

FOREST AND BIRD

ISSUED BY

FOREST AND BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND
(INCORPORATED)



FOREST AND BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

Invites all those who have respect for our wonderful and unique native forests and birds, all those who realise the great economic and aesthetic value of birds, all those who wish to preserve our unrivalled scenic beauties, to band together with the Society in an earnest endeavour to awaken fully 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 help our forests will be hopelessly marred and destroyed by fire, animals and wasteful exploitation.

The subscriptions are:—Life members £5, Endowment members £1 per annum; ordinary subscription, adults 5/-, children 1/-. Endowment members comprise 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.

FOREST AND BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY OF NEW ZEALAND (INC.)

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OBJECTS—To advocate and obtain the efficient protection and preservation of our native forests and 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 Society for the Preservation of the Fauna of the British Empire (of which the Prince of Wales is Patron) and with the International Committee for the Protection of Wild Birds.

Obstacles to National Welfare.

Pressures of Selfish Interests.

IMMEASURABLE damage has been done to the natural resources—the national wealth—of New Zealand by various schemes of self interest—some for pleasure, others for profit. The rights of the public, especially that prospective public, termed posterity, have been flouted for many years, but happily, as the result of the systematic educational campaigns of the Forest and Bird Protection Society and its many well-wishers, there is evidence that the unsocial practices of small minorities will not be tolerated indefinitely by the great majority.

The ceaseless battle of this Society is wholly and solely for New Zealand. No member seeks personal distinction or material gains for his or her work. It is public-spirited co-operation for the safe-guarding of natural assets which are emphatically necessary to assure a continuance of the country's prosperity, but what difficulties ever best the path of progress !

The deer-stalker, keen for his own sport, turns a blind eye to the damage done by the imported pests, and a deaf ear to any argument which does not conform to his personal desires. To him the forests are providential forage-places for deer, and he is constantly agitating for a preservation of the alien nuisances.

The fur-dealer and the trapper desire the "farming" of opossums in native forests, whatever may be the harm done to trees and birds.

The gunner is another whose view is ever for his own immediate pleasure. He regards waterfowl as feathered targets specially evolved for his shooting. Many of the so-called sportsmen resort to ruses which threaten the extinction of beautiful and beneficial birds, whose life delights nature-lovers. Various interests, linked with the shootists, fight in various ways against a proper conservation of the birds.

Eager hands are ever reaching out for timber which should be left for its very important scenic, soil-conserving and water-regulating value in steep country. Even in national parks greedy eyes are cast on tall trees.

Streams have been polluted by the nasty effluents from dairy factories and other offensive waste of other industries—and the nuisance continues.

Thus the sway of shortsighted selfishness goes on, and will not stop until the rights of the nation are upheld by a Government strong enough to act for public welfare.

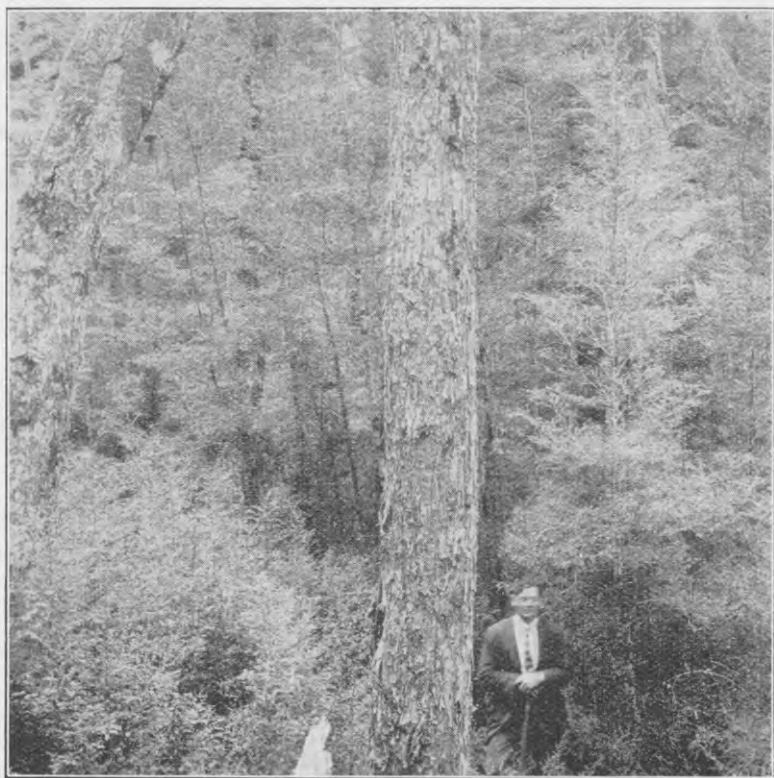
The Forest and Bird Protection Society will strive harder than ever against these obstacles as a united body for the realisation of its ideal. All the year round its national lessons are reaching more than 200,000 people, and the circle is widening. With very limited funds it is ensuring a very wide range of service for the public. It asks for more helpers, and believes it will not ask in vain.

