

to the ground to pick up a grub. Almost without stopping a return is made to the original look-out station, or perhaps to another deemed more favourable. When walking through the bush we can help the tomtits in their hunt by occasionally dragging a foot to disturb the leaves and expose insects. In the open a fence line provides a perch from which to hunt insects in the grass. In the garden use is often made of a spade or rake as a perch to spy out insects on the freshly cultivated ground. The eyesight is remarkable—grubs or other insects may be seen as much as forty feet away. This keen eyesight was known to the Maori. "Ma te kanohi miromiro" (for the eye of a tomtit) was said as a stimulus to a person seeking a lost article.

After leaving the nest the young tomtits are assisted by the parents in catching their food. Then the hen begins to build again, leaving the cock bird to supervise the first family until they can look after themselves.

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## NESTING AIDS FOR NATIVE BIRDS.

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### Scope for Experiments.

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In Great Britain, United States of America, Canada, Japan, and many other countries much aid is given to wild birds in the provision of artificial nesting facilities for them. Indeed, the British Ministry of Agriculture has issued an illustrated leaflet titled "Nest Boxes for Birds," and similar action has been taken in other leading countries.

"Nest boxes," it is stated, "are something more than pleasant aids to the study of bird life, for by their means useful birds, which might otherwise be absent, may be induced to take up residence on farms and in orchards, gardens and allotments, to the great advantage of the owners."

Of course, it is well known that many species of native birds would not be interested in artificial nesting places, but some species would welcome man's assistance if it took suitable form. Also there may be other ways of inducing native birds to nest near people's homes. For example, one bird-lover prunes certain trees in a manner to ensure good sites for nests.

Here are opportunities for admirers of native birds to find scope for their ingenuity and nature-sense by experimenting, and thus gaining knowledge which they will gladly share with other New Zealanders.