

The first of these activities has been dealt with generally in the second article of this series, in which the general importance of pollination by birds in the New Zealand forest was strongly emphasized. It is necessary only to point out here that while in the untouched forest itself the greater part of the work will probably still be carried out by the tui and the bell-bird, to which the native timber-trees had become more intimately adapted before the white-eye came to New Zealand, still in settled districts where these birds are less common the ubiquitous white-eye will doubtless perform good service. Even in the city it is a common sight in winter or late autumn to see white-eyes busily engaged on the flowers of the brush-wattle (*Albizzia lophantha*). In the bush itself the flowers of the various ratas (*Metrosideros* spp.) are visited for their honey, while their relative, the ornamental pohutukawa of our gardens and sea-coasts, receives the same attentions. So much for the white-eye's work in the pollination of trees and shrubs. This is a subject on which further and fuller observation is greatly needed, and it is one which can be studied by observation alone. In other parts of this investigation it is conceivable that the examination of birds' stomachs might be of some service; in this part it would obviously be useless.

In May last almost every patch of inkweed-plants (*Phytolacca octandra*) in the Auckland District was the centre of an animated scene owing to the parties of white-eyes which were feeding with avidity on the berries. In early portions of the district the bright-red bare spikes gave striking evidence of the quantity of fruit already eaten. Inkweed is dependent on birds for its spread; the hard black seeds could not easily be carried by any other method. It must not be supposed, however, that the white-eye is the sole exploiter of the juicy black fruit, for such introduced birds as starlings and thrushes certainly account for large quantities, while pheasants are said also to feed upon the berries. The blackberry—perhaps the most serious weed in New Zealand—is also, so far as the seed is concerned, spread solely by birds; but while there is little doubt that the white-eye will eat blackberries there seems no evidence to convict it of the major share in disseminating this pest. The blame for that must rather be laid at the door of certain of the introduced birds which are so overwhelmingly abundant in settled districts. The berries of another weed, the black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*), are also eagerly eaten by the white-eye.

In the bush itself probably none of the smaller berries are disdained. It is here that the white-eye must be considered as an ally of the forester; so far as its forest activities are concerned, it does nothing but good.

It is when we come to the work of the white-eye in the orchard during the fruit season that there is need for all the good qualities of the species to vindicate it in the opinion of the fruit industry. There is scarcely any fruit which is not eaten, and some, such as figs, are hardly attacked at all by other birds. It is questionable, however, whether the greatest damage to fruit of all kinds is not the work of the blackbird, myna, starling, and thrush, which by reason of their great concentration of numbers in settled districts, and larger size, account for a greater quantity. There are indications that apples and pears are rarely attacked by white-eyes until the skin has first been pierced