UNFAIR WAR ON GAME BIRDS.

Deplorable plight of game-birds in U.S.A., as described in "Nature Magazine" :—

"We are faced with the fact that through over-shooting aided by baiting and other reprehensible practices our number of game-birds is seriously diminished, some species are fast approaching extinction. For some time we have urged a closed season on waterfowl and the outlawing for ever of such devices of killing as baiting, live decoys, and other unsportsmanlike methods."

That statement could apply as well to New Zealand as to U.S.A.



This beech forest in Southland (previously cut over) is regenerating strongly, because it is not infested by deer.

DEER—NEW ZEALAND'S ENEMY NO. 1.

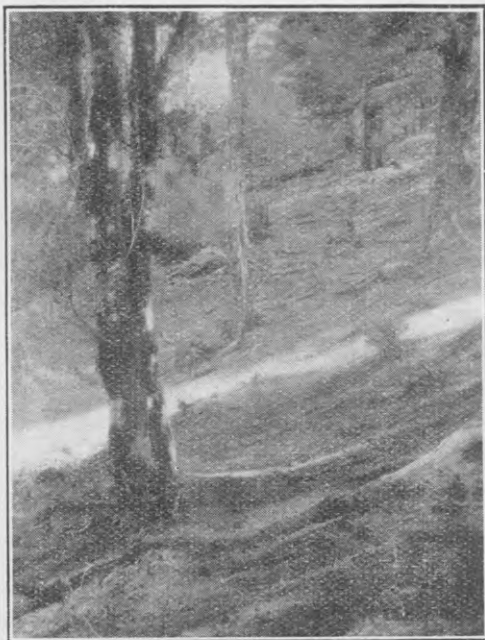
Natural Increase Exceeds Kills.

There is plenty of indisputable evidence that deer are New Zealand's Enemy No. 1. In some forests, especially the girdle of Mt. Egmont, wild goats are the main menace, but the districts threatened by hordes of deer are of much greater area.

The introduction of rabbits has proved a very costly blunder, but bad as the rabbit is as a destroyer it has to take second place to deer. Why? Well, the rabbit makes its habitat in country that is easily accessible. Experience has proved that strict enforcement of existing laws can keep this nuisance under control. A few years ago, when the prices of skins soared to high points, this animal was practically cleaned out of some thickly-infested parts of Otago and Southland.

It is not so easy to wage successful war on deer, which can take refuge in very rough country. They are like the plundering old-time barons of England who could retire to strong castles when pressed by their enemies.

Always the deer are bringing death nearer to forests, on which the welfare of large tracts of farming country is absolutely dependent. They are eating out the undergrowth and so preventing regeneration; they are also killing adult trees. They are spoiling the forest floor—changing it from a sponge, a natural regulator of water-flow, into a waste of rubble. When those forests cease



A clean sweep by deer in the Haurangi State Forest, on the eastern side of Wellington Province.

to be protective of the high-country soil, which is a comparatively thin layer, resting on rock, the lowlands will be smitten with irreparable disaster.

