

The Wheau valley is, in spring, a great resort of the Tuis ; and here in numbers each year it makes some stir when feeding in the yellow blossoms of the kowhais which fringe the creek. Then the valley echoes with their song, and an additional charm is given to this picturesque strip on the road that leads into the Maunga-Haumia country. All around is practically grassed country, but many little patches of bush remain in the scrubby gullies of the neighbouring hills. There some remain the summer through, and rear their young. Not many miles away some build their nests in willows planted along a river-bank, in somewhat rougher country, and feed upon the flax and native trees in the vicinity. There the nesting season is late, eggs being found in October and November. In the main bush only one nest was discovered. This was deserted on 27th September, when complete, through the timber-fellers approaching the site.

The nest of this bird, though well enough built in itself, is very loosely placed in position amid the twigs, and is occasionally blown out by heavy winds. Below the willows mentioned above nests were picked up on several occasions after heavy north-west gales. The young birds, too, soon destroy its shape, and it is rarely that one comes across the nest of a previous season.

The Tui is the only one of our original *Meliphagidæ* which, from present indications, seems certain to survive. The Blight-Bird,* though common in our shrubberies, is believed to be an Australian colonist ; the Stitch-Bird (*Pogonornis cincla*) is now doubtless only to be seen on one or two of our smaller islands ; and the Bell-Bird, though reported to have re-appeared in odd parts of this island, is, I am afraid, unlikely to survive for any long time. Were it not for our Tui, our bushes would, to the general observer, indeed be lifeless, for none of those birds now left to us so soon give pleasant notice of its presence in the vicinity. He is, whether heard or seen, our most vivacious bird, and shows to best advantage amid the honey-producing flowers of his native trees. From earliest morn to later eve, his varied notes sound in joyous outburst, and glimpses of his glistening plumage are caught amid the leaves. He is in a position now to take advantage of the wave of feeling for our birds which is slowly but surely spreading over the land. That, with protection, together with his apparent adaptability, will no doubt save to us this charming bird.

Snakes in Bird-nests.—Tiger snakes are inveterate enemies to young birds. Mr. S. A. Hanscombe informs me that only a short time ago one of the scholars in the State school at Belltrees, N.S.W., dug out a Bee-eater's (*Merops*) nest, and found therein a tiger snake, four feet long. Moral : never put your hand into the nesting hollow of any bird without first seeing the end. D. LE SOUËF. Melbourne.

* Opinions differ as to the position of *Zosterops*.