

As for native birds, the commonest is, I think, the Ground-Lark (*Anthus novæ-zealandiæ*). The Harrier (*Circus gouldi*), the Kingfisher (*Halcyon vagans*), the Fantail (*Rhipidura flabellifera*), and the Grey Warbler (*Pseudogerygone igala*), are about equally numerous. The Weka (*Ocydromus earli*) is not uncommon, being more often heard than seen, and aquatic birds are plentiful on the swamps along the Waikato River. The only rare bird I have seen there is a small Rail, but which one I am not sure, as I only glimpsed it twice while driving along the road. I have heard the Tui once (further north I have seen scores), and seen a Kaka once; these also I have seen on several occasions north of Auckland. Even when to the above list I add the beautiful Californian Quail, which are plentiful, and the equally beautiful but rare Pheasant, the ubiquitous White-eye (*Zosterops cærulescens*)—like myself, an Australian migrant come to stay—the Banded Dottrel (seen at Tokomaru Bay, on the East Coast), the Indian Myna (seen also at the same place), and the dear old Australian Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen*), found on the mainland opposite Kawan Island, to which they were introduced by Sir George Grey. The Shining Cuckoo should be added to the list, also the "More-pork" Owl. Even with all that I can scrape together, you will see what a short bird list I have, and understand how I miss my native land, with its wealth of bird-life.—T. J. ICK-HEWINS, M.B., B.S.

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## Ornithological Notes.

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IN looking through my diary I have culled the following notes, which may be of interest.

*Pomatostomus superciliosus*, V. and H. (White-browed Babbler).—On the 14th March, 1916, observed a pair of these birds feeding their young in nest situated in a peppermint (*Eucalyptus odoratus*), about 15 feet from the ground. I could not help spending some time watching these birds; I think they are in some respects the most interesting of all the native birds in this locality. They spread their tails when they make their short flights, the white tips to the tail feathers giving a pretty fan-like appearance. The short, quick beats of their wings make a fluttering sound, very noticeable even when the birds are not visible. The habit of alighting on the ground at some distance from the tree that they wish to ascend, and completing the final few feet by taking a series of huge hops is almost grotesque, and this is added to as each of the flock follows its leader, the whole party ascending the branches of the tree in a spiral fashion. The notes are most varied; the most common is a combination between a warble and a scold, followed by a loud scolding noise without the warble, or some-

times the warbling notes in a little higher tone without any scolding at all. At dawn they utter a soft cry, quite different from the notes uttered during the day-time. Their actions when feeding on the ground are always worth watching. They turn over dead leaves and sticks with a quick movement, and often in their hurry throw leaves and sticks a distance of a foot or two.

On the same date (14/3/16) I noted the first *Cacomantis (flabelliformis) rubricatus*, Lath. (Fan-tailed Cuckoo), which stays with us in this district till July, when it disappears.

On the 1st of June large numbers of *Meliphaga (Plilotis) sonora* (Southern Singing Honey-eater) and *Acanthogenys rufogularis*, Gld. (Spiny-cheeked Honey-eater) were about my garden—the first time I have seen either of these species in this district, and we have lived here 14 years. The varied notes of the Spiny-checks as they chivied one another about the shrubs and trees in the garden were most pleasing; we wish we could always have them with us. Unfortunately, we had about 11 inches of rain in June, and by the end of the month both these visitors, except a few pairs, had left. Warty-faced Honey-eaters (*Zanthomiza (Meliphaga) phrygia tregellasi*, Mat.) also visited us in May, but they all disappeared before the breeding season. Every few years they breed with us, and at other times they do not put in an appearance.

*Geobasileus chrysorrhous perksi*, Mat. (Southern Yellow-rumped Tit-Warbler).—A pair nested in a creeper in my front verandah. The first egg was laid on 11/8/16. On the 13th there were two eggs, and the nest was soaked through and through with heavy rain and a leak or overflow of the gutter; on 15th, three eggs, and the same number of eggs on 24th and 27th. On 30th there were four eggs, and the same number on 3rd September. On the 6th or 7th September the four chicks were hatched, showing that the wetting had not damaged the vitality of the eggs. This brood was fledged while I was away from home. Directly the young had left the nest the parent birds commenced tidying and mending it. They disappeared for ten days, and then commenced laying a second clutch; the second brood left the nest yesterday (15/11/16).

*Geobasileus chrysorrhous perksi*.—Additional Notes.—The parent birds began tidying the nest ready for the third brood two days later—viz., 17/11/1916. The first egg of the third brood was laid on 20th November, or the fifth day after the second brood left the nest; it was a fertile egg, as subsequently proved. On 1st December there were four eggs; 15th December, three chicks hatched, one egg; the next day, 16th, four chicks; 27th December, the chicks were a good size, with fairly long quills. Noticed that the parent birds were neglecting the family. On examination found a dead chick at entrance of nest; removed same, when parents immediately commenced feeding the three young left.