

**RECORDS OF THE HUIA, NORTH ISLAND  
THRUSH AND NORTH ISLAND KOKAKO  
FROM THE DIARIES OF  
JOSEPH ROBERT ANNABELL (1857 - 1924)**

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Occasionally in the course of research one comes across diaries and journals which contain many interesting and valuable but to date unpublished records of various species of New Zealand birds, species which are now either extinct or greatly reduced in number and range. In this category are the existing diaries of Joseph Robert Annabell.

Born on 15 October 1857, Annabell was later to hold the position of surveyor on the temporary staff of the then Survey Department. He was issued with his first field book in 1879 but it is apparent that he was in the field before then for his diary for 1878 reveals that in that year he was engaged on survey work mainly in the Turakina River area. He resigned from the Survey Department in 1893. During his time with the Department he was engaged principally in the then little known and rugged back country between the headwaters of the Waitotara River and Rangitikei River, with periods spent also in parts of inland Taranaki and on the Volcanic Plateau to the east of Ruapehu. He died on 10 May 1924.

Fortunately, Annabell kept diaries for at least some of the time he was employed by the Survey Department. Some of those diaries are now in the Public Museum at Wanganui. They cover the years 1878-1885 and 1887. All are small field diaries the entries in which are sometimes in pencil and sometimes in ink and in many cases the writing is difficult to decipher. The Wellington District Office of the Lands and Survey Department holds several of Annabell's field books and some of his general correspondence is held by National Archives at Wellington, but this correspondence does not go to the extent of reporting on bird-life. Apart from brief references to his work which appear in the Annual Reports of the Survey Department no reports or personal papers other than the diaries mentioned seem to have survived.

The surviving diaries do reveal that Annabell was an ardent amateur naturalist and collector of bird-skins and that throughout the years he must have collected a considerable number of specimens and amassed an impressive private collection. From the diaries we learn that in June 1887 he displayed a number of his specimens at an exhibition held in Wanganui. It is, however, unfortunate that, with the exception of five specimens of the North Island Thrush (*Turnagra capensis tanagra*), all of his specimens seem to have disintegrated over the years for no others are known now to exist.

But while we do not have the majority of Annabell's specimens we do have his records of some of the birds met with by him during the years 1878-1885 and 1887 covered by his diaries. While he naturally did not record all of the birds encountered, it does appear that he was in the habit of noting those which were more uncommon



Plate XXXIII — Joseph Robert Annabell (1857-1924).

and those which were shot for food or as specimens. It must be remembered that Annabell was active at a time when little or nothing had been recorded of the birds present in many of the areas visited by him. Of particular importance are his records of the birds encountered by him in the country near the headwaters of the Waitotara River. So far as is known no records earlier than Annabell's exist



Plate XXXIV — Mt. Humphries (2238ft.), Matemateonga Range, inland Taranaki — bush cover and terrain typical of that in which Annabell recorded the North Island Thrush and Kokako at the headwaters of the Waitotara River.

for this area nor have there been many since. While it is not proposed here to deal in detail with his records from the Upper Waitotara it may be said that his diaries provide us with a tolerably complete picture of the species of birds present in that area in the mid-1880's. Among the species there noted by Annabell may be mentioned the North Island Kiwi (*Apteryx australis mantelli*), North Island Robin (*Petroica (Miro) australis longipes*), North Island Kokako (*Callaeas cinerea wilsoni*), North Island Thrush, North Island Kaka (*Nestor meridionalis septentrionalis*), Parakeet (*Cyanoramphus*), Whitehead (*Mohoua ochrocephala albicilla*), North Island Weka (*Gallirallus australis greyi*), Fernbird (*Bowdleria punctata vealeae*), Dabchick (*Podiceps rufopectus*), Brown Teal (*Anas castanea chlorotis*), New Zealand Scaup (*Aythya novaeseelandiae*), and Blue Duck (*Hymenolaimus malacorhynchus*).

