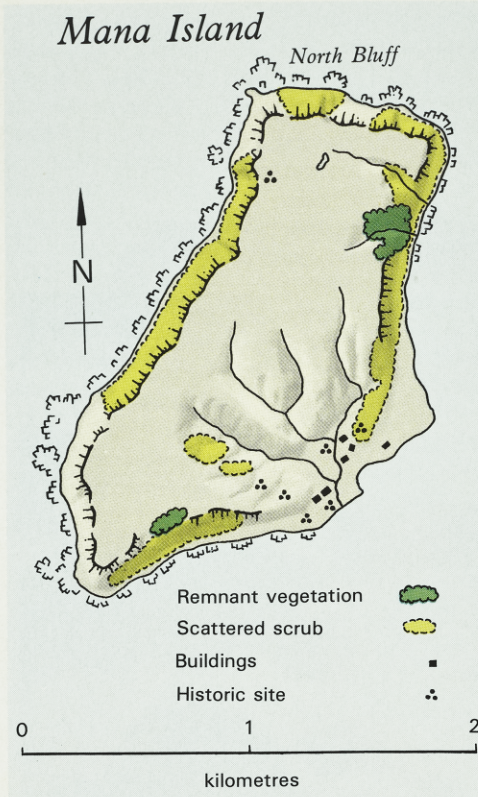


Mana, a similar sized island, provides an even greater challenge for Wellingtonians as it has only a one hectare gully of coastal forest as well as five hectares of manuka/kanuka clinging against its eastern coastal bluffs. Tiritiri had five times more forest in 1983 and grass covered only 57 percent of the island.

Research on Tiritiri has shown that the natural process of regeneration is not enough to suppress invading exotic grasses; hence the need for human intervention. Otherwise regeneration would be extremely slow, the fire risk would be high, and furthermore suitable habitats could not be tailored for introduced endangered species.

Already Mana hosts at least five threatened native species: three animals and two plants. They are McGregor's skink, the gold striped gecko, the giant weta, a fern *Anogramma leptophylla* and Cook's scurvy grass. Perhaps even more importantly, because it is predator-free (except for mice) and is 2.5 km from the mainland, the island has tremendous potential as a refuge for rare species. There are now very few large rat-free islands around New Zealand's coast. Takahe, little spotted kiwi, saddlebacks, shore plover, tuatara and flax snails are examples which could be introduced in due course.

Mana's seemingly flat appearance from the mainland disguises the fact that there are several steep, east-west running gullies — sheltered catchments suitable for starting to plant nursery trees such as taupata,



ngaio and manuka. Areas still in grass will pose a problem and it has been suggested that small, young cattle might be used as "lawnmowers" because they will not break through fences. Spraying and controlled burning might also be required.

Biologists Ian Atkinson and Colin Ogle, both Mana enthusiasts, believe a mixed

broadleaf forest of kohekohe, milk tree and kaikomako originally covered the island. This was borne out in a survey by the Wellington Botanical Society which also wants to be involved in the replanting programme.

Several Forest and Bird branches have already expressed interest in helping out and because our Pauatahanui project is only a few kilometres distant, the two projects are complementary. What better way to appreciate Wellington's coastal diversity than a visit to Pauatahanui followed by a boat ride to Mana — still with spade in hand!

The new Department of Conservation will be the obvious agency to look after the island which should be classed under the Reserves Act — not administered as Crown land as is proposed in Mana's draft management plan. Controls will have to be placed on landings to prevent rat infestation, which spell doom to any endangered species.

As I left Mana recently while hundreds of black-backed gulls wheeled overhead; two impressions remained:

- first, that lots of people had to become involved in revitalising the island
- second, the wonderment at discovering an ancient giant weta clinging to shrubland vestiges on an island decimated by decades of misdirected effort. Obviously the wonderment can be extended to many more species for many more people if future efforts are directed towards restoring Mana. 🦗



## Southern Heritage Tours

Specialists in historical and natural history tours

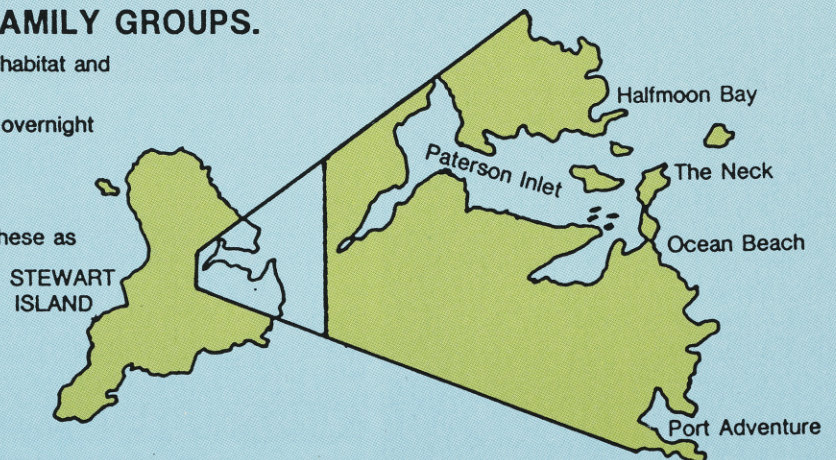


# STEWART ISLAND EXPEDITION

DECEMBER 1986—JANUARY 1987

UNIQUE OPPORTUNITY FOR AMATEUR NATURALISTS—BOTANISTS—ORNITHOLOGISTS—ARTISTS—PHOTOGRAPHERS—ESPECIALLY SUITABLE FOR FAMILY GROUPS.

- Pursue own interests or participate in organised habitat and bird surveys, guided walks, discussions.
- Base camp (tents) at Ocean Beach, facilities for overnight trips
- Expedition divided into three ten-day periods: December 29-January 7; January 7-January 16; January 16-January 25, join us for as many of these as you like.
- Spend a day exploring Paterson Inlet by launch.
- Dinghy transport available from camp.
- Cost per ten-day period \$658.00 plus GST where applicable. Price includes food, boat charter, and accommodation (tents). Special family rates available on application.



Expedition leader: Rodney Russ who has had considerable experience in organising, participating in and leading expeditions throughout New Zealand; Stewart Island; Chatham Islands and Sub Antarctic Islands. He is assisted by his wife Shirley who is an experienced tramper and registered nurse.

For further information and registration form write to: Stewart Island Expedition  
David De Haan Travel Ltd  
P.O. Box 5177  
Dunedin. Ph: (024)772-233 Telex: 5235