



group of tree-lizards, whose colours and markings, for protective purposes, bear a strong resemblance to their natural surroundings. The bright green tints of one species enables it almost to defy detection amidst the evergreen foliage of the native shrubs; the marbled-brown skin of another is peculiarly adapted for concealment as it clings to the bark of a tree, or hides in the crevices; whilst a third, which inhabits the sulphur-crusts on the grounds in the Lake District, is of a uniform bright sulphur-yellow.

The species described by the author of this paper is beautifully marked on its upper surface with patches of pale brown and minute granulations of yellow, exactly resembling in appearance a peculiar *Lichen* common on the bark of certain trees. Apart from good specific characters, it furnishes another remarkable instance of the law of assimilative colouring referred to.

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ART. XLVI.—*Notes on Fishes in Upper Whanganui River.*

By Captain MAIR, F.L.S.

[Read before the Wellington Philosophical Society 10th January, 1880.]

DURING the summer and autumn rains, large quantities of fish are caught by the Natives in weirs or single lines of stakes driven into the bed of the river at the heads of the rapids, and placed at an angle of about 10 degrees across the current. These lines of stakes are 50 feet or 60 feet long, and 15 yards or 20 yards apart, according to the width of the river. *Hinakis* or wicker baskets are placed at the bottom of each row of stakes, and the fish, which appear always to swim down the middle of the river, upon meeting these lines of stakes placed at a slight angle to the stream, follow them down into the funnel-mouthed *hinakis* aforesaid, and are thus caught. As soon as the pot is full, it is replaced by an empty one. In this manner, I saw about 7 cwt. obtained from two *hinakis*, at Whenuatere, on February 25th, 1879. The fish so obtained are:—*Papanoko*, *Toitoi*, *Inanga*, *Atutahi*, *Upokororo*, and a peculiar kind of eel called *Tunaheke*.

*Papanoko* are small fish, from six to eight inches in length, and very deep in proportion, as the accompanying rough sketch will show, and weigh about the eighth of a pound. At this season of the year they are very fat, full of spawn, and are most delicious eating. The fins are red; scales very small; back, pepper-and-salt colour; belly, silvery. This fish is called *Te ika huna a Tanemahuta*—the hidden fish of Tane—the god of the forests; for they are never found in the streams or rivers, unless during a flood, and then only during the night. Great ceremony is observed in cooking them, and they are taken some distance from the village for the purpose. The natives aver that if this were not done, no more fish would enter the *hinakis*.

*Toitoi* are a small blue fish similar to those caught in lakes, but larger. They are fair eating, but rather full of bones—quite unlike the *Papanako*, which have hardly any.

*Inanga* are plentiful. A large kind, called *Atutahi*, are most esteemed as food; they are almost 5 inches in length, and quite transparent.

*Upokororo* are plentiful during the first winter months, also lamprey; but the latter are only caught on the lower part of the river.

The eel most prized by the natives is called *Tunahেকে*. The name implies that it comes from the sources of the rivers, and goes to the sea. It is a very fine fish, varying from 1–10 lbs. in weight; is bluish-black, with flat head, very small mouth and teeth, tail very wide in proportion to the body; but the most remarkable features are its large, deep, blue eyes. It is very strong and active, and can jump out of a canoe. The natives keep them in large wicker-work baskets, placed in the small streams, for many months, feeding them upon boiled potatoes which keep them in good condition. These fish are supposed to come out of the swamps during heavy floods. It is remarkable that they are never caught except during rains, and do not readily take bait.

Where the Ohura river joins the Whanganui, there is a fall of almost 36 feet. In December and January millions of small eels, from 2–5 inches in length and the thickness of a steel knitting-needle, may be seen crawling up the face of the overhanging rock, whenever there is sufficient moisture. At the time of my visit (February 27th) the season was over; yet we caught a great many, between nine and ten o'clock at night, by brushing them into a net with a whisp of fern. It was most interesting to see these little creatures wriggling up the fall in solid masses, apparently hanging on to each other; for if you swept away two or three at the head of the column the remainder all fell back into the water. *Tunariki* are considered a great delicacy by the natives, who hang funnels (shaped like a dunce's cap) made of flax, over the falls, into which these little creatures creep till it is quite full, they are then emptied into baskets. Two or three hundredweight are frequently caught in one night in this manner.

Large *Patiki* (flat fish) are occasionally speared up the river. Formerly they were very plentiful and were caught in nets.

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