Only three species encountered by Annabell and mentioned in his diaries have been selected for special treatment here. They are the Huia (*Heteralocha acutirostris*), North Island Thrush and North Island Kokako. The Huia has been selected because it is presumed to have been extinct for many years; the North Island Thrush because it is today undoubtedly in a most precarious position, existing only (if at all) in extremely small numbers in remote and favourable localities; and the North Island Kokako because, although it still survives in small and scattered populations, it has suffered quite drastic reduction in numbers since Annabell recorded it. It is felt important in order to make more complete our knowledge of the former distribution of these species, and for ease of future reference, to now publish and thus place on permanent record such details as are available regarding Annabell's references to these birds. There is a very real risk that important records such as those contained in Annabell's diaries, if not published, will in time be lost forever. For this reason it is to be hoped that further early records known to be contained in other diaries and journals will also in time be considered and published.

#### HUIA (*Heteralocha acutirostris*)

Annabell recorded the Huia on a number of occasions over a total period of approximately fourteen months spent between the end of November 1881 and August 1883 in the country between the Turakina and Rangitikei Rivers, in an area bounded generally speaking to the south by Hunterville and to the north by the township of Mataroa. It is perhaps significant here to note that this area between the Turakina and Rangitikei Rivers was the only one in which we know Annabell to have met with the Huia; and this despite the fact that over the years he spent many months in remote bush country in various localities to the west of the former river.

At the time of Annabell's visits, and for some years afterwards, practically the whole of the area with which we are concerned was still heavily forested and had suffered little, if at all, from the inroads of settlement. It was not until between 1890 and 1900 that the Main Trunk Line was continued from Palmerston North through Taihape and beyond. At about the same time began the extensive destruction of the bush cover by fire, with a consequent complete

elimination in most areas of indigenous forest habitat suitable to species like the Huia and North Island Thrush (Cumberland, 1947: 31-44).

But while in Annabell's time European man had not penetrated permanently into the area, other creatures had. From Annabell's diaries we learn that wild pigs were plentiful throughout the area and were frequently hunted. Wild cattle were recorded between the Turakina River and Mangapapa Stream and they too were hunted by Annabell and his companions for meat. Rats ruined two of Annabell's bird skins in a bush camp on 8/10/1882. "A great number of wild dog tracks" were seen in the valley of the Mangapapa Stream on 8/5/1882 and even a feral cat was killed by Annabell's dog in the Hautapu River valley on 22/12/1881. It is unlikely that mustelids found their way into the area until the late 1880's at least (Thomson, 1922: 71-72). However, there seems little doubt that the presence in the area of wild dogs and feral cats alone would have been most decidedly inimical to certain native species, particularly the North Island Thrush which evidence available elsewhere tends to show fell an easy victim to such animals by reason of its ground-feeding habits and its tame and confiding nature. In all probability wild dogs and feral cats were a major cause of the early and rapid diminution in the numbers of the North Island Thrush in areas wherein that species was apparently formerly quite common.

Phillips' records of the Huia in the Taihape-Moawhango area (Phillips, 1963: 101-108) are records principally from the 1890's and later, from localities mainly near to and to the east of the Rangitikei River. Records of the species from Annabell's diaries are valuable and fill a gap for they are records in the years 1882 and 1883 from localities to the west of the Rangitikei River. Phillips also noted (p. 115) that small field diaries kept by J. R. Annabell contained at least one reference to the Huia — "a rather vague mention of the Karioi-Taupo area." A careful perusal of the diaries has now disclosed the exact dates of Annabell's recorded sightings and it has also been possible, after much research, to pinpoint almost exactly the majority of the localities in which those sightings were made.

Although, as we have seen, Annabell first arrived in the area in question in November 1881 it was not until 23/1/1882 that he made the first reference to the Huia in his diaries. On that day Annabell noted that two Maoris accompanying his party shot a Huia while on their way through heavily timbered country to a camp which had been established near the Namunui Stream, a tributary of the Hautapu River, at a position close to the present township of Mataroa. Later, on 8/4/1882, we find Annabell camped at the Mangaone bridge on the Mangaone Stream, a westward flowing tributary of the Mangapapa Stream which is itself a tributary of the Turakina River. (The Mangaone bridge was about thirteen miles north of Hunterville where the track northwards, Murray's Track, crossed the Mangaone Stream, now the site of Tiriraukawa). We have already noted that at the time of Annabell's visits practically the whole of this area was heavily bushed and it is interesting here to record that in the 1880's the

country around the Mangaone Stream was most likely typical of the general nature of the country in which Annabell recorded the Huia. Survey plans Nos. 13539 and 13540 in the Wellington District Office of the Lands and Survey Department show the country around the Mangaone Stream in 1893 to have been predominantly hilly country at that time still covered in indigenous bush of matai, rimu, kahikatea, rata, maire, hinau, totara, rewarewa, konini, mahoe and tawa with supplejack undergrowth.

