

birds introduced of which perhaps the most useful was the Starling. Immense clouds of these birds were to be seen every where, and their greatest boon is in the keeping of the grass grub in check at least to a great extent.

In our portion of the ~~district~~ province, native birds were few & far between. There were a good many ground Cuckoos and I can remember the fantail, but I am not sure whether or not they were native. There was also the little silver eye. + There was the Weka or wooden crow nearly extinct, also the pukeko. A few bittern and thousands of wild duck, principally the Paradise and the Grey. The former are now mostly found in the more mountainous or where settlement is not so congested. This Paradise duck is not at all familiar in the North Island. The duck was brown feathered & had a white head. The drake was much larger & very majestic appearance. As game, they were not of the best, at least nothing like as good as the grey. But he was a gentle, mainly bird and would never rise from the ground until the duck was on the wing. If by chance the sportsman shot the duck first he was pretty sure of the drake for he was very loathe to leave his mate. The duck, however, would clear off. I do not know, if they retained their widowhood very

A very few birds

birds

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long. Amongst the imported game birds were the Pheasant, the partridge and the quail. The partridge never became <sup>properly</sup> domesticated but the Pheasant quickly spread abroad and were very numerous, until the swamps were cleared of flax, & the other covering, cleared away. Amongst the song birds was the thrush and the Blackbird. Whether, or not it is the case really, but my impression is that the trill of the Blackbird has lost its <sup>sweetness</sup> beauty from that of long ago.

There were to be seen also at certain times a few Chaffinch also the Goldfinch, this last being I understand a migratory bird.

In reference to the Linnet, they became almost as numerous as the sparrow and easily as destructive to grain, I cannot say that they are as numerous as ever or that they have crossed with the sparrow, but as far as my experience goes, I have no recollection of seeing many if at all in the North Island.

I can call to mind a very large influx of the ~~parakeet~~ <sup>Parakeet</sup> ~~parakeet~~ <sup>parakeet</sup>, (a kind of parrot) which invaded our district and surrounding ones. As this was really a bush bird, I can only presume that their ordinary supply of food had been cut off through the destruction of bush, by burning &c.