BIRDS

ISSUED BY

New Zealand Native Bird Protection Society (Inc.)

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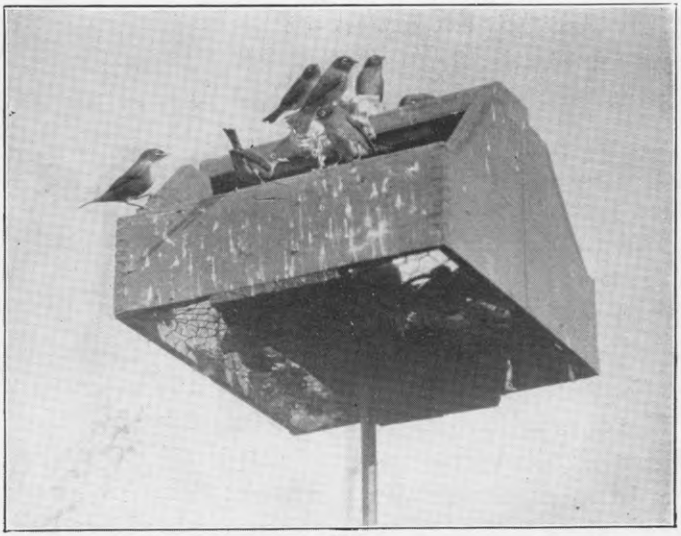


WHITE EYES FEEDING—AN AUGUST EPISODE.

OBJECTS—To advocate and obtain the efficient protection and preservation of our native birds, enlisting the natural sympathy of our young, unity of control of all wild life, and the preservation of sanctuaries, scenic reserves, etc., in their native state.

Affiliated with the International Committee for the Protection of Wild Birds.

The foundation of true conservation is in the setting aside of sanctuaries efficiently and rigidly controlled by men who know how.

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

Life Members - £5.

Endowment Members, £1 per annum. Ordinary Members, 5/- per annum
Children - 1/- per annum.
(Membership open to all.)

New Zealanders! Protect Your Native Birds!

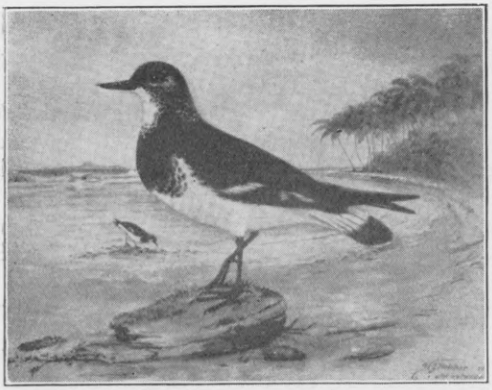
THE NEW ZEALAND NATIVE BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY (INC.)

Invites all those who have respect for our wonderful and unique native birds, all those who realise the great economic and æsthetic value of birds, all those who wish to preserve our unrivalled scenic beauties, to band together with the Society in an earnest endeavour to fully awaken public interest and secure efficient preservation, conservation and intelligent utilisation of our great heritage.

With the co-operation, appreciation and assistance of the general public New Zealand can stand unrivalled. Without such our forests will be hopelessly marred and destroyed by fire, animals and wasteful exploitation.

The ordinary subscription is—Adults 5/-, children 1/-. A ten-shilling note will pay for two years. The Life member's subscription is £5 0s. 0d., while Endowment member's subscription is £1 0s. 0d. per annum, and comprises those who desire to contribute in a more helpful manner towards the preservation of our birds and forests. Besides this, we ask for your co-operation in assisting to conserve your own heritage. Is it not worth while?

We aim at issuing only accurate information, all of which is checked by leading authorities. No remuneration is asked by any of our officers. Your contribution goes solely towards better informing others.



TURNSTONE.
From a Painting by Wm. J. Belcher, Fiji.