Annabell spent the 9/4/1882 in the Mangaone bridge camp and saw one Huia. He was to record the Huia and take a specimen at the same place over one year later. On 13/8/1883 he returned to camp at the Mangaone bridge and next day shot a "fine" Huia, commenting in his diary that he must preserve it very carefully. On 17/8/1883 he was camped on his own in bush a little to the north of the Mangaone bridge. In this camp he collected two more Huias and his diary entry relating to the event is worth quoting in full: "I got up early and had just begun my breakfast when two Huias came and I shot both, a fine old male bird and a female. The tails of both were very dirty, and ruffled but both of them had fine beaks and large orange lobes." All three Huias were set up by him on 25/8/1883 on his return to Wanganui.

Returning to 1882, we find Annabell on 15/4/1882 camped in the Mangapapa Stream about 27 chains below the junction of that stream and the Taumokomoko Stream about five miles west of Mataroa. Here before breakfast on that day he shot a Huia, remarking in his diary that he was going to try to preserve the skin and stuff it when he returned home.

Annabell was again in the country north of Hunterville from August to November of 1882. On the morning of 7/9/1882 he heard a Huia near the Mangapapa Stream about three miles west of the Mangaone bridge. Three weeks later on 28/9/1882, after having been engaged clearing Pukemapou trig (2066'), he left his companions to have a look at the site chosen for another trig to the east, seeing two Huias on the way and nearly succeeding in knocking one of them down with his billhook. Next day he remarked in his diary that he called the new trig 'Huia.' (Huia trig is about four miles due east of Tiriraukawa and Wellington Lands and Survey District Office plan No. 13903 shows it to lie on a ridge known as 'Huia Ridge,' perhaps also named by Annabell. (Another trig a few miles to the west of Mataroa is called 'Pukehuia' — 'Hill of the Huia' — and a road north of the Mangaone Stream is called 'Huia Road.')).

On 2/10/1882, having finished clearing Pukemapou trig, the whole party shifted over to Huia trig, Annabell shooting a female Huia on the way. This bird he skinned that evening and hung up among his other bird skins on the tent ridge-pole. The next few days were spent camped on Huia trig for the purpose of clearing it. While there on 5/10/1882 Annabell noted in his diary that "a Huia came near this morning at breakfast time and I whistled it and brought it near enough to shoot but it was not a very good specimen." Nevertheless he shot the bird and skinned it that same day at dinner time.

Later in October 1882 Annabell returned to continue work in the vicinity of Mataroa. On 20/10/1882 he went from their camp near the Namunui Stream to Kuratahi trig (2452') to the west and on the way back saw a Huia in the bush of the Mangarautawhiu creek, a tributary of the Ngaurukehu Stream. From that date until 6/11/1882 he and his companions were engaged in the vicinity of the Namunui Stream clearing stations from which to sight Rangiuira (2265') and Motukawa (2238') trigs. On 24/10/1882 he heard a Huia calling on the hills near station XB and on 29/10/1882 while he was away pig-hunting one of his companions, Jack Heard, saw three Huia at their camp at station XA, which sighting prompted Annabell to remark in his diary that he wished he had stayed at home. On 1/11/1882, having finished clearing station XA, they shifted back to station XB and on the way saw two Huia but Annabell did not get a shot at them.

All in all, Annabell himself seems to have killed at least six Huia, some if not all of which he would have preserved for his private collection. Unfortunately none of them are known still to exist and it must be assumed that they disintegrated over the years along with the bulk of his collection.

It is also worth recording that on 13/1/1883 while at Wanganui Annabell "went to Putiki to see Tawhio the Maori King. We saw His Majesty and about 200 Auckland natives all with Huia feathers in their heads." King Tawhiao, or Matutaera (1825-94), was the second Maori King, having succeeded to the throne in 1860 on the death of his father, Te Wherowhero Potatau (Gorst, 1959). It was Tawhiao who in 1882 allowed Andreas Reischek, the Austrian naturalist-collector, to enter the King Country, the first white man to be given such permission after the Maori Wars (Reischek, 1930).

