

range to the east. Why *H. chloris* does not occur in Western Samoa is not known.

Samoan Starling (*Aplonis atrifusca*), Fuia—I saw many shot and eaten by Samoans at Vaipouli, Savai'i. Reported to be widespread in the plantations and bush throughout Upolu and Savai'i.

Samoan Fantail (*Rhipidura nebulosa*), Se'u.—These birds are very tame and are common in the bush on both islands. The Savai'i birds (*R. n. altera*) are said to differ from the Upolu birds (*R. n. nebulosa*) in being "somewhat lighter," but the difference does not appear noticeable in the field.

These notes have been written in the hope that they may act as a basis for a comprehensive account of Samoan birds under present conditions.

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## BREEDING HABITS OF SILVEREYE.

By W. H. Davidson, Dunedin.

On January 12, 1950, a silvereye's nest containing three eggs was found in a black currant bush, 3ft. from the ground. On January 14, at 2.30 p.m., the nest contained two chicks and an unhatched egg. The next day the third chick had hatched. The adult birds always approached the nest through the back of the currant bush, perched on a branch about a foot from the nest for a few seconds, then landed on the edge of the nest. It was always on the same place on the edge of the nest that the landing was made, with the result that there was a flat area on the far side of the nest from the camera.

The hen had a poor ring round her eyes. It was not white, but inclined to be dark and very ragged as if it were moulting. She had a smaller, finer beak than that of her mate, and she always sat on the nest facing the camera and looking with both eyes. The male was a little larger and he was well-groomed, with clean-cut features and with bright white eye rings. He sat with his head to the left and watched with one eye.

On January 19 pin feathers were developing on the wings of the young and their bodies were becoming covered with dark down. The nest was gradually canting to one side. When the hen was on the nest, at a given call from her mate, she flew off. Immediately her mate arrived with a beakful of insects, which were fed to one chick. He then settled down on the nest. The hen gave the signal "tweet," and he at once departed. She landed, fed a chick and settled on the nest. This procedure went on continuously. Each bird sat and waited for a signal "tweet," and flew off at once, the other bird landing within a second. At no time were two at the nest at once except on one occasion when a bird missed the signal, but it left the nest immediately the other arrived. Sometimes they cleaned the nest, larger droppings being dropped over the edge of the nest, smaller ones carried to a near branch which was covered with droppings. The interval spent in the nest was from half a minute to about two minutes. Insects and green caterpillars were the standard diet of the young.

On January 22, the eyes of the young were opening. They had green feathers on their backs but their heads were still bare. The two bigger youngsters seemed to be sitting on top of the third bird. The parents were now tame. By January 24 the eyes of the young were wide open and they were fully feathered except for a little bare patch on the top of the head and around the eye. They filled the nest and usually one of them had a wing over the side. On the rare occasions that an adult sat on the nest, it could not cover the young. On this date raspberries were given to the young. The adults seemed more timid about approaching the nest when the observer was near. One side of the nest was at least 2 inches lower than the other.

On January 25, a visit was made to the nest at 9.15 a.m. An accidental false movement was made by the observer and two chicks flew from the nest into the black currant bush, leaving one young in the nest. An unsuccessful search was made for the two that had flown. At 10.15 a.m. another visit was made to the nest and all chicks were back in the nest. Both adults arrived with food and there was a little excitement. The young were twittering and one of them climbed up a black currant branch to about 8 inches above the nest while another sat on the edge of the nest. Both parents flew away and the two chicks flew a moment later. One of them flew about 12 feet and one parent darted after it like a shot. The one in the nest was twittering and stretching up its head. Presently it began to wriggle and then it flapped its wings several times. Next it climbed up and sat on the edge of the nest. Later it dropped back into the nest and settled down. When the observer returned to the nest at 11.10 a.m., the last bird had gone.

During the day several visits were made to the nesting site, but no sign was seen of the family until 8 p.m. when they were noticed preparing to settle for the night in a macrocarpa hedge about 25 feet from the deserted nest.

On December 27, 1950, a silveryeyes' nest containing three young was found among raspberry canes. The young appeared to be a day and a half old. On December 31 and January 3, while photographs were being taken of the nest, the adult birds brought the following food to the young: A large brown moth that covered most of the face of the hen bird; small bluish-green caterpillars, brown wrinkled caterpillars about one and one-eighth inch long and about a quarter of an inch in diameter, white butterfly grubs, daddy-long-legs and raspberries. On December 31, 1950, food fed to chicks about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  days old, eyes not opened: Dark green grub about an inch and a half long; long-legged insect, daddy-long-legs type but smaller; wire worm; bit of raspberry; two large and one small grub of white butterfly. (This last lot was thrust down one neck and the chick had to raise body and head, stretching its neck and swallowing three times before all was properly down.) January 4, 1951: Again watched young fed: Daddy-long-legs, cabbage butterfly grubs, moth, raspberry grub, dark green grub with lighter greenish-yellow horizontal stripes.

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**SURVEY OF DABCHICKS.**—North Island: Most waters in the North Island have been visited in the last ten years and reports have been received from fourteen observers. South Island: Reports have been received from six observers. There is little information about the high-country lakes. Two North Islanders have reported on Westland. It is clear that dabchicks no longer occupy waters where they were not uncommon last century. There is also evidence that they have recently recolonised waters from which they were for many years absent. It is believed that dabchicks dislike waters in which eels abound. Observers are asked for their comments on this hypothesis.—R. B. Sibson, Auckland.

**BREEDING OF GREY WARBLER.**—When felling manuka in the Porangahau district, Hawke's Bay, on August 16, 1951, I found a grey warbler's nest, not quite half built. On September 2, the nest was completed but contained no eggs. On September 8 it had two eggs, and on Sept. 13, four. On August 27 a second nest was found in a "mingi" tree, 6ft. up, containing three eggs. A third nest was found on Sept. 1, also in a 'mingi,' half-built. One of the eggs in the first nest appeared to be completely white, with none of the usual pinkish tinge, and the red spots were missing except when very closely examined, an odd, very pale speck was just visible.—R. L. Grant, Hastings.