THE backbone of the prosperity of New Zealand is the efficient use of the land and the backbone of the land is the efficient conservation of our indigenous forests, because they prevent erosion and thereby the destruction of the lower fertile lands. Our indigenous forests, moreover, are the agents especially designed by Nature to prevent excessive floods, because, owing to their dense floor covering, when in their natural state, they hold back and retain surplus rainfall. In many other ways they are essential to the well-being of our land, such as in the maintaining of equable climatic conditions, and because they give off into the atmosphere during times of drought that moisture which they have conserved during periods of heavy rainfall. These indigenous forests, which cannot be replaced, are now being destroyed by ever-recurring fire, the conversion of steep country into non-economical use, and above all by introduced plant-eating animals for the pleasure and sport of a very few.

TOP-SOIL DEPLETION.

(By Capt. E. V. Sanderson.)

Some pages in human history reflect no credit upon mankind. First in importance is that page which describes man's treatment of the soil. Man was placed in a garden. He has transformed vast areas of it into desert. He has destroyed the cover on thousands of acres; he has laid waste wide stretches of pleasant country; he has made human life all but impossible in many places. The world is full of examples. Mediterranean nations now eke out a bare existence where once they maintained a flourishing civilisation. China periodically suffers from famine brought about by man's own destructive hand, says Mr. Arthur M. Hyde, Secretary of Agriculture, in "American Forests."

In New Zealand, where we have an extremely mountainous and hilly formation, the evils following deforestation are very pronounced even in the comparatively few years which have elapsed since the forest was destroyed. European authorities assert that it takes 400 years on an average for a forest to build one inch of top-soil, while agricultural and pastoral pursuits destroy an inch in from 10 to 50 years, according to the steepness of the country and the intensity of the destruction of tree and shrub growth. In New Zealand the loss of top-soil through over-grazing of steep country is probably much more than 1 inch in 10 years. When it is remembered that it is the top-soil which supplies us with our food and clothing per medium of the growing of wool, butter, meat, etc., such facts should make us pause and think. If the forest is removed from steep country, it is not only that area which is affected, but the water rushing down the forest-denuded slopes carries all manner of debris into the streams and rivers, filling their beds, causing them to spread over adjoining fertile lower lands, while the richest and finest material is that which reaches the sea, as is plainly shown by the discolouration during floods. Well might we learn from the experiences of older civilised lands such as in America, where it is estimated that 21,000,000 acres—an area exceeding the total area of arable land in Japan has gone entirely out of use owing to destructive erosion. China, however, can always provide the best instances of the results of erosion owing to deforestation, due it is said to the old-time belief that to plant trees would disturb the spirits of the soil.

In China some of the large rivers have in the course of hundreds of years brought down such gigantic amounts of

debris from the deforested inland country that the industrious Chinaman has had to continue raising his protecting stop-banks until now some rivers run at a higher level than the surrounding arable lands. Every now and again, however, the river confinement fails to hold the sudden rush of the mighty waters; the river breaks down its banks, flooding hundreds of square miles and carrying Chinamen, huts, bamboo fences and everything movable down towards the sea. There are, however, plenty of Chinamen, and directly the floods subside the drowned ones are replaced by others, who for the time till the rich silt robbed by the waters from the inland hills and deposited by the flood, calmly awaiting their turn to follow their predecessors down to the sea when next the flood breaks loose. Japan, on the other hand, has learned her lesson and for thousands of years has so well managed her agricultural and forest lands that erosion has almost been mastered, despite a dense population of 80,000,000. Are we doing likewise in New Zealand? Readers are invited to look round and see the denuding of the soil on hill and mountain slopes, and remember that Nature decrees that the fittest shall survive. Our forest service, of course, know all about these matters, but so far have failed to give sufficient attention to this the higher side of forestry; rather has their work been confined to the timber side of forestry alone, and well might the mere exploiting of our indigenous forest be considered the only thing possible when the position is so absurd that they have not even got control of the forests assigned to them so far as the inhabitants beneficial or otherwise are concerned, and we hear of purely sporting bodies talking about State forests as "our deer forests." Could forest absurdity reach greater heights? Let us again remember Nature decrees in all things that the fittest shall survive be it nation, bird, fish, insect or plant.