### THE HUIA PAINTING

It does seem appropriate to reproduce with this paper a fine but previously unpublished painting of a female Huia (see Plate XXXV). This painting is in the possession of Mr. A. J. F. Halcombe, of Urenui, a great-grandson of the noted naturalist, William Swainson (1789-1855). Swainson, with his second wife and four of his children, arrived at Port Nicholson on 24 May 1841. The family lived at Thorndon until June 1843 when they moved to their first homestead in the Hutt Valley. With the exception of three years spent in Australia on botanical surveys, Swainson lived in the Hutt Valley until his death there on 7 December, 1855.

We learn from Winchester (Winchester, 1967: 6-19) that during his lifetime Swainson must have made several thousand drawings and sketches and that a great many of these are still preserved in New Zealand, either in libraries and museums or in the possession of members of the family and collectors.

The original of the painting reproduced here is in colour and bears the initials "M.F.M." and the date "49." The initials are undoubtedly those of Swainson's eldest daughter, Mary Frederica (1826-54), who had arrived at Port Nicholson with her father in 1841. In 1849 she married J. W. Marshall of the 65th Regiment so that the painting must have been initialled by her in 1849 after



Plate XXXV — The Swainson painting of a female Huia.

her marriage to Marshall. It is the opinion of Mr. A. A. St. C. M. Murray-Oliver, of the Alexander Turnbull Library, that while Mary may have drawn the original outline of the bird, the finished work is definitely that of her father, William. Indeed the title on the painting "The Huia of N. Zealand" is in the handwriting of Swainson himself.

#### NORTH ISLAND THRUSH (*Turnagra capensis tanagra*)

In 1873 Buller wrote that the North Island Thrush was "comparatively common in all suitable localities throughout the southern portion of the North Island" and that it was "extremely rare in the country north of Waikato" (Buller, 1873: 136). He then ventured to express the belief that the species would in a few years be equally scarce elsewhere and so it proved for by 1888 the North Island Thrush had become, according to Buller, "one of our rarest species . . . certainly doomed to extinction within a very few years" (Buller, 1888, Vol. 1: 28).



Records of the North Island Thrush are very few and far between and it was pleasing to find references to the species in Annabell's diaries, particularly for the period between the years 1873 and 1888 when an apparently rapid decline in its numbers took place.

Although the diaries disclose that between 1879 and 1883 inclusive Annabell spent considerable periods of time working in the then largely bush-covered back country between the Wanganui and Rangitikei Rivers he mentions the North Island Thrush from that area on only two occasions. The first recorded was shot by him on 10/6/1879 at a time when he was engaged cutting lines in the bush of the Turakina River valley close to the present township of Pukeroa. The skin of this bird was apparently kept by Annabell for, as we shall see, we find him referring to it again in 1884. The second occasion was over three years later on 20/9/1882 in heavily bushed country to the east of the Turakina River about fourteen miles north of Hunterville. On that day before breakfast he shot a North Island Thrush between the junction of the Mangapapa and Mangaone streams and Pukemapou trig. He skinned it that same evening but was not to keep it for long for on 8/10/1882 the skin, together with that of a robin, was ruined by rats in a bush camp.

In 1888 Buller recorded (Buller, 1888, Vol. 1: 29) that his last fresh specimens of this species (two males and a female preserved in spirit) were received by him in January 1884 from Mr. C. Field, a government surveyor, "who had obtained them far up the wooded valley of the Porewa on the west coast where he was conducting a trigonometrical survey." (The Porewa Stream is a southward flowing tributary of the Rangitikei River having its source above Hunterville.) It was Field again who in 1891 supplied Buller with further information on the occurrence of the species in the country between the Wanganui and Rangitikei Rivers *seven years before* (i.e. in 1884) and he specified localities in the valleys of the Turakina, Mangamahu, Mangawhero and Porewa as places where it was to be found at that time, adding that "they were formerly so plentiful in the Turakina and Mangamahu Valleys that I think it is likely a few might still be found there." (Buller, 1892: 75-76). In 1893 Buller further reported that he had heard from surveyors and others that the North Island Thrush was occasionally met with (always in pairs) along the Hunterville line of road (Buller, 1893: 68).

