

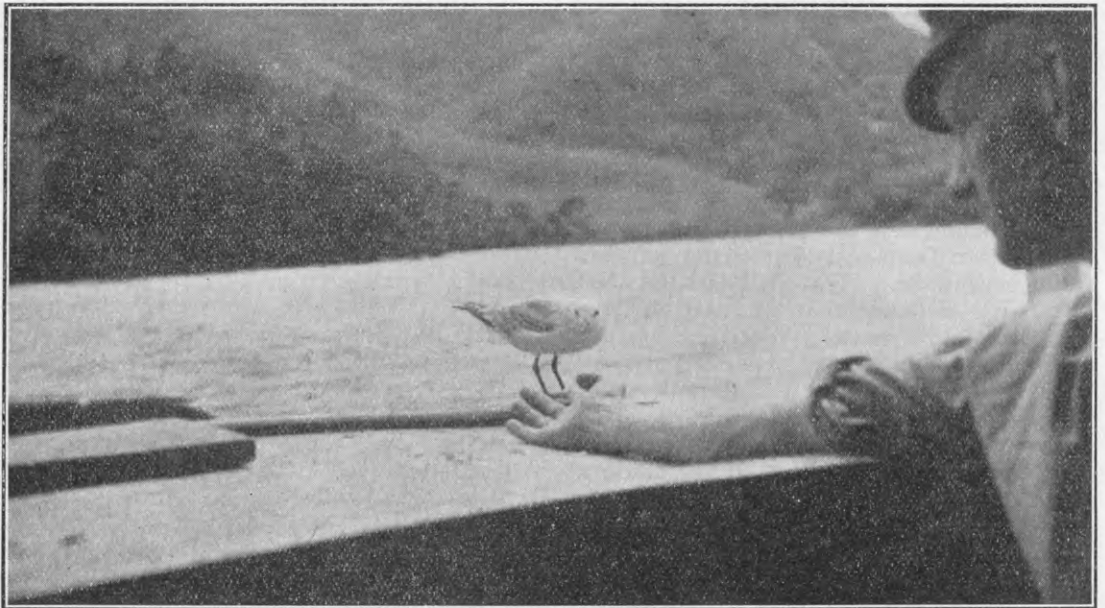
Charm of the Red-Billed Gull

Friend of Many Folk by the Sea.

Anybody who goes fishing near the haunts of the red-billed gull (commonly known as the mackerel gull) will not lack feathered company. These birds regard fishing enthusiasts as providential friends who are pleased to hand out a few tit-bits. Bolder than the larger black-backed gulls, which keep watch further away, the red-bills do not always wait until man deigns to throw a morsel of mussel or other bait. They do not hesitate to act on the proverb "opportunity makes the thief." Craftily they sidle up gradually behind a fisher's back on a rock. Great is his surprise when he looks around for the large fat mussel which he had scooped from its shell a few minutes previously. An unrepentant purloiner is sitting amiably on a crag a few yards away, ready for another chance to give another surprise. However, he would be a hard-hearted man or boy who would grudge those beautiful pilferers a few illicit snacks.



A red-billed gull, injured by a vandal with a pea-rifle, was nursed back to health and strength by Mrs. Sanderson at Paekakariki.



Friendship of a sailor and a red-billed gull.