Such places as the Sahara Desert were once considered to be raised sea bottoms, but modern thought now believes the Sahara to be the original home of *Homo sapiens* (intelligent Man), a perhaps over-flattering term—otherwise the Garden of Eden—but *Homo sapiens* learned to use or rather mis-use fire and sharp-edged tools, with the result that he destroyed the forest and left behind what we now see. Shall we here in New Zealand follow in the usual footsteps of the Anglo-Saxon *Homo sapiens*, or be wise in time and learn to sacredly conserve the remnant of our irreplaceable indigenous forests, and thereby avoid the superhuman task of substituting them with vastly inferior exotic forests, so far as water conservation is concerned, and at a cost which New Zealand could not in the remotest degree afford or even contemplate.

SOME THOUGHTS ON SPORT.

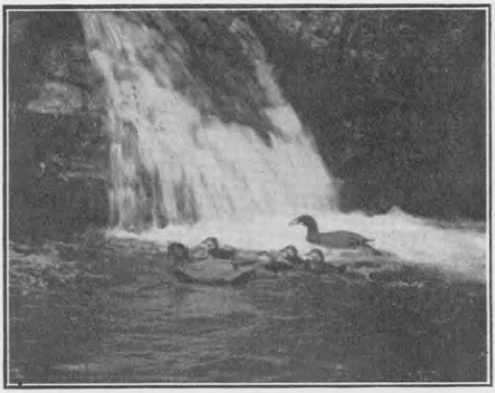
HAVOC OF BLUNDERING GUNMEN.

(By Leo Fanning.)

Who has not heard that old British saying: "It's a fine day. Let's go out and kill something"? Alas, there is another saying which can apply to New Zealand and many other countries: "It's any kind of a day. Let's go out and wound something."

Now that the season for the licensed firing at certain wild birds in this Dominion is drawing near, it is well to make a plea to shooters that they should act honourably, humanely—fairly and squarely—on the principles of true sport. After all, unless the attack on game is made with such a code which gives birds some measure of fair play against well-armed men, it ceases to be sport, and comes under the contempt of conscientious sportsmen.

The worst enemy of sport is the person who feels that the payment of a comparatively small license fee entitles him to go his own way, however callous or careless it may be, in his blazing at the birds. He stupidly takes a long shot which hits a duck, but has not shock enough to bring it down at once. It manages to escape, but its wound saps its strength, and it becomes easy food for a hawk or a weasel.



A FAMILY OF BLUE MOUNTAIN DUCKS IN TYPICAL ENVIRONMENT.

On another occasion, the stupid shooter, who is really an anti-sport, will fire into a flock of birds. He may not kill one outright, but he may wound several. He fails to bag them—and the birds are doomed to lingering death if they miss the merciful attention of a hawk or other enemy.

An indication of the havoc wrought by blundering hit-or-miss sportsmen and sportswomen is given by Darel McConkey in a contribution to "American Forests." He vividly describes how

Mr. H. M. Worcester, Reservation Protector of the Tule Lake Federal Bird Refuge, found thousands of birds which shooters had wounded in the game country just beyond the borders of the sanctuary. When hit, but not knocked out, the birds instinctively made for the Refuge, just as their relatives do in New Zealand in similar circumstances.

In two hours Mr. Worcester's clever retrieving spaniel, "Goldie," brought in 100 live birds and many dead ones—and this salvage work continued briskly throughout the season. From 24th November, 1931, to 5th January, 1932, the total of retrieved birds reached 3,224, of which 1,359 were mortally wounded. The remaining birds, 1,865, had been crippled. These were given hospital treatment, which included amputation of a wing in some cases. Many of these minor casualties recovered sufficiently for release in due course.

Every one of the wounded birds would have perished from cold or the onsets of eagles and hawks if Mr. Worcester had not intervened to save them. Even with the quick rescue activities of the retriever "Goldie," the birds of prey and coyotes had seized thousands of ducks and geese. "Thousands of skeletons on ice and land testified to the grim competition the saviours of the water-fowl encountered daily," remarked Mr. McConkey.

Well now! Is that kind of shooting any good for the conservation of sport? Does it help to maintain the supply of birds for future shooting seasons? Could that destructive peppering hope to command the approval of true sportsmen?

Even a worse offence than careless or clumsy marksmanship is the working of mean confidence tricks against game-birds. Some persons—who no doubt regard themselves as "good sports"—have the habit of setting food regularly for a period near the haunts of waterfowl before the opening of the shooting season. Then they will be ready in a hiding-place for their victims, and from their cunning cover their modern fire-arms will wreak easy slaughter.