Although Annabell may have seen or heard the North Island Thrush in the Wanganui-Rangitikei area on more occasions than he noted in his diaries, the evidence afforded by those diaries does seem to suggest that had he met with the species more frequently he would most likely have recorded it at the time. In any event the fact that he only twice recorded it from the area would tend to indicate that the species was at that time far from common, at least in the localities visited by him. However, as against the paucity of records in Annabell's diaries we do have Field's and Buller's evidence (above quoted) to the effect that at a slightly later date the North Island Thrush was still to be met with in certain localities within the area, in some apparently quite commonly. But this apparent discrepancy can most likely be explained when one bears in mind that by the period in question (if not earlier) the

species had almost certainly been reduced to isolated pockets of population in suitable localities, which population pockets in this area were perhaps more frequently encountered by Field and others than by Annabell.

Between October 1880 and July 1881 Annabell was engaged in the then heavily bushed country near the Patea River inland from Eltham in central Taranaki. From that locality he recorded only one thrush which he saw on 28/4/1881 while cutting the confiscation line near Lake Rotokare about six miles to the east of Eltham. Once again it does seem likely had Annabell seen or heard other thrushes during the nine months he spent in the area that he would have recorded them in his diary. The fact that he recorded only one would seem again to indicate that the North Island Thrush was not often to be met with at that time in the area concerned. — an area which was then typical of, and appears to have been included in, the country which in 1884 was traversed by Morgan Carkeek who neither saw nor heard a thrush during a period of about two months spent in the rugged and bushed land of inland Taranaki. And this was an area in which, according to Buller, the North Island Thrush was in former years specially abundant (Buller, 1888, Vol. 1: 29).

Between October 1883 and October 1885 Annabell was engaged in the remote and heavily-bushed country near the headwaters of the Waitotara River, during which period he spent many months within what is now the Rawhitiroa State Forest (State Forest No. 3). This seldom-visited Forest lies in rugged country still covered in dense indigenous bush at the southern end of what is now one of the largest remnants of the original North Island forest cover.

From Annabell's diaries we learn that at the time of his visits wild pigs were plentiful throughout the area and wild cattle were present but apparently not very common. Rats, too, were present in the bush and on 25/1/1884, when camped near Rakaumahi trig (1998') at the headwaters of the Tunapoto Stream, he noted in his diary that there was a wild dog near their camp but that he and his companions had not yet seen it. Again it is very unlikely that mustelids found their way into this area until the late 1880's at least.

It was while within what is now the Rawhitiroa State Forest that Annabell recorded more thrushes than he recorded in any other area visited by him. It would appear that at that time certain localities within the Forest provided habitat favourable to the North Island Thrush. Of those localities visited by Annabell perhaps the most favourable was the valley of the Pokeka Stream which flows near the southern boundary of the Forest and is a tributary of the Waitotara River. In February 1884, on his first visit to the Pokeka, Annabell remarked that that valley provided "very bad travelling" and that the country therein was "very thick indeed." Similar conditions prevailed in the valley of a tributary, the Tunapoto Stream, wherein Annabell also recorded the thrush. To the north of the Pokeka the thrush was met with by him in heavily bushed country near the Omaru Stream but not as plentifully, perhaps only because Annabell did not spend as much time in that area as he did in the Pokeka.



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Plate XXXVI — One of Annabell's N.I. Thrush specimens in the Dominion Museum.

But despite the fact that Annabell recorded more thrushes from these localities than from elsewhere it seems clear that even there the species was far from plentiful. During many months spent in the area Annabell recorded fewer than twenty thrushes and again he seems to have recorded all that were seen or heard by him.

Because Annabell's are the only known records of the species from the area in question it is impossible to say whether the North Island Thrush was in Annabell's time less plentiful there than formerly. But it is clear that the species had a better chance of continued survival there than in many places elsewhere, for this area was not to be subjected to the direct influence of man, by destruction of the bush or otherwise, as were many other localities wherein the thrush was formerly to be found. Indeed it was considered in 1949 that the valley of the Pokeka Stream had not been visited since Annabell was there in the 1880's (*The Press*, 25 January, 1949). Even if it had visitors were, and still are, few and far between and the country has in the main been left in its isolation.

It was on 17/5/1884 that Annabell recorded his first thrushes in the area. On that day he saw two while he was engaged cutting lines in the valley of the Tunapoto Stream which as have seen is a tributary of the Pokeka Stream on the southern boundary of the Rawhitiroa State Forest. Six days later, on 23/5/1884, he saw another thrush in the Tunapoto but was unable to get a shot at it.

