

public have the right to full information on the neglect of wild-life administration in the field.

On paper there is protection of certain forests and birds, but in practice there is much mischief, because statutes and regulations are not effectively administered. How much longer is this weakness to persist? The penalty of neglect is already heavy on New Zealand wild life and forests; every day adds to the loss.

The Department of Internal Affairs deserves the country's thanks for its war on deer, but, alas, the operations are on far too small a scale. The natural increase of the pests greatly exceeds the tally of kills. These well-organised operations require ten-fold increase to be anything like effective.

NORTH ISLAND KIWI. (*Apteryx Mantelli*.)

Kiwis are different from all other birds in that they have no tails, only the merest traces of wings, and the nostrils placed near the tip of the bill instead of near the base. Then, no other bird lays an egg so large in proportion to its size. In spite of the absence of flight the kiwi, in primeval New Zealand, had no difficulty in obtaining a living, because it made full use of its wonderful bill and feet. In some measure it is compensated for the lack of wings by speed on foot. It can move in the darkness, too, as silently as a rat, aided no doubt in finding its way by the long hair-like feathers near the base of the bill.

It usually hides in the daytime in a burrow or in a hole beneath the roots of a tree or in a hollow log, and it is then that it may fall a victim to dogs which would have little chance of catching it at night. Once dusk falls it moves freely about, uttering the shrill call which has given it the name kiwi. The tip of the bill, in addition to bearing the nostrils, is very sensitive to touch, and a combination of smell and touch seems to be used for locating food. As it rambles through the dense beds of fern, making the while a continual snuffling sound, it uses the strongly clawed feet to scratch away litter. The long flexible bill is then driven into the soft ground or rotten log to search for worm or grub.

In extracting a worm from the soil it displays much intelligence and ingenuity. "The hunt opened with the usual tapping with the bill," wrote one observer. "When by this means the bird discovered the burrow of a worm it set to work at once to enlarge the opening, using its bill as a workman uses a crowbar. When it had formed a funnel-like depression, it inserted its bill and took hold of the worm. With a steady pull it often succeeded in bringing the victim to the surface. When it was not able to do so, it ceased pulling, as continuing to do so would have re-