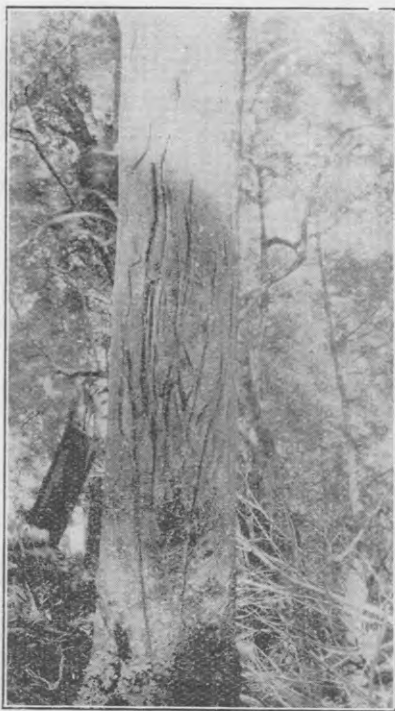


ONE OF THE FINAL STAGES OF DEER RUIN.
Scoured scarps in parts of the Haurangi Reserve after the forest cover
has been ravaged by deer.

A good few thousands of the pests have been killed during the past three years in limited areas, but the tally of the slain would be far short of the natural increase, because those alien animals have no natural enemies in the forests. Sir Alexander Young (Minister of Internal Affairs), with a full knowledge of the havoc wrought by deer, has rightly declared a war of extermination against them, but he lacks the funds for the



Mountain beech of Otago laid waste by deer.



Adult hinau deeply scarred by antlers of deer in a Wellington forest.

necessary large-scale operations.

The time has come for the Government to recognise properly its responsibility to the present population of New Zealand and to posterity. An effective onset against deer—a great campaign to save the vitally necessary forests—is far more important to the Dominion than anything else that is visible in the Government's programme.

The photographs showing the guilt of deer as deadly enemies of New Zealand were taken by the State Forest Service.

FANTAILS HUNTED BY GERMAN OWLS.

New Zealand has many lovable birds, but perhaps the favourite is the brave little fantail which will cheerfully flutter through open windows or doorways of houses in search of flies.

When Zane Grey was in camp near the Tongariro River a few years ago he had some happy hours in watching and hearing birds. "I liked especially the fantails," he wrote in "New Zealand—the Angler's El Dorado." "What delicate birds! . . . I often watched the fantails. On one occasion two gave



me a pretty exhibition of their feeding. It was early in the morning and I was back in the woods just at the edge of an open place. I stood motionless. These birds flew down and perched on a snag above me. Then one darted out, fluttered and whirled, and returned to his perch. The other made nearly the same manoeuvre. I saw the insects in the air. A fantail would flutter out a few feet—snip—then back to his perch. Finally I saw one actually catch an insect; but if I watched the birds I could not detect their prey. It was only by looking up at the sky and locating a tiny gnat or moth that I could see the actual tragedy. Snip! What vicious little bills, considering their size! The noise was as hard to hear as the bills were to see.

"I was about to make my presence known when both took after the same insect, quite a large fluttering creature. The birds met practically in midair in collision. That seemed to anger them, and one flew after the other, uttering fierce little notes. They darted within a foot of my face, and all around over my head; and finally the pursuit took them off into the woods."

Reports from various districts state that German owls continue to kill many fantails, warblers, tom-tits and other native birds. The alien pests (introduced by the Otago Acclimatisation Society) do not wait for nightfall to begin their butchery of charming little birds, which are also useful to mankind.

By its white legs the murderous marauder can be distinguished from the morepork which has yellow legs, and is also larger than the imported nuisance. The morepork is strictly a night-worker, whose diet takes no serious toll of birds.

FEED US, PLEASE!