However next day he shot one when on his way back to camp in the evening, noting in his diary that he was "very well pleased as I have only got a rather soiled skin at home, and have been wanting to get a good one for some time." This bird he stuffed the next day.

Presumably the soiled skin referred to was that of the thrush which we have seen was shot by him in the Turakina River valley on 10/6/1879. The fact that Annabell had only the one skin at home and was so pleased to have got another would seem to confirm the inference already drawn from his diaries that the North Island Thrush had been far from common in areas visited by him over the previous years.

Annabell was again in the Tunapoto at the end of October 1884 and on 29/10/1884 he heard a thrush in that valley. A month later, on 1/12/1884, while swagging up the valley of the Pokeka above the junction of the Whakauahi Stream, he fired at two thrushes and wounded both but failed to get either of them. However, early the next morning he heard a wounded thrush calling and managed to get it with the help of his dog and his gun. That same day he and his companions swagged out of the Pokeka valley to a camp behind Tawanui trig (1680') where he skinned the thrush and made a box in which to protect its skin. When returning down the Pokeka valley on 12/12/1884 he killed two thrushes in that valley above the Whakauahi Stream and next day he shot two more in the Pokeka above Lake Rotokohu but to these he "was too close and cut them up very much."

In the following months Annabell was again in the valley of the Pokeka Stream. There above Lake Rotokohu on 20/2/1885 he shot and skinned two thrushes and on 22/4/1885 he shot another which he skinned the next day while in camp at Lake Rotokohu.

In the meantime, for part of November 1884 Annabell had been engaged a little further to the north looking for a new trig point on a long heavily-timbered ridge running north-east from near the junction of the Waitotara River and the Omaru Stream to Puteore trig (1933'). On the morning of 15/11/1884 while clearing Tahupo trig (1677') he saw a thrush. He saw it again the next day and on 17/11/1884 heard it, remarking in his diary that he might get it when he came to observe at that station. It was not until May of 1885 that he returned to the area and on 12/5/1885, while on his way down from Puteore trig, he heard but could not get a shot at three thrushes between Tahupo trig and the junction of the Waitotara River and Omaru Stream. However on 11/6/1885 he was in country close to the Omaru Stream. He had left his gun at camp and was sorry when he heard a thrush but was able to knock it over with his billhook without damaging the skin. That the North Island Thrush was a bird of a tame and confiding nature is perhaps indicated by the fact that Annabell was able to approach this bird closely enough to knock it over with his billhook.

So far as is known Annabell's last visit to the headwaters of the Waitotara River was in October 1885. Sixty-four years later a son, A. R. Annabell, who was also keenly interested in the bird-life of New Zealand, led a party into the Rawhitiroa State Forest to

search for the North Island Thrush. This was in February-March 1949. Although the expedition was unsuccessful in its principal objective, A. R. Annabell did record that the side streams and valleys off the Pokeka Stream should be ideal country for the North Island Thrush (Annabell, 1949: 156; see also *Weekly News*, 27 April, 1949).

In the course of research on the New Zealand thrushes, extensive enquiries of museums around the world have revealed the existence of only twenty-seven specimens of the North Island Thrush. Of these, seventeen are in New Zealand, three in Holland, three in the United States of America, two in England, one in Austria and one in Australia. As mentioned earlier, at the present day the North Island Thrush is undoubtedly in a most precarious position, existing only (if at all) in extremely small numbers in remote and favourable localities. This unhappy fact renders it all the more important that we ascertain what details we can pertaining to the very few scattered specimens we know to have survived.

We know from the diaries that of the thrushes seen or heard by Annabell in the upper Waitotara ten were killed by him, six in 1884 and four in 1885. Of these the two he shot in the Pokeka Valley on 13/12/1884 were "cut up very much" and may not have been retained by him. Neither might he have retained the "rather soiled skin" of the bird he shot in the Turakina Valley on 10/6/1879. All in all Annabell probably retained eight specimens and it would appear safe to assume that all those retained had been collected within the confines of the Rawhitiroa State Forest at the headwaters of the Waitotara River.

