

Transcript of R.A.L. Bately's narration in the original phonograph recording:

This recording has been made to preserve a resemblance to the call of the huia, one of our [Aotearoa's/New Zealand's] native birds, which is believed extinct. Never abundant, the huia inhabited the mountain ranges lying between the Wellington and Hawke's Bay Provinces [North Island].

To both the ornithologist and the layman, the huia—with its straight bill on the male and its longer curved bill on the female—was an object of unusual interest.

To the Maori, its ivory-tipped tail feathers were the prized emblem of chieftainship. And to snare the bird, they became experts in imitating its call.

During the first decade of the present century, it became apparent to the New Zealand government and the [Dominion, now Te Papa] Museum authorities, that the huia would soon become extinct unless some steps were taken to obtain and preserve live specimens.

To this end, several expeditions were sent to a heavily-bushed area surrounding the table mountain, Aorangi, and the Mangatera stream in the north-western portion of the Ruahine Range. These were guided by local Maoris experienced in giving huia calls, the first expedition being led by Mr. Gregor McGregor [and Augustus Hamilton] about 1909. This expedition was accompanied by Mr. Henare Hamana and [Peter] Utamate. There were two later expeditions led by Mr. Edgar Stead, of Christchurch—one about 1909 or 1910, and another in 1912. These expeditions were accompanied by Messrs. Kohatu and Pehira Kingi [and N.P. Bately] of Moawhango.

We are fortunate to have in the studio, Mr. Henare Hamana, who accompanied Mr. Gregor McGregor to Aorangi about the year 1909. Mr. Henare Hamana will now give us his huia calls. [Note: I am working with a Cornell ethnomusicologist to notate the huia calls, as narrated below.]

Let us imagine two birds are feeding on a rotten tree. After awhile, the female climbs to the top of the tree and glides into the distance.

The male bird calls with the following notes....[sixteen seconds; 0:00-0:16].

The female answers....[nine seconds; 0:17-0:25].

After this, the male replies....[seventeen seconds; 0:26-0:42].

The male bird then joins the female where they scratch amongst leaves. After feeding, they both climb to the top of a tōtara tree [Podocarpus totara].

And, now, to complete the survey of the huia, Mr. Hamana will repeat his calls.

The male....[fifteen seconds; 0:43-0:57].

The female....[seven seconds; 0:58-1:04].