from late September to early January, than at any other time. The hen bird even sings while sitting on the eggs—a most unusual phenomenon in the bird world. The tui is a competent mimic; it was popular among the Maoris as a pet and was taught to call greetings to visitors arriving at the pa.

The tui's flight is as distinctive as its song. It is rapid and noisy, and the rustle of its wings is clearly audible. The tui's most characteristic haunts are among the outskirts of the bush and the tree tops, where the flowers and fruits which form its chief source of feed are found. Groups of tuis can sometimes be seen giving their version of a jetobatic display, flashing and darting in the air, then diving suddenly to disappear among the trees.

Tuis find their main food supply in the berries and nectar-bearing flowers of the forest. They feed on mahoe, coprosma, supplejack, maire, mako and karaka berries and the flowers of rata, kowhai, rewarewa, fuchsia, and flax. The tui's tongue, which is tipped by a very fine brush, is especially adapted for extracting nectar from flowers. In winter, when the berries are past, insects form the mainstay of their diet. During the winter months, in their search for food, tuis move about much more and are often seen in the gardens of more settled areas. The tui has adapted itself more readily than many other native species to the changing pattern of European settlement. Many settled areas now have well established gardens with various nectar-bearing shrubs such as rhododendrons, acacias and eucalypt. Occasional stragglers are seen searching for food in exotic pine forests. The tui with other birds plays an important role in the regeneration of our native bush. When it thrusts its beak into flowers for nectar, pollen settles on its head and it then carries the pollen from plant to plant. In addition it destroys various insects harmful to trees.

The tui's nest, which is usually built in a tree some ten to thirty feet above the ground, is a wide shallow structure of sticks, leaves and moss, insecurely attached to its site. The inside of the nest is lined with grass or leaves and perhaps one or two feathers. The eggs, which are very pointed and white in colour with a faint rosy tinge, are usually laid from October to December; there are three or four eggs in a clutch.

Nature Notes for Winter

Winter is almost upon us and many of the birds we have become familiar with during the summer have left our shores, notably the godwits and knots, who have set out on their long journey to Siberia and Alaska, while the shining and long-tailed cuckoos have left for the tropical islands such as the Solomons and Tahiti and the banded dotterel has crossed the Tasman to Australia. However, not all the bird population goes away. The first-year godwits remain behind and some of the other species are still represented, but in very much reduced numbers. While these birds are not so noticeable locally, migrants move north from the South Island or from inland localities to gather on our estuaries and seashores. You will notice the large number of South Island pied oyster-catchers, or if you are more fortunate and live near Auckland, you may see the flocks of wrybills on the Manukau Harbour or the Firth of Thames.

Storm Wrecks

With the winter comes the rough weather, and many of the oceanic birds, such as the albatrosses and mollyhawks, find it difficult to obtain food at times. The result is that after heavy storms many perish and some are cast up on the beaches right around the country. If you take a walk along the beach straight after a long stormy period, you may find interesting specimens; for instance, last year on Ohope Beach two rare petrels never before recorded in New Zealand were recovered and made wonderful museum specimens, and a wedge-tailed shearwater from distant Hawaii was found at Makara (near Wellington). Many of these birds are difficult to identify, especially after they have been on the beach for some time, because often the hungry gulls will tear them about and eat parts of them. Identification of some may prove rather difficult, so it