Of these eight we know the destination of five. On 25/12/1884 Annabell went to see Mr. Drew's museum in Wanganui remarking that it was "a very good museum . . . for a private collection." He promised Drew a thrush skin which he took to him on 29/12/1884. (S. H. Drew began building up his private collection after his arrival at Wanganui in 1870. By 1885 the public were freely admitted to his museum which soon so grew in proportions that in 1892 he offered the whole collection at \$600 for a public museum at Wanganui. The Public Museum was formally opened in 1895, Drew's collection forming the nucleus thereof (Chappel and Veitch, 1939: 184-5)).

The Wanganui Public Museum now holds three mounted specimens of the North Island Thrush. Apart from the fact that all three were received by the Museum prior to 1920, none has any data concerning date of collection, locality or collector. However, in view of the foregoing it seems safe to assume that in all probability at least one of them was collected by Annabell in 1884 within the confines of the Rawhitiroa State Forest at the headwaters of the Waitotara River.

The other four Annabell thrush specimens of which we know the destination are held by the Dominion Museum at Wellington. All four are mounted specimens (Nos. 212-215) and bear the data "No sex, Waitotara District, 8/9/1900, J. R. Annabell." Of these specimens Oliver wrote (Oliver, 1930: 448) — "The last definite record of its (the North Island Thrush) occurrence pertains to four specimens in the Dominion Museum obtained at Waitotara in 1900." In 1949 A. R. Annabell wrote that they had been obtained in 1887

not 1900 (Annabell, 1949: 156), and in 1955 Oliver corrected his date to 1887 (Oliver, 1955: 524). But it would now appear from a close perusal of J. R. Annabell's diaries that the specimens were not obtained in 1887 either. His diary for that year shows that from the end of January until the beginning of June he was engaged in country well up the Wanganui River valley (principally between Pipiriki and the Ohura River) and for the rest of the year he was at home in Wanganui. All in all it seems quite certain that the four Annabell North Island Thrush specimens in the Dominion Museum were collected by him in 1884 and/or 1885 within the Rawhitiroa State Forest at the headwaters of the Waitotara River. In the circumstances the date "8/9/1900" on the labels is undoubtedly the date the specimens were received or registered by the Dominion Musum.

#### NORTH ISLAND KOKAKO (*Callaeas cinerea wilsoni*)

In 1873 and again in 1888 Buller recorded that the North Island Kokako was "sparingly dispersed over the North Island, being very local in its distribution" (Buller, 1873: 153; 1888, Vol. 1: 2). In 1905 he remarked that it was a matter of very keen regret to him that the North Island Kokako was "one of the endemic species destined ere long to vanish from the land" and that it was then becoming very rare in localities where formerly it abounded (Buller, 1905, Vol. 2: 166). Fortunately the species has not yet vanished from the land but it has, since Buller's day, suffered quite drastic reduction in numbers and now survives only in small populations mainly in certain more extensive forest remnants (Macdonald, 1966: 101).

As we have earlier seen, Annabell was engaged between October 1880 and July 1881 in the then heavily bushed country near the Patea River inland from Eltham in central Taranaki. It was in this country that he first recorded the kokako. On 10/12/1880 he saw "some kokako" in beech country near the Mangatoromiro Stream, a tributary of the Patea River about four miles east of Lake Rotokare. Later, on 4/4/1881, he saw a kokako while he was engaged cutting the confiscation line near Lake Rotokare.

An earlier unpublished record of the kokako from an area about twenty miles north-east of that of Annabell's above sightings could appropriately be included here. In December 1846 the Reverend Richard Taylor of the Church Missionary Society made a journey through unknown heavily forested country in central Taranaki to the Wanganui River near where it is joined by the Tangarakau and Whangamomona Rivers (Mead, 1966: 104-6). On 7/12/1846 he and his party left Mangaehu Pa on the Mangaehu Stream and proceeded on their journey through the forest towards the Whangamomona River, travelling by way of the Mangarewa Stream. In his diary of that date he noted: "We have also heard the kokako or New Zealand Crow, a beautiful glossy black bird, one of the mielophaga family much resembling the tui; its monosyllabic note is very loud shrill and sweet." (Taylor, 1846: 147).

As with the North Island Thrush, Annabell recorded most of his Kokako in bushed country near the headwaters of the Waitotara River while engaged there between October 1883 and October 1885.

