

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

<i>Nestegis lanceolata</i> (white maire)	0	0	3
<i>Pennantia corymbosa</i> (kaikomako)	1	3	3
<i>Podocarpus totara</i> (totara)	18	1	2
<i>Prumnopitys ferruginea</i> (miro)	0	0	9
<i>Prumnopitys taxifolia</i> (matai)	0	0	5
<i>Pseudopanax</i> spp. (fivefinger)	3	1	4
<i>Pseudopanax crassifolius</i> (lancewood)	0	0	11
<i>Pseudopanax edgerleyi</i> (raukawa)	0	0	1
<i>Pseudowintera colorata</i> (pepper tree)	0	0	15
<i>Ripogonum scandens</i> (supplejack)	0	0	2
<i>Schefflera digitata</i> (pate)	0	0	4
<i>Solanum laciniatum</i> (poroporo)	3	0	11
<i>Streblus heterophyllus</i> (milk tree)	2	2	2
<i>Tupeia antarctica</i> (mistletoe)	7	2	0
<i>Vitex lucens</i> (puriri)	0	0	1
Nectar			
<i>Cliantbus puniceus</i> (kaka beak)	4	0	0
<i>Fuchsia excorticata</i> (fuchsia)	123	23	0
<i>Hebe</i> spp.	4	0	0
<i>Hoheria</i> sp. (lacebark)	4	2	0
<i>Knightia excelsa</i> (rewarewa)	1	2	0
<i>Metrosideros excelsa</i> (pohutukawa)	6	2	0
<i>Metrosideros robusta</i> (northern rata)	1	0	0
<i>Metrosideros umbellata</i> (southern rata)	9	6	0
<i>Phormium</i> spp. (flax)	30	18	0
<i>Pittosporum crassifolium</i> (karo)	2	0	0
<i>Pittosporum eugenioides</i> (lemonwood)	1	0	0
<i>Pittosporum umbellatum</i> (haekaro)	8	5	0
<i>Pseudopanax</i> spp. (fivefinger)	48	35	0
<i>Sophora</i> spp. (kowhai)	86	65	0
<i>Vitex lucens</i> (puriri)	16	9	0
Sap			
<i>Nothofagus solandri</i> var. <i>cliffortioides</i> (mountain beech)	0	1	0
Leaves, buds and/or flowers			
<i>Calystegia tuguriorum</i> (bindweed)	0	0	8
<i>Coprosma robusta</i> (karamu)	0	0	1
<i>Coprosma rotundifolia</i>	0	0	2
<i>Hoheria</i> sp. (lacebark)	0	0	4
<i>Kunzea ericoides</i> (kanuka)	0	0	1
<i>Meliccytus ramiflorus</i> (mahoe)	0	0	18
<i>Muehlenbeckia australis</i> (pohuehue)	0	0	1
<i>Myrsine australis</i> (mapou)	0	0	2
<i>Parsonsia heterophylla</i> (jasmine)	0	0	8
<i>Plagianthus regius</i> (ribbonwood)	0	0	18
<i>Sophora</i> spp. (kowhai)	0	0	112
<i>Streblus heterophyllus</i> (milk tree)	0	0	3

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 – December-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.

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