in turn depend on the amount of flowers present. Most plant species will have good and bad flowering seasons just as fruit trees will have heavy or light crops depending on the season. Furthermore, the starting and finishing time of flowering seasons is not always at the same time each year. Comparisons from year to year can only be made subjectively but the difference is often obvious and frequently considerable. Thus 1967 was a 'bad' year for *Knightia excelsa, Phormium tenax, P. colensoi,* and *Ixerba brexiodes,* and a 'good' year for *Metrosideros excelsa, M. robusta* and *M. umbellata.* However, almost the reverse was true for 1968. *Knightia excelsa* and *Phormium tenax* flowered particularly well, while *Metrosideros excelsa* was notably poor. On November 8th, 1967, it was noted that, "the majority of the *M. excelsa* is coming into full flower, especially around the coast, while some have been reported flowering for several weeks." Up until the time of leaving the island on November 7th, 1968, no *M. excelsa* had flowered at all.

Poor flowering of important plant species could have a marked effect on the success of honeyeater populations. This would be particularly important during early spring and critical for juveniles during the first periods of bad weather each autumn and winter. Success at such times would depend on the availability of alternative food sources and the adaptability of the species.

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SHORT NOTE

BIRDS CAUGHT BY HOOKGRASS

The entanglement of Silvereyes *Zosterops lateralis* and Hedge Sparrows *Prunella modularis* by hookgrass (*Uncinia* spp.) reported by Merilees (1969) and Hilton (1969) may not be quite as rare as these authors suggest. Although Hilton (1969) reported finding no hookgrass seeds on 21 Moreporks *Ninox novaeseelandiae* banded by A. H. Whitaker at the D.S.I.R. Orongorongo Valley Field Station, Turner (1937) reported a Morepork firmly caught by hookgrass on Kapiti Island. The bird was only released with difficulty after a cap was placed over its head to quieten it.

Other records from Kapiti Island include Tomtits *Petroica macrocephala,* Fantails *Rhipidura fuliginosa,* Whiteheads *Mohoua albicilla,* parakeets *Cyanoramphus* spp. and even a Long-tailed Cuckoo *Eudynamis taitensis* found entangled; and kiwi (*Apteryx* spp.) feathers were also frequently found in hookgrass after the birds had pulled free (Wilkinson and Wilkinson, 1952).

These earlier observations, with those of Merilees (1969) and Hilton (1969), suggest that this mortality may not be as uncommon as previously thought and clearly demonstrate that it is not just smaller birds which are liable to be caught by the tenacious *Uncinia.*

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