

repair to the gardens of even the most populous towns. Even in summer small travelling-parties may occasionally be seen in the most thickly populated districts.

There are several birds, both native and introduced, similar to the white-eye in size, but the nest of the latter (Fig. 1) cannot be confused with that of any other bird in New Zealand. It is a basket-shaped structure, attached by the rim at several places to two or more twigs lying more or less in the same horizontal plane. Though it may rest against twigs lying below it, the nest is never dependent on them for its support, and may be therefore truly described as pendulous or hanging. It is very frail-looking, often showing the light through it, but owing to the skilful interweaving of the grasses, mosses, &c., of which it is built it is really a very strong structure. It is generally



FIG. 1. NEST OF WHITE-EYE, SHOWING HOW IT IS SUSPENDED.

[Photo by G. H. Cunningham.]

lined with grass, with the wiry leaves of the grass-tree (*Dracophyllum* spp.), and very often, particularly near settled areas, with horse-hair. The eggs, of which three or four are laid in the nest, average under $\frac{3}{4}$ in. in length. Their beautiful pale-blue colour combined with their small size distinguishes them from all other eggs found in New Zealand, except possibly those of the hedge-sparrow, which are larger and far deeper blue in colour.

The activities of the white-eye may be discussed under the following headings: (1) Pollination of flowers of trees, (2) dispersal of weed-seeds and tree-seeds, (3) damage to fruit, and (4) destruction of insects. From the economic standpoint (1) and (4) can be adjudged as wholly beneficial, (3) as wholly destructive, and (2) as a mixture of good and evil, between which a fair balance must be struck in considering the treatment the white-eye should receive from the cultivator.