Food plants of Bellbird (Anthornis melanura), Tui (Prosthemadera novaeseelandiae) and New Zealand Pigeon (Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae) in Dunedin

I saw the honeyeaters Bellbird (Anthornis melanura) and Tui (Prostbemadera novaeseelandiae), and New Zealand Pigeon (Hemiphaga novaeseelandiae) eating the following New Zealand native plant foods in Dunedin between July 1992 and December 1997 (May 1998 for New Zealand Pigeons). Table 1 shows the number of days that each food type was seen being eaten by each bird species. Most of the records are from the Town Belt, the Botanic Gardens, Ross Creek, the Pineapple Track and private gardens.

TABLE 1 – New Zealand native plants used by Bellbirds, Tui and New Zealand Pigeons in Dunedin, July 1992 – December 1997 (May 1998 for New Zealand Pigeon).

Plant species			
Food type	Bellbird	Tui	NZ Pigeon
Fruit			
Aristotelia serrata (wineberry)	7	9	25
Beilschmiedia tawa (tawa)	0	0	1
Carpodetus serratus (marbleleaf)	3	0	16
Coprosma areolata	9	2	0
Coprosma crassifolia	1	1	0
Coprosma grandifolia (raurekau)	2	0	7
Coprosma linariifolia	4	4	3
Coprosma lucida (karamu)	9	6	4
Coprosma parviflora	1	0	0
Coprosma propinqua	11	1	0
Coprosma repens (taupata)	1	0	0
Coprosma rhamnoides	1	0	0
Coprosma robusta (karamu)	54	6	17
Coprosma rotundifolia	7	1	o
Coprosma tenuifolia	2	0	0
Cordyline australis (cabbage tree)	1	0	42
Coriaria arborea (tutu)	1	0	0
Corokia sp.6	1	6	0
Dacrycarpus dacrydioides (kahikatea)	3	0	5
Elaeocarpus bookerianus (pokaka)	0	0	1
Fushcia excorticata (fuchsia)	0	0	49
Griselinia littoralis (broadleaf)	3	2	30
Ileostylus micranthus (mistletoe)	4	1	1
Lophomyrtus bullata (ramarama)	5	4	0
Lophomyrtus obcordata (rohutu)	3	2	6
Melicytus alpinus (porcupine bush)	5	0	0
Melicytus lanceolatus (mahoewao)	0	0	3
Melicytus obovatus	2	0	0
Melicytus ramiflorus (mahoe)	10	0	20
Muehlenbeckia australis (pohuehue)	13	6	3
Myoporum laetum (ngaio)	1	1	14
Myrsine australis (mapou)	26	4	26
Myrsine salicina (toro)	0	7	11
Nestegis cunninghamíi (black maire)	0	O	3

Nestegis Ianceolaid (White maire)	Manufacture of the control	^	0	2
Podocarpus totara (totara) 18	Nestegis lanceolata (white maire)	0	0	3
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New Zealand Pigeons ate fruit and leaves in every month, but records of fruit eating were scarce from July to December. Most of the records of leaf eating were from June to September. From mid-spring until the fuchsia ripens New Zealand Pigeons fed mainly on exotic plants. The honeyeaters took nectar most commonly from June to January, while fruit was eaten mainly between February and August. Tui were much less commonly encountered than Bellbirds and New Zealand Pigeons, hence the lower number of records for this species. Tui were most evident

in winter and early spring, when they concentrated around urban food sources, especially kowhai.

The months when the most frequently observed foods were eaten were as follows:

Bellbird: Fruit – mapou – January-August; pohuehue – February-May; Coprosma robusta – March-September; totara – April-August. Nectar – fuchsia – January-December, chiefly July-November; puriri – February-August; kowhai – May-November; five finger – May-October.

Tui: *Nectar* – flax – Decmber-February; kowhai – May-November; five finger – May-October; fuchsia – June-November.

New Zealand Pigeon: *Fruit* – fuchsia – December-March; mapou – January-June; wineberry – January-March; *Coprosma robusta*, mahoe and pepper tree – February-May; marbleleaf, cabbage tree and ngaio – March-June; broadleaf – March-May. *Leaves, buds and/or flowers* – kowhai – January-December, chiefly June-September; mahoe – June-August; ribbonwood – July-September.

KEYWORDS: Honeyeaters, NZ Pigeon, native plants, foods.

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