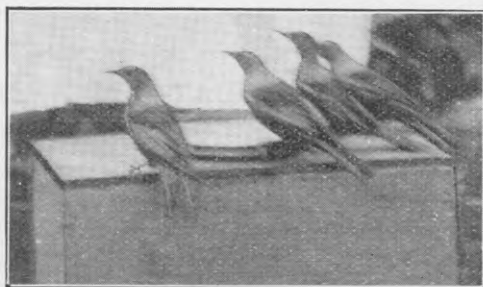
Captain Sanderson (President of the Forest & Bird Protection Society) acts as host for some of his visitors (White-eyes). Two are busy on the hat and others on the plate.

cunning cats, which have long been one of the worst enemies of birds, particularly the "natives," which are not so wary as the descendants of species imported from cat-infested countries.

Every home has all manner of waste, which makes a feast for birds. They like scraps of fat from roasts of beef or mutton, remnants of stews and minces, porridge (well sweetened), rinds of pineapple and odds and ends of other fruit. Tuis and bell-birds like sweet fare.

Members of the Forest and Bird Protection Society will hardly need a reminder that August is "Bird Month," when natural supplies of food for feathered creatures are comparatively scarce and the weather in most districts is very cold and wet. However, it is well for them to urge friends, who are not yet members, to assist in the kind feeding. Thus friends of man will be helped to survive the winter and to be ready in spring for a strong attack on insects and grubs.

It is necessary to have a receptacle well clear of the ground beyond the reach of



Tuis enjoying a dish of sweetened porridge supplied by a permanent friend.



A friendship at Paekakariki, on the west coast of Wellington Province.

Feeding wild birds—which are quickly tamed by kindness—is a heart-warming pleasure. Like the quality of mercy, “it blesseth him that gives and him that takes.”

TREE DAY—AND TREE YEAR.

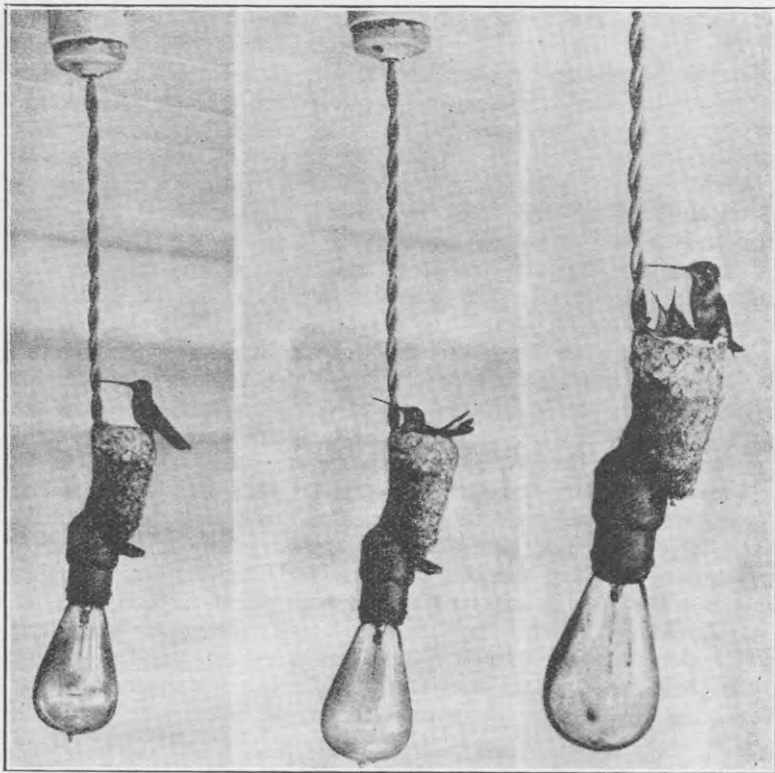
If the expression “Arbor Day” is replaced by “Tree Day,” probably the public response to the call for planting will be greater than it has ever been. Why use the word “arbor” which is merely the Latin word for tree? It was a thoughtless adoption of an American selection of a foreign word instead of a plain English one.