That kind of cruel killing is a breach of all the principles of sport. Indeed, it does as much for the killing of sport as it does for the butchery of the tricked ducks. That practice has been fairly termed "trickery and treachery."

In articles on game conservation by expert American writers one sees the term "game crop." It means that the only common-sense policy for sportsmen to have for game is one which will maintain the supply of birds. Such a policy must necessarily

provide for a severe checking of practices which do not give the wild birds a fair chance of survival.

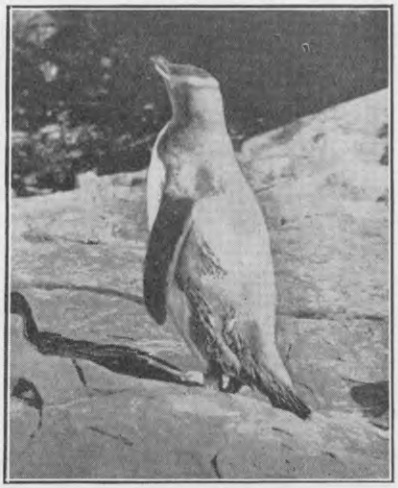
Maoris of olden times had a good understanding of "game cropping." Birds which they desired to take for food they killed quickly. They wounded none, and they were careful to avoid excessive killing. Danger of extermination of birds did not come until Europeans arrived with their weapons and their lack of commonsense for the conservation of game.

Working for that "game crop," Federal and State authorities of the U.S.A. and public-spirited private owners of estates have established many permanent sanctuaries where the birds will have suitable cover. That good example should be followed in New Zealand by folk who desire the survival of game birds.

GERMAN OWLS.

The position so far as the German Owl menace is concerned is that the N.Z. Native Bird Protection Society has offered to contribute towards the paying of a bounty or towards the cost of other methods of lessening the destruction caused by this virile pest, and suggests that the Department of Internal Affairs and those Acclimatisation Societies which were responsible for the introduction of the owl should contribute towards the cost, as it is quite beyond the means at the disposal of the Bird Society to carry the whole burden. These two Societies responsible have, however, declined to participate. The offer so far as the Bird Society is concerned means that as our trust funds are earmarked for certain special work, which does not include the paying of a bounty for the destruction of pests, they have to find the money from sums honorarily contributed for other purposes, and this is in order to offset the mischief done by those Acclimatisation Societies which were the main agents in importing the pest. When it is considered that the gross income of Acclimatisation Societies is more than 20 times that of the Bird Society, it will be considered that the offer to participate in the paying of this bounty is an exceedingly generous one.

Now insects, in contradistinction to vertebrates, are in the great majority vegetable-feeders, both by ancestral predilection and modern practice. So that in regard to what we may call biological trade, the complicated circulation of matter through lifeless forms in earth, water, and air through green plants, animal bodies, and microscopic scavengers like moulds and bacteria, and back into lifeless forms again, the nett effect of birds is to be a check upon insects in their consumption of green plants and their products. In this way they are obviously the allies of man; remove every bird in the world at one stroke, the biological balance would be tilted, and it would be much harder even than now to protect man's crops and trees from the ravages of their persistent insect consumers. Birds, in fact, are one of the few groups of animals whose activities as a whole are useful to man.



PENGUIN IN CHARACTERISTIC ATTITUDE.

But do not let us run away with the idea that economics are everything. There was a letter in *"The Times"* not long ago apropos of Sir Hilton Young's Bill for safeguarding some of the beauties of the countryside. The writer, after pointing out that the Bill, if it became law, would involve in certain cases some financial sacrifice for individuals or for the country, continued, "and, after all, the aims of the measure are merely aesthetic"—and therefore, in his estimation, not to be weighed against even small quantities of £ s. d.

