

“The fantails also had a good year, judging by the results of those we had under review at Rangatira. We had three nests under observation, one of them not more than half a chain from our door, and the other two near the old wharf. From these, nine young fannies were reared.

“The domestic affairs of the whiteheads likewise seem to have been satisfactory. We knew of nearly a dozen nests, and although a few of them were destroyed in the January gales most of them produced young. Although some whiteheads were victimized by the parasitic long-tailed cuckoo, these birds were very scarce during the breeding season. We saw only one being fed by whiteheads, and this was by our house. For nearly a week they fed this bird, which was just about full grown and looked four times as big as themselves. All through the daylight hours, whenever we were near it, the young cuckoo could be heard crying out for food. From daylight until dark those two whiteheads worked like trojans trying to silence that monotonous whine. They must have carried enough food to feed a dozen of their own species, and yet they never satisfied that greedy creature, and they must have experienced intense relief when the cuckoo left for far-away Tahiti or wherever these Kapiti-reared birds go.

“Kiwi are definitely increasing. Either that, or they are roaming about more than they have done before. Traces of them have been found on nearly every part of the reserve. Wherever the trapper goes he comes across the feathers of this bird caught up in the hooked grass (*Uncinia riparia*). Last winter some were heard calling at night in the bush behind the cottage, and one was seen by a surveyor on the track near the vegetable-garden at 9 o'clock one night. Early in January my daughter saw another kiwi about 3 o'clock in the afternoon a quarter of a mile south of Maenene. It was the little grey kiwi (*Apteryx coweni*). Two pair of grey ducks nested at Rangatira. One pair had eight little ones, and they lived in the swamp until they were ready to fly. They were fed daily on scraps of bread and wheat, and became tame enough to take food from our hands. Towards the end of February the swamp became almost dry, and some of the ducks flew away. They returned several times after this, usually at night, but their visits grew less and less until finally they stayed away altogether. About this time another duck appeared with a batch of young, but they were altogether different from the other family. Instead of coming to meet us when we took food down to them like the others had done, they kept well under cover. No doubt such caution was necessary, because a harrier had discovered them and was always hovering over the swamp, and sometimes sitting on the reeds near it, watching for an opportunity to seize one of the ducklings. The presence of this bird, and the fact that the swamp had nearly dried up, apparently decided the duck to seek safer quarters, and she took her family away.

“A pair of paradise ducks nested by the boat-shed within half a chain of where they had hatched out seven young the year before. The nest was under a toitoi, and although I knew it was about somewhere I nearly trod on the bird before she slipped off. There were eight eggs lying amongst the down, which the bird had plucked from her body. Apparently they were about due to hatch, because the duck, which had settled on the boat-shed, where she stood watching me, flew straight back to resume her sitting as soon as I walked away.

“On the flat at the north end the usual number of stilts and banded dotterel were in evidence. This place appears to be incapable of supporting more than about two dozen of each species, as no more than about that number breed there. After the season all the stilts and most of the banded dotterel go to other places.

“The blue heron have retained the same status in regard to numbers as when we first came here. Every year they nest in the same old place and generally rear one or two young ones, yet they never increase. Apparently the season's increase is driven away to earn their living along the coast of the mainland.

“The black slugs nested as usual on the high pinnacles at the south-west corner. Although some of these birds can always be seen diving for food near the shores of Kapiti, many wend their way across to the shallower waters near the mainland, to return again to the island at sunset.

“In early spring the little blue penguins were very much in evidence. Under nearly every rush bush, toitoi, or rock these queer little fellows could be found. They seemed to be everywhere, even under logs half a mile in the bush. One nest was found well above the cliffs of Paripatea at an altitude of about 300 ft. Why these birds should travel so far from water up such a steep place is beyond understanding. It must have taken them well over an hour to waddle and climb the distance.

“The mutton-birds have extended their breeding-grounds so as to include many places that were unoccupied ten years ago. Their nesting burrows can be seen on most of the higher ridges in the sanctuary as well as on the highest portion of the Native land at the north end. The young birds appear to have reached maturity earlier this season, as the burrows in the colony at Paripatea were found to be empty when examined a week ago.

“As in previous years, both species of gulls and white-fronted terns nested in large numbers. While the red-billed gull and terns usually breed together in colonies, and may pitch their camp anywhere on cliffs or beaches that take their fancy, the large gulls show their unsociable nature by choosing places as far removed from other birds, even their own species, as they can.

“As has been the case during previous years, a good deal of planting and distributing of seeds on the reserve has been achieved. In this connection I have derived considerable help from Mr. G. W. Hughes, who, during the course of his trapping activities, travels over different parts of the sanctuary.

“Although most of the trees planted out naturally belonged to the island, some had been sent from other parts of the Dominion by people interested in the native flora.

“During the year some very useful additions were made to the equipment. An engine was installed for drawing the launch out of the water, thus making this performance only a matter of a few minutes. A 10-ft. dinghy was supplied to replace the old one that had reached the useless stage, and such necessary tools as a forge, anvil, vice, &c. The addition of these implements will be of great benefit, and will save expense and delay when a breakdown occurs. Alterations to the doors of the boat-shed were made. These are now much better, as they slide out of the way instead of swinging on hinges.”

*Approximate Cost of Paper.*—Preparation not given; printing (760 copies), £18.