

by the female, who, as she approached the nest, besides the typical "tzit" also uttered sometimes a soft "whit." When I saw her approach no food was visible in her beak; elsewhere it has been mentioned that young bellbirds receive a liberal diet of insects; Guthrie Smith had already noted that young stitchbirds seemed to be fed on nectar. Once after entering the hole she remained inside for two hours. On another occasion Houghton timed her nectar-collecting round, if that is what it was, as 11 minutes.

Watching the stitchbird's nest took up much of our time during the last two days. Fairly persistent drizzle and a poor light made photography difficult. However, Heather succeeded in getting one quite good picture of the female stitchbird on the pohutukawa trunk just above the nesting hole, a sight we are not likely to forget for many a long day.

INTRODUCED BIRDS.

Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*).—On my first walk round the garden and flat, I counted ten singing males. This excluded the east paddock, where there were probably 4/5 pairs. A chaffinch was singing near Awaroa Point along the undercliff. There was still plenty of vigorous song when we left.

Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).—There seemed to me an increase over last year. They are numerous on the boulder bank.

Thrush (*Turdus ericetorum*).—Faint snatches of song were heard on December 31 and January 4. A nest placed on a clump of *Astelia* on a kanuka in Waikohare had newly-hatched young on December 29. Away from the flat, a thrush was seen along the undercliff towards Hao-whenua.

Blackbird (*T. merula*).—Young left a nest in the garden on January 6; and a nest in a tree-fern well into the bush near the matai and Maori pits off the Thumb Track contained a single well-feathered youngster on January 5. At least four males were heard singing, (a) garden, (b) Waikohare, (c) inland cliffs, (d) Shag Track. Near the garden a blackbird sang finely most of the morning of December 31 and even at noon when it was very hot. There was a marked decrease in singing during the ensuing days, but I heard two blackbirds singing in the evening of January 4. None was heard on January 5 and 6.

Hedge Sparrow (*Prunella modularis*).—There was plenty of full song, particularly noticeable during the drizzle of January 4 and 5. Dunnocks were noted at (a) Cow Gully, (b) orchard and garden, (2) 200 yards up Waikohare, (d) near Titoki Point, (e) inland cliffs in Grafton Gully, (f) mouth of Waipawa. Five-six pairs is a conservative estimate for the population of the flat.

Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*).—A flock of c. 200 was frequenting the flat; their chatter recalling hay meadows. Parties were sometimes noted flying along the cliffs.

Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*).—One was seen on December 29. No song heard.

FOOD OF HARRIER.—In the late afternoon at Waimumu, on November 24, 1947, I watched a harrier (*Circus approximans*) hunting along a gorse hedge. It circled a number of times around a gorse bush separated from the hedge, and after two or three attempts to catch something, was successful. It tore its victim to pieces and ate it, and on visiting the site of its kill, the few feathers that remained revealed its catch to have been a young blackbird (*Turdus merula*).—Mrs. I. Tily, Dunedin.