

Towards the latter part of the year 1883, I returned to the Upper Waitotara country and I heard the first kiwi on the 8th December of that year. This was at the Trig-Kapara on the western side of the river in the Kapara Survey District.

I spent the year 1884 and nearly the whole of 1885 in the Upper Waitotara district. We now began to see signs of kiwi and to hear them more often at night. Still none were caught by the dogs which we always had with us. Wekas were heard occasionally. In 1886 we worked over the watershed on towards the Wanganui River above Pipiriki. While cleaning a trig station here I found a dead kiwi that had been killed by a wild dog. The dog had buried the bird in the soft ground of a pig rooting. Kiwis were now to be heard almost every night, and occasionally we found the skins of those killed by wild dogs, turned inside out. About this time I caught one alive and kept it in Wanganui for some time. About 1888, returned to the Upper Waitotara. Kiwis fairly plentiful. Wekas scarce. In 1892, I took up a bush section in the Kapara Survey District, Taranaki, and have lived here ever since.

About the year 1896, kiwi had increased greatly in numbers. Though the country was being felled and roaded, all the bush contained them in numbers. And this remained so for 10 to 15 years, after which they were not quite so plentiful, but still were not at all scarce away from the heavy bush.

About 1918 I noticed that they were getting scarce and this continued. Now (1922) though they are still fairly plentiful in the heavy bush, still there are, I should say, not more than one tenth of the numbers of say 1911.

Wekas increased in numbers in the district from about 1900 to 1905 and became moderately plentiful in favourable localities after which they became scarcer, and I have not heard the cry of the bird for several years. Pukeko came about 1903-05, and in certain limited but favourable localities they multiplied greatly; about 1916-17, they began to decline in numbers. There are now only a few left.

Thirty years ago the piopio or native thrush would be heard in a limited number of the heavily timbered valleys. Now, if any are left, it will be in some of the remote valleys of the forest reserve. Bellbirds remain in fair numbers also whiteheads, but the kaka and kakariki are only heard in the seldom visited localities.