

Extract from an Honorary Ranger's Report

In the Mt. Roskill area starlings and minahs seem to thrive and live in harmony, both species increasing about 100 per cent. last year. When the starlings occupy the lawns the minahs leave and vice versa.

At Whangaparaoa the quail, both Australian and Californian, seem to have been greatly reduced this season and very few are now seen, but the heavy building going on here would partly account for this. There are still quite a number of pheasants around, a few rabbits and opossums, and I have seen an occasional stoat in this area. Of other birds we have the white-backed crow, tuis, moreporks, and all the usual small native birds including a few pair of parrakeets and the usual shore and sea birds, bittern, shags, and all the gulls.

At Waiwera an occasional Australian white cockatoo puts in an appearance; also there are quite a number of pukekos between Orewa and Waiwera. There were fledgling thrushes here the second week in August but, except for a few blackbirds, most birds did not begin to nest till September. A sight to see here is the homing of starlings. I counted 23 flocks with several hundred in each passing over my house, besides quite a number of straggler groups with a few dozen in each during the course of half an hour. They roost in the pine plantation at the tip of the peninsula and must travel several miles to their feeding grounds. There are still quite a number about in spite of the fact that many of them are nesting.

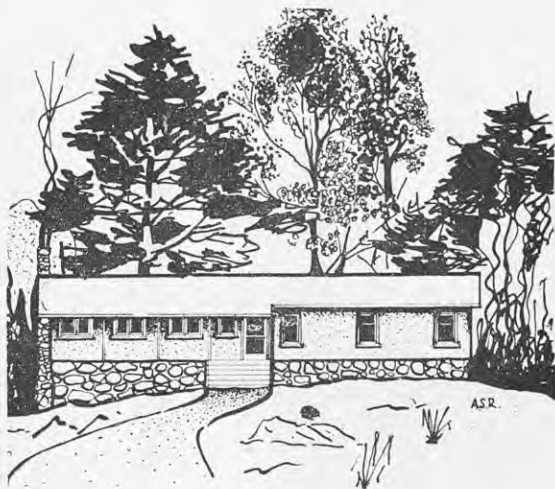
I saw a kingfisher make a dive attack on a young thrush on my section but the mother drove after it in no uncertain manner. The thrush could not fly properly but this is the first time I have seen a kingfisher attack a young bird. I have seen them take frogs and mice.

An amusing incident which I witnessed in the Morrinsville area was a pukeko charging after a stoat. Presumably the stoat was in the vicinity of a nest and the pukeko was able to land quite a few good pecks at the rear end of the stoat and must have chased it several hundred yards. The stoat was going all out. Another incident

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RUAPEHU LODGE

FURTHER NOTES



There comes a time in most enterprises, usually about half way, when the going itself becomes a preoccupation and the outcome is a thought too far off—a time of plodding. (Remember those days, we say later on, how it rained.)

Since last Journal issue our funds have increased to £1,800. Thus we are still moving ahead, but—too slowly. In addition to our continuing appeal to members for contributions, either as loans or outright gifts, we are making application for a substantial grant from funds administered by our Council.

Meanwhile members of the Lodge Committee have again visited Ruapehu. Mr. Mazey, the chief ranger, accompanied us in a survey of the building areas. The whole aspect is entrancing, with a beech forest on the left, a sparkling and busy little creek down on the right, and beyond it further bush. Up the valley looms the bulk of upper Ruapehu while down below are the plains, across to the blunt wedge of Hikurangi.

The site itself is a scrubby gentle slope with little alpine gardens already planted about for us by nature. Behind the bush on the left will go a substantial drain, Mr. Mazey informs us, to capture any seepage and deflect rain water. We examined the sites, beginning with the lowest and working up. Any site, we thought,