

permit is required for landing as there are no introduced animals or plants on this island, so boots and clothing had to be checked for any seeds before going ashore.

We climbed up a steep rocky watercourse through the usual coastal belt of *Hebe elliptica* which withstands, undamaged, the salt-laden winds. We then passed through a belt of stunted rata, inanga and matipo at the edge of which a sub-antarctic snipe (*Coenocorypha aucklandica*) appeared from almost under my feet. Its long beak made up nearly a quarter of its 23cm length.

Then came the cherished moment of standing on the edge of a vast meadow of large-leaved tropical looking plants. The large leaves were perfect, not tattered by the strong winds the region is noted for. They belonged to two species of *Pleurophyllum*, *P. speciosum* which has white to mauve ray-florets on its large daisy flower-heads and *P. criniferum* which has dark maroon flower-heads without ray-florets. We were fortunate to see some flowers on these beautiful plants as we were slightly early for the main flowering season.

Two other large and spectacular plants were fully out; *Stilbocarpa polaris* with yellow flowers and *Anisotome latifolia* with mauve flowers. On a smaller scale were the 12cm high *Gentiana concinna* with reddish-purple flowers and again we met the bright blue forget-me-not.

To see an island of native plants completely unaltered by humans is a privilege granted to few.

As well as the interesting plants, we saw twenty or so wandering albatross chicks (*Diomedea exulans*) their heads raised above the snow-grass to look at us. One was being fed and others were exercising their long wings. Light mantled sooty albatrosses (*Phoebastria palpebrata*) were resting on the cotula sward. We saw the occasional giant petrel chick (*Macronectes giganteus*) like a soccer ball of grey down, and also saw swimming amongst the swooshing kelp, an Auckland Island flightless duck (*Anas aucklandica*).

We were fortunate to have Colleen Black as our guide on these occasions for as well as being a qualified skipper and an excellent caterer, she was very knowledgeable about the plants.

Still in Carnley Harbour we sailed to Epigwaite where we saw the few remaining timbers of the *Grafton* which was wrecked in 1864 and also the remains of the cottage built by the survivors of the wreck.

That evening we anchored at Camp Cove. After our evening meal we walked up the



*Pleurophyllum criniferum*, Fairchild's Garden

Shy mollymawks, Disappointment Island