The first occasion was on 22/11/1883 when he shot and preserved a Kokako in the valley of the Waitotara River close to the present township of Ngamatapouri. Further north on 19/12/1883 he heard but was not able to get a shot at "some Kokako" in heavy bush at Rakaumahi trig at the headwaters of the Tunapoto Stream.

Six months later, on 7/6/1884, he was clearing lines in heavily bushed country between Tahoronui trig (1819') and Rakautihitihi trig (1701') on the southern boundary of the Rawhitiroa State Forest to the east of the Tunapoto Stream. Here he shot a Kokako which he set up that evening. On 9/6/1884 Annabell and his companions started back from their camp at Rakautihitihi trig to the Waitotara River travelling via Rakaumahi trig. On the way he shot a Kokako which he set up next evening in camp at Pungarehu on the Waitotara River. On 12/6/1884 on his way down-river he shot another between the Waitotara River and Trig F (1440') which lies about four miles to the west of Ngamatapouri.

As we have seen, for part of November 1884 Annabell was engaged on a long heavily-timbered ridge running from near the junction of the Waitotara River and the Omaru Stream to Puteore trig. On 15/11/1884 he saw "Kokako" while clearing Tahupo trig. In May 1885 he was again in this area and on 11/5/1885 he shot one while on his way back from Puteore trig to Tahupo trig.

On 23/11/1884 Annabell shot and skinned a Kokako while camped at Whakauahi trig (1738') which lies in heavily bushed and broken country midway between the Pokeka and Omaru Streams. Three days later he saw two when travelling north-east along the ridge from Whakauahi trig to Maungarau trig (1876') on the eastern boundary of the Rawhitiroa State Forest. Several months later, on 6/6/1885, Annabell again travelled from Whakauahi trig to Maungarau trig. On the way he shot a Kokako which he skinned the next day when in camp at Maungarau trig.

On 5/3/1885 Annabell was again at Maungarau trig. From there he and his companions swagged south along the main ridge to Tuanuiotakou trig (2057') which lies at the head of the Tunapapa Stream about two miles to the east of the Rawhitiroa State Forest eastern boundary. From there they went to Mataimoana trig where a Kokako was shot by Annabell on 9/3/1885. Next day they swagged back from Mataimoana trig to Tuanuiotakou trig and on the way Annabell shot three Kokako which he skinned two days later. On 7/4/1885 he shot a Kokako on the ridge running north from Taurakawau trig (1350'), at a point near its junction with the main ridge running from Rakaumahi trig to Tuanuiotakou trig. This bird he skinned the next day.

Annabell's last record of the Kokako from this area was of a bird shot by him on 29/8/1885 in the vicinity of Lake Rotokohu. This bird he skinned also.

It is interesting to note that, with one possible exception, Annabell did not in his diaries record this species from areas visited by him to the east of the country near the headwaters of the Waitotara River. The one possible exception was on 10/7/1882 at a time when Annabell was engaged cutting lines in the vicinity of the

Waipahihi River a few miles east of Mount Ruapehu. He noted in his diary: "I saw a strange bird today. A bird as large as a pigeon nearly, dark slate colour or blue, with a slightly bent beak, large eyes with an eyebrow of bright blue. I should very much like to get him." From Annabell's description one would be tempted to say that this bird was definitely a Kokako were it not for the fact that Annabell obviously recognised a Kokako when he saw one for he had, as we have seen, previously recorded the species in inland Taranaki.

All in all Annabell recorded having shot twelve Kokako and although at least some of them would have been kept by him none are known to have survived to the present day.

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### REFERENCES

Most of the place names mentioned in the text can be found on maps published by the Lands and Survey Department as follows:

**Inland Taranaki:** N.Z.M.S. 1 Sheet N119 (Stratford) and N.Z.M.S. 117 Sheet N120 (Matemateonga).  
**Upper Waitotara River:** N.Z.M.S. 1 Sheet N130 (Waitotara) and N.Z.M.S. 177 Sheet N120 (Matemateonga).

**Turakina - Rangitikei area:** N.Z.M.S. 177 Sheet N132 (Taihape) and N.Z.M.S. 177 Sheet N139 (Mangaweka).

A more general map covering all of the localities dealt with is N.Z.M.S. 10A Sheet 13 on which can be found a number of the place names mentioned.

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