It is just this point of view—the attitude embodied in that word *merely*—which I want to combat. Economics is the foundation of everything, and money is money and must be made. We may know that elementary truth well enough, and yet be permitted the reminder that the really important thing is what we are going to ask of our money when we have made it. We may ask leisure, or a bigger house, or travel, or a gay life, or power, or bits of several of these in turn. And one thing that some will want to ask for is the refreshment of unspoilt country

and the delight of wild birds. England is getting so crowded now, with mechanical devices so huge and pervading, and travel so easy, that the different things different people ask from money are coming to clash with each other. If the wants of different kinds of people are to be satisfied, there has got to be not only forbearance and goodwill, but regulation and restriction.

The bird-watcher and the bird-lover ask for more birds, and more different kinds of them, and more opportunities of quietly watching and studying them. In the last thirty or forty years there has been a welcome change in the attitude of the general public about birds. They are more interested in them, fonder of them, delight to see photographs and read accounts of them in their wild state, but deprecate the killing of them or the wanton taking of their eggs much more than they used to do. The bird-watcher can help the growth of this changed attitude. We have gone a long way, but could go much further. In some American towns there are now bird-boxes everywhere in city parks and private gardens, and bird-tables and bird-baths—and naturally an enormous increase in the number of birds to gladden the eyes of city dwellers. In Germany, before the war, I went once casually into the city park at Würzburgh, and found an astounding plenty of birds, and people feeding them. One man had a couple of tits on his hand, chaffinches and blackbirds at his feet; he told me he once had a spotted woodpecker swoop down from a tree and take a nut from his fingers. And the hawfinches, those fantastic huge-billed birds, so shy that many country people do not know of their existence even where they are not uncommon —they were sitting about in the trees like sparrows; I even saw a pair of them courting over a public path and in full view and sound of the trams and traffic in the street beyond.

We could encourage and tame birds like this in our own garden and our cities and our parks if we wanted to.

The bird-lover can help to see that the Bird Protection laws are enforced; for, in spite of the general change of attitude, there is still plenty of killing of rare birds and egg-snatching of rare eggs by people with the ridiculous collection mania, plenty of snaring of linnets and goldfinches, and other song-birds to be put into cages, plenty of wanton shooting, especially of something unusual just because it is unusual.

He can try and get the law changed; to take an example, the law which permits the discharge of waste oil from oil-driven ships at sea, to drift about and foul our shores, and in doing so to smear itself on the plumage of hundreds of guillemots and divers and puffins and other sea-birds, prevent them opening their

wings, and so condemn them to death from starvation. If you want ocular demonstration, go and look at the case in the Central Hall of the Natural History Museum at South Kensington, which shows what happens to birds when the oily filth gets onto their feathers.

And he can help by supporting such bodies as the National Trust and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, which are saving wild bits of country from being built over or otherwise developed, or reserving them as actual sanctuaries, inviolate to the birds, or providing birds-rests at lighthouses to prevent dazzled migrants from being drowned, or paying watchers to see that protected birds are not shot or robbed of their eggs.—*Extracted from "Bird Watchman and Bird Behaviour," by Julian Huxley.*

WILD PLANTS.

Easy access to all parts of the countryside by city dwellers is menacing wild flowers and wild plants in many parts of the world. In Australia a law has been enacted prohibiting the sale of wild flowers, as it was feared that the plants would be so depleted of their flowers that insufficient seed would be available for their propagation. Bylaws against the uprooting of wild plants have existed in certain English Counties for many years; in Hertfordshire, for example, since 1915, and the County Councils Association model by-law has now been adopted by forty-two counties and sub-counties. It is as follows:—

> "No person shall (unless authorised by the owner or occupier, if any, or by law so to do) uproot any ferns or other plants growing in any road, lane, roadside waste, roadside bank or hedge, common or other places to which the public have access.
>
> "Every person who shall offend against the foregoing by-law shall be liable for every such offence to a fine not exceeding, for the first offence, Forty Shillings, and for a subsequent offence not exceeding Five Pounds."

HOW TO TAME WILD BIRDS.

The following article by E. W. Hendy, author of "The Lure of Bird Watching," describes how so-called wild English birds can be tamed. Our own birds, such as bell-birds, are all amenable to similar treatment, including sea birds, numbers of which may be seen following one lady bather into the sea at Paraparaumu. This lady feeds the sea-birds every morning.

