

less mistakable, and should be confused with the work of no other bird in New Zealand. It is a covered structure hung from often a slender twig, though rarely pendulous. The opening in the sides, rather nearer the top than the bottom, is so small as barely to admit more than the tip of a finger, and is frequently shadowed by a small porch. The otherwise capacious interior is almost filled with the softest feathers, in which lie the tiny pink-speckled eggs.

Few birds are so exclusively insectivorous as the grey warbler. At a period with even less apprehension of the true position than at present, when the colonists of Canterbury considered as pests all birds except the truly destructive ones they themselves had imported from England, Potts brought forward as proof of the innocence of the grey warbler a nest which a pair had built embowered in a heavily fruiting red-currant bush. The parent birds had actually to brush aside the ripe fruit when entering the portal of their nest, yet not a currant was taken.

Strictly speaking, our riroriro is not a true warbler, but its differences from the warbler family are in no sense related to its insectivorous qualities. Hence the following figures published in *American Forestry*, 1917, will be of interest as showing the rate at which insects are destroyed by these birds and their allies: "One palm-warbler was observed to catch insects at the rate of from forty to sixty a minute during a space of four hours, making a total of nearly 9,500, while another species feeding on aphids (plant-lice) on a grey-birch destroyed eighty-nine in a minute and 3,500 in forty minutes. The destruction of caterpillars is on the same scale, one warbler destroying twenty-two gypsy-moth (*Lymantria dispar*) caterpillars in fourteen minutes, another twenty-eight browntail (*Euproctis chrysorrhoea*) caterpillars in twelve minutes, and a third forty-two in thirty minutes."

#### THE WHITE-BREASTED AND THE YELLOW-BREASTED TITS.

The two New Zealand tits which are really fly-catchers (*Muscicapidae*)—the white-breasted tit or miro (*Myiomoira toitoi* Less.) of the North Island, and the yellow-breasted tit or ngiru (*M. macrocephala* Gm.) of the South—are tame and familiar little birds which, nevertheless, are not very frequent in cultivated areas, though both show a considerable liking for clearings on the edge of the forest. The males of both have the same colour scheme of plumage, with black upper parts, head and breast, and pale abdomen, but the latter is white in the miro and yellow of varying shades in the ngiru. The females are greyish-brown with white under-parts, but may be recognized by their movements and build, which are similar to those of the males. Both species live practically entirely on insects, but they exploit a quite different locus from the preceding species and a correspondingly dissimilar set of insects. A large portion of their food, as indicated in the article dealing with forest-birds, is obtained from the ground, whither frequent darts are made from a position of vantage, in which the black beady eye is constantly alert.

In winter both the miro and the ngiru occasionally frequent orchards and gardens; but the writers know of no recent cases where nests have been built in such situations. The same remarks apply therefore to the nests of these birds as were made on those of the yellowhead and its relatives.