New Zealanders have been urged to “plant a tree.” Better advice is “grow a tree.” Tree-mindedness must not be for a day, but for the whole year, next year, and the year after, on and on.

FRIENDLY HUMMING BIRDS.

Probably the average New Zealander thinks of a humming-bird as a flash of bright colours in a tropical forest. Yet in parts of the United States one may see some humming-birds that are as friendly as fantails, tom-tits and robins are in New Zealand. In the April issue of "Nature Magazine" (published by the American Nature Association) George A. Lewis gives a delightful chronicle of the family life of a pair of humming-birds.

For eighteen successive years (Mr. Lewis writes) a little Anna humming-bird, *Calypte anna*, has raised her family in a tiny nest attached to an electric light cord on the front porch of Judge William D. Dehey of Independence, California. Returning each year, the mother hummer first sets about house cleaning. Then she builds a new addition atop the old, which is carefully left for



Humming-Birds—fearless home-making on an electric light bulb in the porch of a house in California.

her. This accumulation of nest material, which consists of thistle-down, willow cotton and lichens, has continued through the years. Now the nest extends about six inches above the light globe.

Sitting tranquilly on her two tiny eggs, this midget mother is undaunted by the curious visitors and photographers which her unique loyalty to this nesting place has brought to see her. During the period of incubation nothing can force her to relinquish her duties. In fact, once during the eighteen years the residence was partially destroyed by fire but she went right on with her family duties despite the confusion.

Once that the lazy but extremely exacting days of incubating the eggs are over, the problem of feeding two small but exceedingly hungry children keeps the mother bird continually on the go. Returning at regular intervals of about twenty minutes, she taps one of her babies on the beak as a sign that dinner is ready. She always finds a willing diner.

The rapid growth of the youngsters soon taxes the capacity of the nest. Their constant preening and stretching might have led to danger if the mother did not tie them in. Human mothers who tie their babies in a crib to keep them from falling out may have got the idea originally from the humming-bird. As soon as the young birds have grown to a point where there is danger of one being pushed out of the nest, the mother weaves one foot of each baby to the side of the nest. Closely examined, this bond is found to be so cleverly done that while it accomplishes its purpose, it does not bind or cut off circulation.

Because the young hummers are not able to walk, as they belong to the great group that fly directly from the nest, they must be strong of wing before they leave. By providing this anchor, the mother assured safety for the babies in their practice at "ground flying" and the vigorous exercise of their wings, which was done frequently during the last few days in the nest. Each day or so the binding is removed, the young are shifted in the nest and the binding is replaced on the other leg.

The baby hummers were almost as large as their mother when they were released from their anchor. For a few minutes after the first young bird had flown the other youngster seemed to enjoy the luxury of the nest to himself. Then he launched himself into the world, leaving the nest empty and forlorn.

A world of sunshine and flowers awaits the young hummers. The mother continues to feed them for a few days and then they make their own way. They delight in chasing one another up and down the woven wire fence near the house and giving the shrill piping song characteristic of the Anna.

OILY TRAIL OF DEATH.

Sea-Birds Cry to the Wide World.



At last there is a definite prospect of effective international action to make the seven seas safe for birds. Meanwhile master-mariners can do much to lessen the menace of oil. For example, Captain George Alwood, of the *Nucula*, which trades between California and New Zealand, takes care that his ship is in the middle of the Pacific Ocean before he washes out the cargo tanks.

THE MOREPORK. RURU.

Ninox novaeseelandiae.

It is not until twilight that the morepork becomes active. But all through the night it is ever on the hunt, especially if there be moonlight to enable clearer sight of the prey. Most people know the cry of "mopoke" or "morepork" repeated at frequent intervals and sometimes with great rapidity, but it has other notes such as "kon kon" and "kree kree."