"The best way to tame birds is to keep a bird table or tables. It is unnecessary, so far as the bodily welfare of the birds is concerned, to feed them except in cold weather. But if you supply food for them all the year round they become accustomed to human presence, and, as Lord Grey has pointed out, realise that in a certain area—that is, on and near the bird-table—they are safe.

"WILD" BELLBIRDS MAKE FRIENDS WITH MAN.

"Tame robins have become proverbial. I have known many: but during the summer of 1930 they mysteriously deserted our board and our garden. It was the chaffinches that were tamest. Whenever the weather allowed we took our meals on a flagged space bounding the south side of our house, and, as we ate, the chaffinches walked round our feet, under the table, and devoured the morsels we gave them; occasionally they perched on the table. Pied wagtails and greenfinches sometimes came with the chaffinches, but they never ventured so near.

"It was an interesting experience to look down from above upon a 'wild' bird at a distance of only a foot or two. From this vantage you can see every separate feather on the blue head and russet mantle of a cock chaffinch; you can watch him turning the hemp seed with his tongue as he holds it between his horny mandibles, and hear it crack. You may note, too, that his long middle toe is slightly turned inwards, to get a good grip.

"Soon we began to recognise the differences in the individualities of our guests. The most trustful was a cock whose white wingbar was almost obscured by the greyish wing-coverts.

He was the father of a family and brought two of his infants with him. It was ridiculous to see these fluffy hunched-up bantlings swinging their heads and bodies from side to side as they squeaked for food, though at the same time they showed that they were perfectly capable to getting their own dinners by picking up crumbs almost at their father's feet, as he fed them. Another cock chaffinch looked very worn with family cares, and was constantly collecting food and flying off with it. He was almost as tame as the first chaffinch, but the others were more wary. All were extremely quarrelsome; in fact, they seemed more nervous of each other's presence than of ours. The tamest of the chaffinches were all cocks; hens came too, but they were far shyer. This was unexpected: I think the explanation is that while the hens were incubating the cocks had fed daily and hourly at our bird-tables, and had become inured to our proximity.

"I never succeeded in inducing any of these chaffinches to feed from my hand, though I have in times past had several robins who would do so. The chaffinches became suspicious as soon as I held my fingers near the level of the flags on which the crumbs were spread, though they took food only a few inches distant from my finger-ends. I was surprised to find that the fledgling chaffinches showed the same suspicion. Was this wariness a piece of inherited instinct, or did they learn discretion from their father's example? Such questions may seem trivial, but if we could interpret them correctly they might lead to the elucidation of some of the most secret mysteries of bird behaviour. The border line between instinct and intelligence in birds and animals is a very tenuous one: it is only by careful observation of individuals that we can ever hope to discriminate; even the smallest incident properly understood may prove to be a clue of infinite importance.

PET WEKAS OF J. C. GLYDE, KAMO.

"No doubt some fortunate human beings are endowed with a certain magnetism which disarms the suspicions of wild birds.

Many of us can remember, in one of the London parks, the man on whose arms, head and shoulders the sparrows used to perch in numbers. I once knew a lady who could put her hand beneath a sitting robin and feel the warm eggs, and another whom a brown owl allowed to take a similar liberty. These privileges are not vouchsafed to all. But anyone who can remain quiet—and does not keep a cat—can teach wild birds to trust them. And they will thus learn more of their individualities than from any cage-bound captive. A tamed bird in the bush is its natural self."

"THE STORY OF SAN MICHELE."

The wanton and cruel destruction of the birds on Capri Island, near Naples, had gone on for centuries, and yet the fact was fully known to people that could and should have taken action to stop it. Much of the world is selfish, much is complacent, and much does not care. Dr. Alexander Munthe's book, with its strong dramatic appeal, compelled attention, and the great Mussolini as a consequence enacted legislation and has changed Capri from a huge bird trap to a bird sanctuary. There are no half measures, dire punishment is the lot of any transgressors.

