

OIL ON BIRDS' FEATHERS

During the summer you may pick up on the beach a poor sea bird, its feathers so covered with oil that it cannot fly. If left to its fate such a bird will of course die.

Many bird watchers have attempted to clean these unfortunate birds and it has been found that the thing you must not do is to bath them with soap or detergent. (Petrol or kerosene are even worse because they would probably kill the bird). The reason why soap or detergent should not be used is that they will wash the natural oil from the bird's feathers and then it will lose its power to float. When a sea bird can't float it drowns!

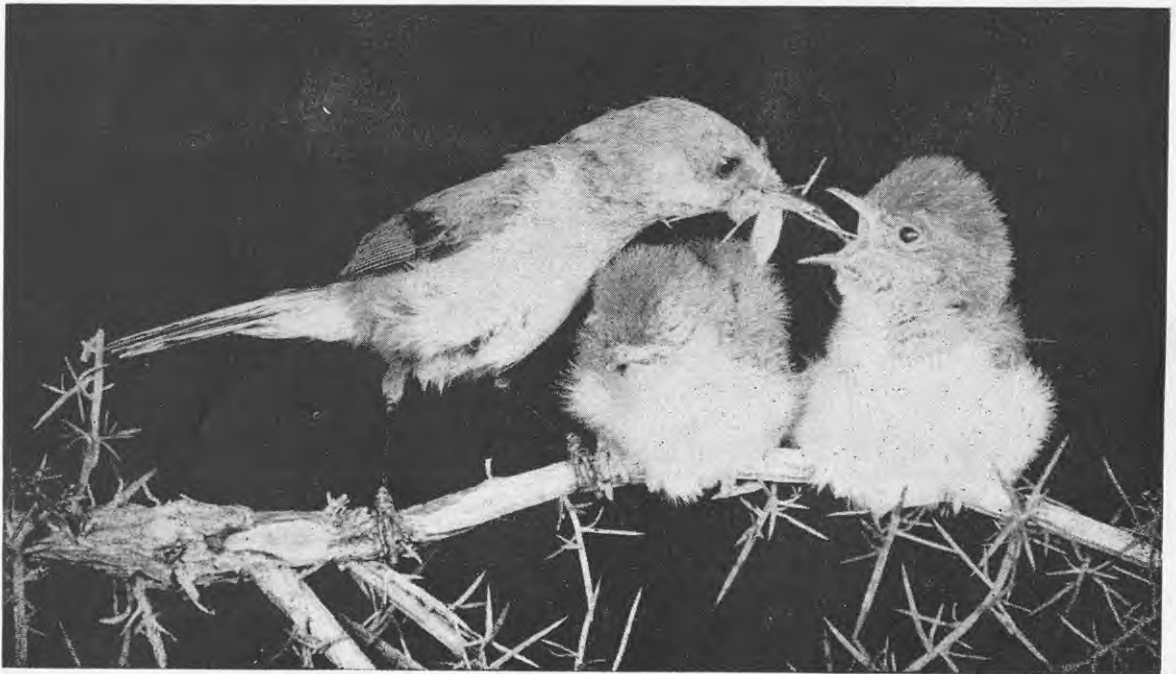
Mrs. Katherine Tottenham, an English bird lover, has found a solution. She says that "a dry shampoo made of fuller's earth and powdered chalk will not take away the natural oil from the bird's feathers". She tells us that she wraps the whole bird in cotton wool except for its beak and keeps it warm. She then feeds it with raw fish or whatever its correct food may be—but she first dips the food in cod liver oil. Next day, when the bird is warm, rested and well fed, she sprinkles the feathers with the fullers earth and chalk,

which, she says should draw out the oil in about 24 hours. In from 7 to 10 days the bird ought to be well enough to be set free at the seashore. Your chemist would probably stock fuller's earth and powdered chalk.

JUNIOR ALONG THE TRACK

TIRAU—While looking for frogs in the swamp one afternoon my sisters, brothers and I were walking around when one of my sisters pulled a piece of wood off a cabbage tree under which was a wasp's nest. After we all had a look at it we made off as quickly as we could. After a while I saw a whiteeye, which was the first I've seen this year. I was six feet away from it when it flew away. It had a greenish back and yellowish chest. I also saw many native ferns, two fantails catching insects in the air, one minah, and three blackbirds, also several dead sheep on which hawks were feeding. We were unsuccessful in finding any frogs.—**Patricia Jenkins, 12 years.**

PUKETITIRI—In the May holidays I went to Masterton. On the way we stopped and saw the takahe. The takahe is a large bird. It is like a pukeko. It has a large red beak and large red feet. The rest of it is bluish. Not many people have seen the takahe. It was once thought to be extinct. The takahe yelp klowp, klowp, klowp. In the cage with the takahe were wekas, a kaka, a morepork, a native pigeon, and some kingfishers.—**Cynthia Whittle, 11 years.**



Grey Warbler Feeding Young.

Photo: G. J. H. Moon.