Mainly because of the bird's habit of ejecting from the crop castings containing the indigestible parts of its food, the diet of the morepork is well known. Cicadas, beetles, moths, and wetas are regularly eaten. Among the moths most commonly taken are the adults of the "caterpillar" and "army worm," which do so much damage to grass paddocks, farm crops, and lawns. On occasion the smaller native and introduced birds frequenting the bush or other haunts of the morepork are killed and eaten and even fed to the young, but such is the exception rather than the rule.

The development of a taste for rats and mice, a feature of owls in other countries, is one of the most useful accomplishments of the morepork. It is mainly because of the presence of these rodents that the bird is attracted to farm buildings.

Watching a morepork hunting at night is a weird experience because of the complete absence of noise. Unlike the chattering fantail or the chiming bellbird, the morepork takes its food in silence, and the flight, though comparatively rapid, is noiseless because the feathers of the wings have downy margins which muffle the sound.

The nest is often found in a hollow tree. Other sites are the holes underneath arching roots, the cavity resulting from the wrenching off of a branch, a mossy shelf on the trunk of some huge tree, a bed of needles in the fork of a pine—nearly always deep in the bush to obtain that filtered shade so much desired in the daytime. The two eggs are almost spherical, white, smooth, and glossy. The young are at first slate grey, their appearance made the more peculiar because of the unusually small heads. In about a week the first feathers are replaced by pure white fluffy down. The adults supply the young with food similar to their own, except that in the case of mice and birds the flesh is first torn into small pieces. Often food is stored near the nest, so that meals are readily available.

Although at night the approach of a morepork will put any bush bird to flight, the smaller birds will often pay back old scores during the day. A foraging bellbird or tui may detect the natural

enemy sheltering in a hollow tree or perhaps beneath the top of a lawyer. Instantly the alarm will be given. Most of the small birds in the vicinity will take up the cry, flock together, and mob the unfortunate morepork, which puffs out its feathers and glares helpless defiance at its dimly seen attackers. No attempt seems to be made to peck it, but soon it will seek safety in flight to a more gloomy part of the forest.

THE HAWK'S PLACE IN NATURE.

A Friend of Farmers.

A very interesting book "The Hawks of North America" (by John Richard May), has just been published by the National Association of Audubon Societies, one of the world's leading organisations for a proper conservation of wild life.

"Do you realise," the preface states, "that most hawks, in spite of the widespread prejudice against the members of this group of birds, should be classed among the best friends of the farmer because of their destruction of injurious rodents and other pests, and that very few hawks ever molest poultry! This volume has been prepared in the hope that by presenting the facts it may arouse a more friendly interest in these generally unappreciated and maligned birds through a better knowledge of their real habits and their place in the economy of nature.

"Just what do we mean when we call a bird a 'hawk?' To the average uninformed farmer a hawk is a robber of poultry yards; to the gunner, sportsman and game-breeder, a hawk is 'vermin' to be ruthlessly destroyed; to the ammunition manufacturer and sporting-goods dealer a hawk is an unprotected bird and therefore another target; to the biologist a hawk is a wonderful example of adaptation for life in a certain definite niche, a check upon harmful rodents, a control against the over-production of normally useful creatures and an invaluable instrument in preserving the 'balance of nature'; to the vast and rapidly increasing number of nature lovers and amateur bird students a hawk is one of the finest and most interesting forms of bird life, worthy of protection at all times

"It is evident that hawks must play an important role in nature or they would not be found in such large numbers of species and so widely distributed, but until a comparatively few years ago man had very little conception of what that part might be

"Popular opinion and scientific research often differ markedly. The feeding habits of our hawks are among the things which recent investigations have revealed as at odds with common beliefs.

"Many self-styled 'practical' people demand to be shown whether hawks add to or subtract from man's income, and they are all too prone to condemn upon slight or hearsay evidence, and to refuse to accept the testimony of sincere bird students as to the beneficial actions of these birds. It is axiomatic with the liberty-loving American people that a person on trial is innocent until he is proved guilty, but we do not apparently carry this principle into our consideration of the birds of prey."

