

One thing my little friend is proud of, that is his hunting ground. He guards it jealously. Silver-eyes, red-polls, an occasional dunnoek (hedge sparrow) he promptly chases away; they seldom come back. Once a little hen tomtit ventured to trespass, and to my surprise he dealt out the same treatment to her. I have never seen her come back.

In the food line Pip is becoming particular. Where before he ate any and every insect that ventured to show above the ground, he now chooses a species of grass grub, a small wire worm. From morning till night he does little but eat. His holding capacity appears to be enormous. I estimate that he eats about fifty grubs an hour at that rate for about ten hours a day; the most optimistic of people could not but suppose that something dreadful is bound to happen. I used to think so myself. Yet it never does. What's more, he stubbornly refuses to get any fatter. At the end of a day he is as hungry looking, as energetic, and as perky and cheerful as when he is waiting for me in the mornings.

I often wonder where Pip goes to roost. I have never been able to discover that. He appears to be busy as long as there is daylight, hunting, ever hunting grubs. Perhaps to-night he is asleep in some gorse bush, his head tucked under his wing, confidently awaiting the morrow, dreaming maybe of the grubs he will catch for his endless meal; for full well I know he will be there waiting for me in the morning and ready to share with me the duties of the day.

A REAL FRIEND.

(By a Dunedin Naturalist.)

We tamed a pair of tomtits this winter, and this month (September) they nested across the road in a neighbour's garden, and for three weeks I have not seen the hen. A part of our garden is dug every day so as to feed the male bird, and I keep a special feed tin in which to put the grass grubs and other insects as they are dug up, and our little friend comes along and empties it in good time. One Sunday I put 15 grass grubs in the tin and timed him. In exactly 30 minutes he had utilised all the grubs. Of these about one in three he ate, the others he took to the hen, which is perhaps a greater share than most husbands give to their wives. The following Saturday I was all day in the garden and counted the grubs actually given the bird as he followed me around. He took 43 from me, apart from those he found on his own account. When one observes that he has a regular round of about six gardens you can realise what a big bit of good one good little bird can do.