

## NATIVE GREY DUCK

By *Ahu-Whenua*.

There is one important measure of protection which is still awaiting the approval of the authorities. This is the complete protection of the native grey duck for a period of years; three years is the shortest term likely to be of any use in arresting the diminution of the species, which is being brought about mainly by over-shooting, with perhaps the destruction of its feeding grounds, and the depredations of rats as other important factors. One careful observer reports that 90 per cent. of the grey ducklings on his property are killed by these rodents.

There is an acclimatised bird that could with benefit take the place of the grey duck for sport, and that is the swan, both the black and the white. Swan are greedy feeders, and their increase means the decrease of the duck and also of the pukeko and grebe in the lakes and lagoons.

It may be laid down as a safe principle in forest and in lake and river life that any foreign wild creature is injurious to our native birds and bush. And it may also be accepted as a principle of control that every native creature is of some use or other in the scheme of Nature if unspoiled by acclimatised animals. That the shags and even the hawks that arouse the rage of acclimatisation societies have their place in the balance of Nature is supported by scientific evidence.

[Photo : Rangi Webber.]



## BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY

By *Roger T. Peterson in "Bird Lore."*

SOME psychologists would insist that our pursuit of birds is a remote survival from primitive times, when every man had to hunt to keep alive. This would seem to be most true of bird-listing, where the sport lies in bagging birds with a glass, especially new or rare species. For that matter any earnest occupation could be regarded as a civilized substitution for hunting. Although few men now need to hunt for food, the urge is there in modified form. Millions still shoot for sport; others, with a distaste for the taking of life, subconsciously enjoy the thrills of the chase by shooting their quarry with a camera. This takes greater skill than handling firearms but there are not so many prohibitions and limitations. There are no open or closed seasons; no protected species; no bag limits. The same bird can be "shot" again and again, yet live to give pleasure to others beside the photographer. . . . No photographic activity that endangers the lives of birds, their eggs or young is worth risking. . . . In photographing a nest, do not disturb it too much. Tie back obstructing foliage temporarily, but do not break it off or remove it. In photographing nests on the ground, be especially careful not to cause too much disturbance, as a well-defined trail attracts the attention of cats and other ground predators. . . . Under normal conditions between 50 and 65 per cent. of the nests of small birds are destined to failure through natural causes. Bird photography should not impose an additional strain on the natural mortality. . . . Without a sense of responsibility or a code of ideals when we photograph birds, we are not fulfilling our obligations as good conservationists.

### PREDATORS

Campaigns of predator control are inspired by an unfortunate misunderstanding, or lack of knowledge, of the whole subject. Indiscriminate campaigns are launched against hawks, ignoring the now general recognition, even among sportsmen, that the majority of these species are beneficial. Other so-called predators are the object of vendettas with utter disregard for scientific justification for such control. Any predator control activity should be based upon conclusive scientific evidence and practised by trained personnel under competent supervision. Furthermore, killing campaigns are no way to teach young people conservation.—"Nature Magazine."