

The year just closed must be considered one of the most important in the history of the sanctuary, as it marked the almost complete extermination of the wild sheep. Mr. Fletcher took on the task of ridding the island of these animals, and made such an excellent job at it that only a few are left. The number of sheep destroyed reached a total of 1,437.

No goats were seen during the year, so they too can be considered a thing of the past. With these animals out of the way the plant covering will soon re-establish itself. Great progress is already noticeable in parts where the goats were shot out. The large grass area at the northern part of the sanctuary is now almost covered with manuka and tauhinu. All through the manuka young plants of many species are growing well, so that in time there will be a good mixture of suitable trees and shrubs on this end to provide food for the birds. It is especially pleasing to see amongst the young growth a good proportion of fuchsia, one of the most useful trees we have. Not only in this part of the island is this plant doing well, but in most of the ridges and gullies as far south as Maraetakaroro it can be seen.

For some unaccountable reason, but probably largely due to opossums, the fuchsia had died out in many parts of the island. In many places dead trees 6 in. in diameter can be seen. The previous absence of the young plants could be accounted for by the presence of wild goats, but these animals can hardly be blamed for destroying the larger trees. No doubt it is due to the total destruction of the goats and a great reduction in the number of opossums that this plant is coming on so well. Amongst the many plants showing up can be noticed a good number of miro and matai, both species being amongst the most useful, and providing fruit much sought after by the pigeon. Another tree which, though not quite so useful as the foregoing is nevertheless a beautiful species, is the titoki. Like the fuchsia, it appeared at one time to be dying out, but seems to have recovered. Last season some of them were loaded with berries. All of the coprosmas have done well, both in the bush and amongst the manuka. On the eastern coast-line from the Native land to Wharekohu the taupata is showing up well. Along the western coast on the cliffs this tree is also doing well, both seedlings and the old trees that had been kept down by goats. Scattered about all along the cliffs can also be seen plants of kowhai. Last season this plant flowered very well and attracted numerous bell-birds and tuis. Other plants coming away on the cliffs are koromiko, akeake, manuka, and tauhinu.

I was pleased to find there a plant of Cook's scurvy-grass (*Lepidium oleraceum*). In several places on these cliffs the exotic lupin is growing, unfortunately in places hard to get at. This plant has probably been introduced by starlings. In Taepiro Valley the fuchsia that showed up last year has made wonderful growth, not only by the main stream, but also in the side gullies. The narrow-leaved koromiko (*Veronica parviflora*), of which there are several very large specimens growing on Taepiro ridge, can be seen coming up through the grass. Other plants are also helping to close in this large area of grass. In the Kaiwharawhara and Maraetakaroro Valleys the flax flowered well, providing a feast for the nectar-loving birds. The other flax growing on the cliffs also provided plenty of food.

With the exception of the recent dry weather, which destroyed some of the plants I had put out, and would have killed many more if I had not watered them, and a severe gale which blew down a good many trees on the 28th October last, the year just ended is the best experienced during my term. The spring was exceptionally good, and the plants made wonderful growth. It was unfortunate that the gale should have come just when the young growth was in its most tender stage. I had to make practically a new track to the trig. owing to so many trees being blown down near the summit of the island. Fortunately the gale did not last long or otherwise much more damage would have been done. It blew harder and knocked up more sea here than I have ever known before. This accounted for a considerable amount of destruction amongst the nests of the sea-birds on Tokomapuna, as it happened when the birds were right in the middle of the nesting season. Dozens of nests, eggs, and young birds were washed away, the gale raging at its worst at high water. On one rock alone where terns were nesting only seven remained out of twenty-one. Out of about fifty nests of the black-backed gull, only those on the lee side of the islet were left. So strong was the wind that a flock of terns that had been working north of Rangatira could not fly against the wind to get back to their nests and young, and had to take shelter just north of Rangatira Point. Many times some of them attempted to fly back to their homes, but every time they were blown down into the sea. About fifty of them sheltered on the sand to wait for the wind to lull.

The land-birds also suffered from the effects of the gale. We had many nests under observation that were destroyed. The species that suffered most were the whiteheads. A pair of tomtits that had for some reason forsaken the usually secure position in a hollow tree built their nests in a tauhinu, and this was blown down.

With the exception of perhaps the pigeon, most of the other species have done fairly well. The robin especially seems to have increased in every part of the sanctuary: it is easily the best season they have had during the last four. Bell-birds, too, have multiplied exceedingly. On every part of the island young bell-birds could be heard. For some reason the pigeon does not appear to have been so successful. We knew of three nests, and in all of them the one egg was taken by some marauder.

The long-tailed cuckoo was not so plentiful during the last season as he was during the three previous years, and the shining cuckoo was seen on only two occasions. A black fantail that has been seen about Rangatira for the past two years mated up with one of the pied species, and had two nests, but the young birds were taken by some pest. The saddlebacks that were brought from North Auckland may now be considered as well established. Each season has seen them feeding young birds. A pair of these birds—probably an original pair—can be seen at almost any time of the year at Kahikatea, just south of Rangatira.

In two widely separated parts of the sanctuary feathers of the kakapo were picked up by the opossum-trapper, showing that these birds have apparently increased. One of the birds was caught by the trapper, and brought to me for identification. It was stone-blind, but otherwise in perfect