

Birdsong From Kapiti

STANDING mysteriously off the coast about 30 miles north of Wellington, Kapiti Island is one of the sights pointed out to travellers coming down to the capital for the first time. At present the island is a bird sanctuary, and its only human inhabitants are a caretaker and his family, and a family of farmers. Yet Kapiti has many links with the past. Te Rauparaha built a stockade above its steep cliffs, and the Maoris fought inter-tribal battles on its shores. It is richer in legend than many parts of New Zealand, and this, combined with the fact that it is now a sanctuary, led Dr. O. J. Murie, the Director of the American Wilderness Society, who was recently in New Zealand, to say that in his country it would probably be made a national monument.

Recently Bryan O'Brien and an NZBS technician paid a visit to Kapiti Island, and recorded there an unusual programme which will soon be broadcast from the Commercial stations. In this case Bryan O'Brien was not interested, as he was when he went to Norfolk some time ago, in describing the history and

social life of the island. All he wanted was a description of native birds living in their natural environment, in one of the few places where they have been allowed to remain undisturbed.

In this 30-minute programme he describes his journey to the island, after he had obtained a permit from the Government Department which is in charge of it, and tells how he met the caretaker's wife, Mrs. Lindsay. He found that she was a keen amateur naturalist who took a great interest in the birds under her husband's care. With her daughter Margaret, she led her visitors along a track through the bush, and there, only a few yards from her house, introduced them to the birds with whom she has made friends over the past years.

One-Legged Weka

First they saw three green parakeets (kakariki), and then one after another, whiteheads, tuis, fantails, bellbirds, woodhens, pigeons, a robin, and wild ducks and ducklings. They even found at one stage that they were being stalked down the track by a curious weka. As Mr. O'Brien was carrying a microphone with him, listeners are able to hear the



KAPITI ISLAND—"Rich in Legend"

calls of many of these birds in the background as he describes what he saw.

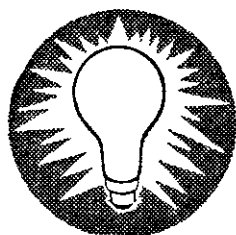
Later Mrs. Lindsay fed some of the kakas she had befriended—some of them even answered to their names—while the microphone picked up their cries. And she introduced the commentator to a one-legged weka, named Mr. Cassidy, who had been caught in an opossum trap and was now very tame. In the evening the party went down to the foreshore where they were fortunate enough to see some specimens of the rare native bat.

Throughout the programme Bryan O'Brien gives a running commentary on everything he saw and the emotions he experienced in this naturalist's paradise.

In the first few minutes he describes in dramatic form some of the outstanding incidents from Kapiti's history, including a reconstruction of the battle in which Te Rauparaha defeated an overwhelming force of Maoris who were trying to invade his island stronghold.

Under the title *Kapiti—Island Sanctuary*, this programme will be broadcast from 3ZB at 9.30 p.m. on Sunday/April 3; from 2ZB at 9.30 p.m. on Sunday, April 10; from 1ZB at 6.0 p.m. on Sunday, April 17; from 4ZB at 9.30 p.m. on Sunday, April 24; and from 2ZA at 6.0 p.m. on Sunday, May 1. Although three of these broadcasts are timed for 9.30 p.m., the programme should have a special appeal for children of all ages.

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