

to within 10 m of the bird and watched it for several minutes before it flew off into the bush.

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STATUS CHANGES IN GARDEN BIRDS

Daily records of birds observed in my garden in Masterton in a 12-month period — May 1942 to April 1943 inclusive — compared with a similar record in the 12 months — May 1971 to April 1972 — indicate the changes that have taken place in the intervening 29 years. The trees and shrubs in the garden have remained basically the same, with the minimum alteration in the environment in the garden or in its immediate neighbourhood.

Four species have maintained their numbers: Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and Silvereye (*Zosterops lateralis*) being recorded on every day of observation.

Two species showed a slight decrease, the first figures in each instance giving the days recorded in 1942-1943, the second those in 1971-1972: North Island Fantail (*Rhipidura fuliginosa placabilis*), 166-144; Tui (*Prosthemadera n. novaeseelandiae*) 98-78.

Greater decreases in varying degrees were shown by eight species: Chaffinch (*Fringilla coelebs*) 229-126; Goldfinch (*Carduelis carduelis*) 184-74; Greenfinch (*Carduelis chloris*) 62-10; Hedge Sparrow (*Prunella modularis*) 276-173; N.Z. Kingfisher (*Halcyon sancta vagans*) 19-1; Song Thrush (*Turdus philomelos*) 365-174; Shining Cuckoo (*Chalcites l. lucidus*) 13-3; Grey Warbler (*Gerygone i. igata*) 257-37. As the Kingfisher is of erratic occurrence in built-up areas and has remained widely distributed in the district generally and actually increased in numbers in the past 30 years, the above garden record is of no significance. The decrease in records of the Shining Cuckoo possibly bears some relation to the substantial drop in the numbers of the Grey Warbler. The other introduced species listed above have shared in the general decrease of birdlife apparent throughout the Wairarapa.

Eight species recorded in 1942-43 were not seen in 1971-72: Californian Quail (*Lophortyx californica brunnescens*) 8-0; Morepork (*Ninox n. novaeseelandiae*) 18-0; N.Z. Pipit (*Anthus n. novaeseelandiae*) 5-0; Pukeko (*Porphyrio porphyrio melanotus*) 3-0; Indian Myna (*Acridotheres tristis*) 4-0; Redpoll (*Acanthis flammea*) 96-0; Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*) 25-0; Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) 10-0.

Except for occasional birds brought to the district, mostly from Hawkes Bay, the Myna no longer inhabits the Wairarapa. The Pipit,

Skylark, Pukeko and Yellowhammer lost their habitat when a large area of open land a short distance up the street was developed for housing; the Pukeko and Skylark formerly bred in the area. The Californian Quail, Morepork, Redpoll and Yellowhammer have all declined district-wide. The Redpoll was formerly recorded during the breeding season and bred in the garden and vicinity.

Recorded in 1942-1943, substantially increased in 1971-1972: White-backed Magpie (*Gymnorhina tibicen hypoleuca*) 9-127. This species has increased throughout the district.

Not present in 1942-1943, recorded in 1971-1972: Barbary Dove, feral, (*Streptopelia risoria*) 0-365; N.Z. Falcon (*Falco novaeseelandiae*) 0-4.

Since it became established in a feral state in 1971 the Barbary Dove has been a constant inhabitant of the garden and other areas in the neighbourhood. The Falcon is widely distributed throughout the district and is frequently observed flying overhead from the garden.

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REACTIONS OF FEEDING WADERS TO BROWN RATS

On 23 March 1975, *Union South Pacific* was at the wharf at Nuku'alofa, Tonga. Since it was Sunday there were no cargo operations in progress and the wharf area was quiet. From the ship it was possible to see over the wharf shed onto a reclaimed area where, after recent heavy rain, there were some large shallow pools. Throughout the day, waders were seen at these pools, three species being noted: Pacific Golden Plover (*P. dominica*), Turnstone (*A. interpres*) and Tattler, probably *T. incana*. The highest numbers seen together were six Golden Plover, four Turnstones and three Tattlers.

The whole area was alive with rats, up to 15 being counted in sight at once. It was interesting to observe the reactions of different species of birds to the rats. Many times a rat was seen to run at the birds as if to attack, and each time the specific reaction was the same. The Golden Plovers and the Turnstones just lifted clear of the rat, drifted a few feet, and landed again, remaining quiet throughout. The Tattlers, however, jumped up, calling loudly and flew rapidly clear of the reclamation altogether.

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