In a letter to Lord Howard of Penrith, Dr. Munthe writes:— "I have just received an official communique that, by order of Il Duce (Signor Mussolini) a special Decreto Legge—decree with the force of law—has been published in the Gazzetta Ufficiale, declaring the whole island of Capri a bird sanctuary, with severe punishment for killing any birds the whole year round. It is added in the communique that 'this provision will make a great impression in the animal-loving world, both in Italy and abroad.' So it will, Capri being known since the time of the Romans for the exceptionally large number of migratory birds coming here every spring to rest, or die, after their long flight across the Mediterranean. I could never have believed that my book should have created such a great sensation in Italy. In my letter of thanks to Mussolini, I have told him that 'he could not have trusted to more eloquent collaborators than to these thousands and thousands of missionaries of the sky that propaganda abroad for the sacred cause he personifies.' What it means to me you will realise better than most people. Indeed, it means the crowning success of my book. It means the saving of the lives every spring of thousands of exhausted migratory birds, many of them on their way to inaugurate summer in an English garden. If this is not literary success, I really do not know what literary success means."

TRUST FUNDS.

Much misconception as to the means at the disposal of the N.Z. Native Bird Protection Society appears to exist amongst kindred organisations and others. Some of the requests made to this Society for funds certainly border on the absurd. In one case we were asked to purchase a large tract of land and cede this to a leading City Council. Acclimatisation Societies at times twit the Bird Society because we do no ranging, and at the same time expect us to finance the whole cost of a bounty on German Owls originally introduced at the request of Acclimatisation Societies. The facts concerning these matters are that our trust funds were set aside for certain purposes some time since agreed upon in conjunction with the Minister of Internal Affairs. We desired that ranging should be included in our activities, the expenses of which should be met from the trust funds, but the Department was not agreeable to this. The total gross revenue of the Bird Society is not one-twentieth part of the amount gathered in by Acclimatisation Societies, who receive their funds for the purposes of wild life control. These receipts include license fees for fish, deer, imported game and native bird shooting, and for fines imposed for breaches of the Animals Protection and Game Act, 1921-2, etc., etc. Much revenue from opossums has also been granted in the past.

The Bird Protection Society, on the other hand, is supported by the results of its own efforts and by subscriptions tendered from all parts of the land by those who desire to save a remnant at least of our essential and wonderful forest and bird life. In the early years of the Society's career a grant of £50 per annum was received from the Government, but otherwise the small revenue at our disposal has been subscribed by the public to advocate native bird and forest protection. We spend no money on paid secretaries; all our helpers freely give their time and money to the cause. Surely then it is not cricket to say that the Bird Protection people do no ranging. As a matter of fact, the very few paid rangers operating under the Animals Protection and Game Act, 1921-2, do not give their whole time to the work, in as much of their time goes in fish and game distribution and various other activities. The work required in checking the present wholesale poaching throughout the land far exceeds the capacity of the nine or ten rangers employed under Acclimatisation Societies, and the Bird Society only wishes that funds were allocated to it to help in this extremely necessary work. Many of our members do honorary ranging, and the Society invariably passes on all reliable information received to the controlling Government Department, and in this manner substantial fines have at times accrued to Acclimatisation Societies.

"Suddenly, however, we noticed a bird standing in the running shallows of the stream. It did not move as we approached. Marney stole upon it and lifted it up with his two hands. It was a guillemot, and a glance was enough to explain its apparent lack of fear. Its breast feathers were clotted thick with oil. Marney dealt with it in the one way humanely possible. He mercifully broke its neck.

"We crossed the stream and pushed on, but I could see that the incident, familiar though it was, had upset him.

"'You know,' he said suddenly, 'if I was on one of these oil-burning steamers, and I saw the engineers cleaning out their oil-tanks, close into land, I'd let 'em have it. I reckon hanging would be too good for a chap who could do that sort of thing. You can't call me tender-hearted. I'm not like our old man. I'd kill anything that was harmful, or that I wanted to eat, or that I could make brass out of, but I'm damned if I'd torture anything. You can't think of anything more awful than being a sea-bird like that one I just killed, having to catch all your food by diving, and having your feathers plastered up with that muck, so that you can neither dive nor fly. Slow starvation! Think of it! Swimming over a shoal of herrings, perhaps not more than a foot below you, hungry as hell, and not being able to get a bite at one. It wouldn't be so bad if they could kill themselves! But they just go on drifting about the sea, or wash up in a storm like this, and stand about till they die of starvation!'

A GAME OF PATIENCE.
Black Billed Gull Sitting.

