

## RANDOM NOTES ON THE KIWI.

By J. D. Clark, Opotiki.

On Thursday, June 23, 1949, an injured kiwi caught on the night of June 21, in an opossum trap on Mr. E. Pratt's property, about ten miles up the Waioeka Gorge, from Opotiki, was brought to me. Its right leg was badly broken just above the foot. On the following day, Dr. Armstrong dressed the wound and reduced the compound fracture of the foot, which was placed in splints. Considerable difficulty was experienced in getting the bird to swallow worms, a feat which was achieved only by placing them at the back of the tongue with a pair of tweezers. On June 25 a tin of worms covered with earth, and a tin of water were placed in the box with the kiwi. By 10 a.m. the next day the kiwi had eaten all the worms in the tin and pushed off the lid of its box and escaped, to be found an hour later in a dark corner under old timber and boxes. The kiwi slept with its bill under its rudimentary left wing.

On July 11, the dressing was taken off the foot, which had gone gangrenous. I amputated the foot and dressed the stump, and in subsequent days further dead tissue and pieces of bone were removed either by Dr. Armstrong or myself. By the time the bird left for the Auckland Zoo, the foot had healed. The kiwi showed fight when a dog came near by raising the feathers on its back, similar to a cat raising its hair. The bird then raised its head and made a vigorous forward kick with its good foot at the dog, at the same time hissing. The kiwi, under the name of "David," left for the Auckland Zoo on August 20, 1949.

Inquiries were made as to the presence of the kiwi in the district. Thirty-five were reported and of these 28 were checked on for details of trapping or finding, these being distributed as follows: Waimana, 4; Waioeka Gorge area, 9; Woodlands, 13; coast, 1; Kutarere, 1. Waioeka and Woodlands are adjoining areas, separated from the Waimana area by the Waitohi Valley, from where I can get no reports of the kiwi.

The locality where "David" was caught in the Waioeka Gorge was about 2000 feet high. In three seasons (1947, 1948, 1949) six had been caught near the same place. Some had only the centre toe injured, others their legs broken. The birds were liberated. All were caught in high beech country on rough, stormy nights.

A farmer further up the Waioeka Gorge showed me a range opposite his cowshed where some kiwis have been for about the last four years. They call more frequently on dull or wet evenings. The ridge is a good place for wild pigs. On account of the kiwis being there the farmer endeavours to keep all pig hunters off the area so as not to disturb the birds.

In the high country at Woodlands, a farmer who is a keen observer of nature, states there are plenty of kiwis in the bush there. A trapper who operated there in 1942 and 1943 caught four each year. Some were killed and others injured were liberated again. Other kiwis have been caught in the farmer's traps. One, a very large bird, fiercely attacked him when he tried to liberate it and with its bill and claws injured his hand so severely that he still carries the scars. After the bird was liberated it followed him for some distance, showing fight before it took cover. He says kiwis make scratchings among fallen leaves much deeper than those of the domestic fowl.

In the middle of August, 1949, a nest containing two eggs was found at Waimana by a farmer's daughter. The nest was in a hole about a foot deep, at the bottom of a bank on the edge of the bush. The kiwi was almost invisible when sitting on the nest which was under a puna trunk lying among ferns. The nest was well concealed and there was another hole about two yards away as if the bird had changed the site of the nest, or perhaps had used the second nest the previous year.