

an odd one, although I only know of one occasion in which one actually caught an owl—that was after it had been mobbed by starlings. Several times I have seen them swoop at the grey shapes which, although looking decidedly uncomfortable and frightened, refused to leave their perches, thus causing the harrier to flap off in search of other prey. Once or twice I have seen cats stalking them, usually in the bright moonlight. In every case, however, the grey birds proved too wary and wideawake, never letting puss get within striking distance.

Thus it would seem that with no natural enemies the owl will naturally increase. Such, however, does not seem to be the case, for within the last few years there has been a decided decrease in their numbers, until within the last year they have, in this district at least, almost entirely disappeared, it being now but seldom that one hears their weird cry. This may be because the district has been killed out by them.

On the other hand, the equally mournful cry of the morepork can now be heard on every hand throughout the night. That he is not nearly so harmful to our small native birds as is the owl is easily seen by the fact that while moreporks and other birds lived and flourished side by side for probably centuries, directly the owl was introduced both began rapidly to disappear.

Of course, owls haunting the neighbourhood of farm buildings do a certain amount of good in the way of destroying vermin, such as mice, rats, insects, and a considerable number of sparrows and other such birds. Nevertheless the damage done by the owl to our native birds far exceeds the good he may do in the way of helping the farmer. After summing things up, the wisest plan seems to be to destroy all these grey killers that come our way, for unless we do our beautiful, friendly native birds must surely become less and less until finally they disappear.



## ESSENTIAL.

The one thing that conservation needs most is continuity of policy.—*American Game.*