"We counted a score of these tragic by-products of human progress within the next half-mile, all fortunately dead, most of them so encased in congealed oil as to be mummified."

The above is an extract from one of the outstanding books of the year: *"Three Fevers," by Leo Walmsley.*

"This is a tale of the lives of the fishermen of the North-east Coast (of England), as it is being lived since the war by men

of this grim fascinating coast. . . . Though nothing of the author is allowed to intrude on the narrative, he has lived and endured with these men." So says Storm Jameson in the Foreword to this wonderful book of present-day fisher life. It is sufficient testimony that the preceding account of the impression made on "Marney Lunn" by the sight of the oiled sea-birds is not likely to have been exaggerated.

Marney, the fisherman, is described as a man of 25 years of age—a direct descendant of the old Viking raiders of centuries ago—one of a race of men "full of swift humour, of hardihood, stubborn and fierce in holding what they possess, and brave beyond description, both as fishermen and in the life-boat service.

Though now only 25 years of age, he had served for ten years before the mast in the Merchant Service during the War.

Can we regard his outburst of fury over the victims of the mis-use of oil-fuel as the drivellings of a weak, ignorant, and sentimental man?

Rather let us use this wonderful description as an incentive to ensure than nothing that persuasion and legislation can do shall be left undone to prevent this infamous abuse of the luxury of "oil-fuel."—*Rita A. Curtis.*

COLLECTORS' PERMITS.

It cannot be said that the present system whereby permits are issued by the Minister is at all satisfactory to those of the public who desire that as few as possible of our native birds should be killed. These permits are issued officially by the Minister of Internal Affairs, but Ministers come and go and must in such cases as this be guided solely by their subordinates. Acclimatisation Societies are advised when a permit is issued in their particular district, but rangers are not notified and no check whatever appears to be ever made as to whether a collector exceeds his permit or not. Permits are usually given for three months for certain specified birds, and generally for alleged scientific reasons. Considering that thousands of bird skins have been collected in the past, how much knowledge has been gained thereby? ; if so little in the past how much is likely to be gained by these destructive means in the future? The Native Bird Protection Society has suggested various ways of overcoming the present secret system such as that they should be furnished

with a copy of all permits issued, that a ranger should accompany the collector at the latter's expense, that collectors' permits should be gazetted, but all of these requests have been refused, and the most the Department will do is summed up in the words:—

> "It is considered that to gazette the issue of permits might do more harm than good. I might add that the necessity for restricting the taking of birds, particularly the rarer varieties, is fully recognised, but apart from giving an assurance that authorities will be issued very sparingly and only in such cases as I am satisfied the circumstances warrant, I regret that I am unable to comply with your request."

"Sparingly" is, however, an ambiguous term and may mean anything, especially when one noted private collector stated that the trouble with him had never been to get permits but to get the birds his permit authorised him to take. Further, a permit was recently issued to the Directors of a Zoological Park to take certain water fowl during the nesting season, including some rapidly decreasing species. This would mean that the parent birds were in captivity while the young were left to starve. Surely it would have occurred to anyone who had the welfare of the birds at heart to defer operations to a later period when the birds had finished nesting? There are legal as well as illegal collectors and besides this the requirements of five museums have to be met, and their toll has undoubtedly been a very heavy one as the skins of our rare birds have been extensively used to barter with foreign institutions of a similar nature. Museums are under the same Department as that which grants permits to private collectors.

CRUELTY IN SPORT.

"It always surprises me to hear English people decrying the bull fight as being cruel while they hunt defenceless foxes with packs of dogs, buffaloes and lions with rifles, pheasants with shot-guns, and trout with fish-hooks. . . . Any pot-bellied draper who has made a fortune can arm himself with a rifle (an invincible weapon against any animal), and go out and bag his elephant, lion, tiger, rhino, then he returns as a hero with a few paragraphs in the gossip column. . . . Lord Dash and Lady Blank can go off and wound fifty antelopes, which, escaping, die in agony after several days. As regards the alleged 'cruelty' of bull fighting, any English pheasant-hunt provides a far worse shambles than the arena."—*Mr. Roy Campbell, the poet, in his book on bull fighting, "Taurine Provence."*

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