

sanctuaries, otherwise the vandal poacher and collector get the lion's share, leaving only a few of the least useful birds in existence. The bona fide hunter gets little or nothing, and the more desirable birds lessen or become extinct through Nature's balance becoming upset.

Here in New Zealand, people are inherent Nature lovers and would, without doubt, welcome the proper enforcement of efficient conservation laws. Only some, 3 or 5 per cent., can be classed as real vandals, and it is because this small minority are allowed to do as they please that a larger proportion of the public, seeing the inefficiency of the protection afforded and that the vandal poacher fellow is allowed to do generally as he pleases, join in the general destruction.

We must not, however, blame the authorities altogether, as a Government is merely a reflection of the people. No doubt the real cause of the lack of efficient administration of conservation laws is a want of adequate realisation of the great value of wild life and of the possibility of preserving our native birds and other desirable life. The results of recent educational work on the part of the New Zealand Native Bird Protection Society, the Press, and many others has already resulted in a decided increase of many of our native birds. The public are beginning to realise the necessity of diverting destruction from the birds to their enemies, the cats, rats, weasels, poachers, collectors, etc.

With efficient protection we can have our native birds around our homes wherever food is present and game birds in plenty for the legitimate hunter. We have the natural conditions to make New Zealand and New Zealanders' conservation efforts an example to the world—the cost would be small in proportion to the value of the results.

The society stands for the enactment of intelligent conservation laws and their absolute enforcement in order that desirable birds, including a sufficiency of game birds, may be preserved for all time. Lovers of New Zealand birds, genuine sportsmen, all who enjoy a day's recreation afield amidst the beautiful surroundings of this fair land, agriculturists, and all interested in our national well-being are invited to stand together and insist on the intelligent and absolute enforcement of such conservation laws as will ensure the democratic preservation of New Zealand for New Zealanders, and the intelligent use of those

endowments which Nature has so lavishly bestowed as our heritage.

OPOSSUMS.

A member of the Royal Australian Ornithologists' Union, Mr. A. F. Wilkin-son, writing of that organisation in the official organ, "The Emu," says:—

"The Tararua's, having the largest forest in the southern part of the North Island, and being a forest reserve, will be a sanctuary for our native birds for all time. Unfortunately, opossums, which were liberated a few years ago on the western side, have spread through the ranges, and are doing a considerable amount of damage to the bush trees; those principally affected being mahoe, kotukutuku, and the wawapaku, or five-finger, as it is generally called by bushmen.

I have travelled down gullies for hours where these grow without seeing a healthy specimen, most of them having all the leaves and young shoots eaten off, and hundreds dead. As *fuchsia excorticata* and *melicytus ramiflorus* are much frequented by our native birds, the former by the honey-eaters, and the latter by the native pigeon, it can easily be seen how much harm the opossums are doing.

GANNETRIES.

The gannets which nest on Cape Kidnappers are seemingly dissatisfied with the conditions there, and this season, after arriving at the sanctuary, left again. They have, however, returned, but in lesser numbers than usual.

Too much unrestrained curiosity is in evidence while the birds are nesting, and steps are, we understand, to be taken to fence the sanctuary off, and it is to be hoped this will be done ere it is too late.

The White Island gannetry is also menaced by a syndicate, which is not a New Zealand affair. We are informed the proposal is to exploit the guano lying around the nesting place beside the deposits of sulphur. Although we wish such a company every success in legitimate enterprise, we think the proposed interference with the gannets will be strenuously opposed by many, and rightly so.

OPOSSUMS.

BY CAPT. E. V. SANDERSON,
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Efforts made by those institutions which are being benefited by the cash returns from opossum skins are naturally