

hint of its attractiveness. The first land snail seen on Disappointment Island was found crawling up the tripod of my camera while photographing this flower!

On our way to North Harbour we passed Beacon Rock where cape pigeons (*Daption capensis*) were nesting. We saw three goats and several sea-lions on the shore and when we landed and crossed the beach we were surprised to find that these sea-lions could lift their immense weight on to their flippers and chase us at such speed that we had to run fast, intimidating us further with large wide-open mouths and loud roars.

The bush here was eaten out by the goats, the inanga only surviving where it was a perching plant on the rata.

That night we again anchored in Erebus Cove, having circumnavigated Auckland Island thanks to the wonderful weather and the enthusiasm of Alex Black who wanted us to have as complete a picture of the islands as possible.

December 9. Rose Island was visited in the morning. We had hoped to see the beautiful light mantled sooty albatrosses nesting, but were too early and some birds were seen in courting displays. A colony of about forty giant petrel chicks were found, some covered in grey down and others able to run around.

Peggie Jenner had an unusual experience as protector to a future relentless hunter, when a skua chick which was being harried by black-backed gulls (*Larus dominicanus*) ran to her for protection.

On a windswept cliff-top where the vegetation was eaten flat to the ground, rabbits being present on this island, I saw gentians (*Gentiana cerina* var. *cerina*) covering an area of about 100m<sup>2</sup> their heads bobbing in the breeze, some white, some red and some white with red stripes.

The smooth even outline of rata was a feature of much of the coastline and later when in flower would be a dazzling display. Only on Rose Island did we see one of these trees in flower. A tomtit was also seen being very bold hopping about on the swirling kelp and eating minute insects.

Our next stop was at Ranui Cove where there had been a lookout station during World War II, the buildings were still intact. We went to the lookout point and trig (76m) to have our final look at the Auckland Islands, the view the Coast Watchers would have been so familiar with, and that evening we headed out for Dunedin.

The wonderful birds, animals and plants indigenous to the Auckland Islands are dependent on man's care, understanding and goodwill for their survival and need all the protection that can be given. We New Zealanders are responsible to the world for their survival.

Photographs: with exception of *Myosotis capitata* by Ron Sinclair and Auckland Island from Rose Island by Keith Mayhill, all by Audrey Eagle

Rock-hopper penguin, Rose Island



*Stilbocarpus polaris*, Disappointment Island

Hooker's sealion, North Harbour