That request of fair play for hawks will be supported by many accurate observers of such birds' habits in New Zealand. For example, Mr. E. T. Frost, representative of the Forest and Bird Protection Society in North Auckland, has produced definite proof of the harrier's usefulness as a killer of rats and other destructive rodents.

New Zealanders can rest assured that the National Association of Audubon Societies would not have championed the cause of hawks unless the birds deserved this defence.

INTERNATIONAL OFFICE FOR THE PROTECTION OF NATURE.

By Royal Decree the Belgian Government has officially recognised the International Office for the Protection of Nature, and has appointed the following delegates to be its representatives to the General Council of the Office:—

Delegates from Belgium: Baron E. de Cartier de Marchienne (Belgian Ambassador in London) and Count Henry Carton de Wiart (former Prime Minister).

Delegates for the Belgian Congo and the Mandated Territory of Ruanda-Urundi: P. Charles (Minister of Colonies) and Professor Dr. V. Van Straelen (Director of the Royal Belgian Museum of Natural History and President of the Institute for National Parks in the Belgian Congo).

PITILESS POACHERS OF PIGEONS.



A pair of pigeons at home in the Native Bird Sanctuary of Little Barrier Island.

In defiance of a law ineffectively administered in the field, pitiless poachers are taking heavy toll of beautiful native pigeons in various forests of Auckland, Nelson, West Coast of the South Island, and Stewart Island. Complaints of this sneak-thieving of "protected" birds have been frequent for several years, but the offences seem to be more numerous than ever. It is very rarely that one reads of a prosecution. Why cannot the authorities make an effective

move to catch and punish the contemptible culprits?

Feed Boxes and Baths For Birds.

Facilities for Charming Friendships.

Bird-lovers, here is your opportunity to make life more pleasant for yourselves and for birds.

The Supply Department of the Forest and Bird Protection Society has just the right equipment to meet the case.

For 5/- you can buy a feed-box, 28in. by 15in.

For 15/- you can buy a feed-box which has the form of the old-time pataka, the Maori store-house for food.

For 25/- you can buy a handsome bird-bath, 26in. in diameter, in which a suitable water-level is automatically maintained.

All of these prices are f.o.b. Wellington.

Information for the fixing of a box or a bath will be given to each purchaser.

LET BIRDS BE FREE.

Famous John Buchan's Plea.

Canada's new Governor-General, the famous John Buchan (well known as a novelist to many New Zealanders) is a warm lover of birds. Here is part of the eloquent plea he made for the freedom of birds to a committee of the British House of Commons:—

"A bird in a cage is an atrocity. I believe it is cruel to keep any wild thing used to the freedom and happiness of its natural life in captivity. Evidence shows there is actual cruelty involved in the catching and caging of birds.

"Birds are one of the chief amenities of rural English life. The wholesale, unrestricted catching of them has undoubtedly depleted certain areas.

"The abolition of an abominable form of cruelty and the preservation of one of the chief amenities of the countryside are cheaply purchased at the cost of a few hard cases (the comparatively small number of bird-dealers and fanciers)."

BELL-BIRDS AND BLOW-FLIES.

A correspondent of the Forest and Bird Protection Society tells of an incident which supports a statement of the well-known naturalist, William Potts, in his "Out in the Open" (1882), that the fancy of bell-birds sometimes turns to food which is usually supposed to be outside their dietary.

While waiting at Bluecliffs for the arrival of the boat from Port Craig, the actions of a pair of bell-birds attracted my attention (the writer remarks). A piece of deerskin, lying in front of the hut, was swarming with blow-flies, and the birds (a cock and a hen) were industriously catching these insects and flying away to the bush.

As they were obviously feeding their young, I followed, and soon found the nest in the top of a tall pepper-bush.

I timed the trips of the birds, and they averaged five trips each in four minutes, each with not one or two flies, but as many as their little beaks could hold. When I left an hour later they were "still going strong." Evidently the family liked the "blue-bottles."

FOREST AND BIRD PROTECTION SOCIETY OF N.Z. (INC.).

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