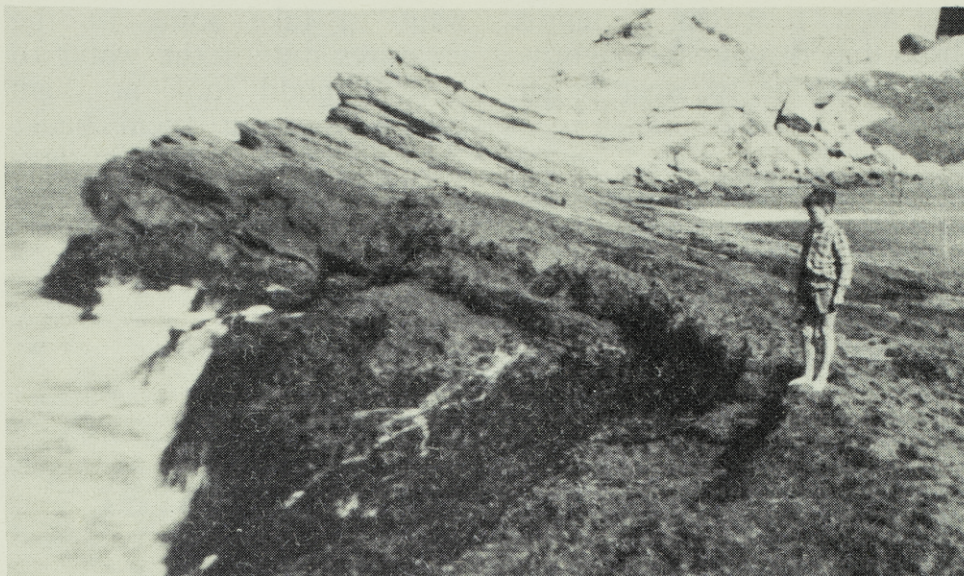


drenched with spray and is occasionally drenched with a storm-tossed wave. Not many plants live here except lichen and algae, which do not need soil to live in. A few iceplants and the tough taupata shrubs may survive in sheltered spots on little patches of soil. Grass grows where it can. Only a few hardy animals can stand these awful conditions. Barnacles, sand lice, shore crabs, and a few more. We will meet them again in the next issue of *Forest and Bird*.

The **tidal zone** is the next layer and it is so interesting that I will spend the whole of my next article writing about it. The tidal zone is all along the coastline between the high-tide mark and the low-tide mark. Most of the zone is under water twice a day and out in the wind and sun twice a day. This is where you will find rock pools—large and small pools of sea water left behind by the falling tide. Cracks between the rocks shelter crabs, barnacles, limpets, starfish, mussels, and lots of other interesting creatures. The rock pools themselves are full of life — from tiny shrimps to octopuses. But more about them in the next issue.

The last layer that we can get into is called the **light zone**. This is all the sea around the coast from the low-tide mark to as deep as light can penetrate—about 20 m. Many of the creatures that live in the tidal zone can be found here, but the species change as the water gets deeper. You can't explore this zone without a face-mask, snorkel, and flippers.

But we can explore the other three zones with a sensible friend. An interested adult is handy to have around on a shore trek, provided that it knows how to keep quiet, can keep its eyes open, and doesn't



A rocky shore can be a dangerous place if you are alone. As the photos (taken 15 seconds apart on the reef at Castlepoint) show, this boy was lucky he was not standing about a metre closer to the sea when the wave broke on the rocks.



mind getting wet. Because, make no mistake about it, you will get wet! You could go with your mother or father, aunt or uncle, or an adult friend. But don't go alone. The photos reproduced on this page show how dangerous a rocky shore can be.

Preparations

Now, what about preparations? You can't just wander down to the rock pools any old time in your T-shirt, jeans, and jandals. A T-shirt is a good idea; it stops you from getting sunburnt as you bend over looking into the rock pools, but the other items need more thought.

Time is important. Low tide

is the time for exploring rock pools, but low tide is at a different time every day. You can find out when low tide is by ringing the harbour board or lighthouse keeper, asking some professional fishermen, or asking your local bookshop to order a copy of the *New Zealand Nautical Almanac and Tide Tables* from the Government Printer.

Clothing is important. Jeans are dangerous. When they are wet they are heavy, and the weight could drag you under if you fell in. Wear shorts or togs, then it won't much matter if you do get wet. Jandals can be dangerous too; it is very easy to lose your footing and hurt yourself on the rocks.