

Diary of a Small Girl

21st June, 1953—Sunday shortest day.

Daddy put up a bird table outside the kitchen window, on a kowhai tree. Few birds found it and came around on the first day. Later a few starlings came but it was mostly "green-eyes" and sparrows.

The table is a shallow box hung from a pulley on a branch. It is out of reach of all cats and can be lowered to fill it. When I put the scraps out, I intend to make the same call each day.

Sunday, 28th June

This week has been very cold and wet. Many little birds are now feeding daily at our table. Today I noticed a larger brown bird like a finch, perched on the edge of the table. He didn't seem to feed much, but chased the other ones away. At one moment there will be about twenty-five sparrows, at the next moment they will be gone, and the table will be covered with "green-eyes."

Sunday, July 5th

The birds have been feeding at my table all the week, and I have been feeding them regularly with bread, fat and table scraps. I now have a bird call which makes a noise just like a bird. During the week a native pigeon flew into the tree to watch the other birds eat. There are birds on the table all the time now, either "green-eyes" or sparrows.

Sunday, July 12th

Today is a lovely day after a frost, and the birds have been eating and singing gaily all the morning, and also early this morning a bell-bird and a pigeon came and watched the little birds feeding. Yesterday

a yellow hammer came and sat by the table, too. This morning we took a photo of the bird table from the kitchen window.

Sunday, July 19th

The weather has been very cold and wet and the birds have been hungrier than ever. Today I found a very sick wax-eye on the table. I brought it in and warmed it and then let it fly into a tree. But at night when I fed them I found a little dead bird on the table. I think it was the same one.

Sunday, July 26th

Today there are signs of an early spring. I heard a thrush singing this morning and there are yellow bulbs out in the garden. The bird table is swaying backwards and forwards in the wind and starlings, sparrows and wax-eyes are all feeding happily together.

August 2nd

One morning last week I saw a little bird swinging upside down from the wire above the table. We thought he was playing, but later found he was caught by the leg in a very thick cobweb. Daddy lowered the table and released him. There are still plenty of birds around. Two or three pigeons are often in the tree.

August 9th

This week my table broke.

From Bird Lover, Rangitikei.

[Note—We are assured that although the diary ended on 9th August, the table was repaired and is still in use.—Ed.]

OBITUARY

DR. WALTER REGINALD BROOK OLIVER

WAS a member of the Forest and Bird Protection Society since 1923—our foundation year.

Born in Tasmania in 1883 he arrived in New Zealand in 1896 and continued his education at the Tauranga High School and Victoria University College. After working as a Customs Officer for a number of years and serving with the 1st N.Z.E.F. 1915-18 he joined the staff of the Dominion Museum in 1920 and was appointed Director in 1928. He retired in 1947.

Dr. Oliver wrote and subsequently revised "N.Z. Birds", probably the most complete book on that subject ever produced. He also wrote "Genus Coprosma" and "Moas of New Zealand and Australia", beside numerous scientific papers.

He was the recipient of many high honours including the Hector Medal for Botanical Research 1936; he was a member of several Societies including the Royal Society of N.Z. of which he was President 1952-54. By his death New Zealand has lost a foremost ornithologist.

Dr. BERNARD EHRENFRIED MYERS, C.M.G.,
M.D., F.R.C.P.

DR. MYERS, an endowment member of the Society, in latter years residing in London, was a bird lover and in particular an enthusiast on the birds and forest of New Zealand.

Educated at Wellington College, Auckland Grammar School, Edinburgh University and St. Bartholomew's Hospital, he served in the 1st N.Z.E.F. as A.D.M.S. and then D.M.S. He was a high officer in the St. John Ambulance and Red Cross Organisations and was the author of "Reminiscences of a Physician". A generous friend to the Forest and Bird Society, just before his death, he sent to us a fine book on British birds, a welcome addition to our library. Unfortunately he died before we could express our thanks.
