the scene. The introduction of ferrets, stoats, weasels, and other vermin, which, leaving the rabbits untouched and made straight-way for the birds, was the end of them. Afterwards, as this was not enough, the little German owl was brought out. Then deer, thar, chamois, elk, goats, and other such pests, ruinous and destructive to our native bush, were introduced. I have seen acres of bush ruined for all time by these pests, the bark stripped, the branches of many broken down with their teeth, the seed-beds beneath trodden hard and ruined by their feet. You will never now rid the bush of these destructive pests. The bush in New Zealand is doomed, together with the native birds. The mountains will eventually become heaps of debris, slipping into the river beds and covering the lower lands with stones and soil. It will for ever be a lasting monument to the insensate folly of man, who, without thought or reason, has brought a lovely and beautiful forest-covered land, replete with unique and exquisite bird life, to ruin. I repeat, sir, and with deep regret I say it—you are now *too late* to save either the birds or the forest they live by and which also depends on them."

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Now should we just give in and say we cannot, or should we act in that spirit which made Britain great? Once the public can be brought to realize the economic importance of bird and bush, conservation is easy; but the public must be on the side of the forests and birds, and it is in their interests to be so. Our forest-inhabiting birds were evolved for those conditions prevailing at the period Mr. Gibson writes. Return our remaining forests to their natural condition and the birds will be there. Plant-eating animals and fire are now the greatest menace to the homes and food supplies of our forest-inhabiting birds. Good progress has been made since the inauguration of the Native Bird Society. Let us carry on, and with the help of all the better thinking, the impossible shall be done. Mr. Gibson has offered to lend his help too.