

ILLEGAL SHOOTING.

The shooting season is now at an end, and many stories of wanton destruction of protected birds and the failure of the present methods to effect protection reach the N.Z. Native Bird Protection Society. A white heron was picked up in a disabled condition on the Wairarapa lake and died, another was destroyed in Otago. The killing of these rare visitants to our shores is looked on by the Maoris as bringing the worst of evils to their destroyers.

On the 1st May twelve paradise ducks flew around the Wairarapa lake, next day only six remained, although absolutely protected, and records of these instances could be almost indefinitely repeated.

PIGEONS PROTECTED.

As showing what can be done by the right man in the right place, the efforts of Mr. James Ogle, forest guard at the Omahuta forest, are well worth recording. Year after year in the past the rattle of shotguns has been heard in the Puketū and Omahuta forests, each containing an area of some 14,000 acres, in the Hokianga district. The first-named forest in particular is a nesting and congregating place for pigeons, and great was the toll taken by both Natives and pakehas.

Now all is stilled, and the pigeons can be seen serenely preening themselves within a few hundred yards of Rangaihua township.

This forest guard is, moreover, an excellent Maori linguist, and old-time bushman who loves his kauri forests and its birds. Through his good offices the Natives were induced to come on the side of the birds, and an influential chief, Nopera Otene, has worked hard amongst his followers, with the result that some hundreds of acres of their forests are to be set aside as bird sanctuary.

These results have not been achieved without untold hard work day in and day out. Few people know the difficulties, which are increased by the whites giving the Natives cartridges to shoot pigeons, and receiving the pigeons, but none of the penalty if the culprit is caught.

The old-time Maori knew how to protect the birds, when necessary, but his method of tapu was useless against the pakeha, and thus came into disuse. Some of the Hokianga Natives are once more prepared to use the tapu if protection can be given by the white man against pakehas. Can we give it?

Birds appeal strongly to the interests and affections of mankind. Not only do they charm by their graceful forms, harmonious colours, sprightly actions, and usually pleasing notes, but they have even more important claim upon our esteem because of their great economic value.

Birds feed upon practically all insect pests. They are voracious, able to move freely from place to place, and exert a steady influence in keeping down the swelling tide of insect life.

For economic as well as aesthetic reasons, therefore, an effort should be made to attract and protect birds and to increase their numbers. When proper measures of this kind have been taken an increase of several fold in the bird population has resulted, with decreased losses from depreciations of injurious insects.—Farmers Bulletin 844. U.S. States Departments of Agriculture.

One result of the increasingly popular interest in birds has been a definite movement to protect them and to concentrate them where they are especially desired. It is during the breeding period that birds are at their best, and people who love to see and hear them or who need their help in fighting insect pests are eager to offer inducements, in the way of nesting sites, to invite their presence at this season.—Farmers Bulletin 609. U.S. Department of Agriculture.

THE POOR KNIGHTS.

NATIVE FLORA AND FAUNA.

DESTROYING THEIR ENEMIES.

An interesting expedition to the Poor Knights Islands, which lie off the Whangarei coast, was recently undertaken by Mr. W. M. Fraser (engineer of the Whangarei Harbour Board), a keen lover of New Zealand flora and fauna. With a party of six Maoris and three good pig dogs Mr. Fraser travelled in a launch from the northern mainland to the islands, and spent six days there. The visit, which was made under the auspices of the Government, was mainly to adopt measures to destroy wild pigs, which have proved a menace to the flora and bird-life of the island sanctuaries, and to report generally on the present condition of affairs existing.

Reporting on his trip to the Minister of Internal Affairs (the Hon. R. F. Bolland), Mr. Fraser stated that bad weather prevailed during the stay of the party on the islands, but the condi-