

Subantarctic Islands

SPECKS OF LAND in a vast expanse of ocean, the subantarctic islands lie near the limits of antarctic water yet are influenced by warmer subtropical currents. The resulting nutrient-rich waters support enormous numbers of seabirds and marine mammals. Tiny Dent Island (centre) is the last remaining refuge of the endangered Campbell Island teal. Photo: Kim Westerskov



ONE OF THE MOST HAUNTING SOUNDS of the subantarctics is the call of the light-mantled sooty albatross. Nine species of albatross breed on New Zealand's subantarctic islands, far more than on any other island group in the world. Because of the great diversity and numbers of such seabirds, the islands are of tremendous global importance. Recent revelations (see *Forest & Bird* November 1990) about the possible extent of seabird deaths through fishing are worrying conservationists and wildlife managers. Photo: Graeme Taylor

AFTERNOON LIGHT shines on seacliffs of Campbell Island on an uncharacteristically calm day. In common with the Auckland Islands and Antipodes Island, Campbell Island's origins are volcanic. About 25 million years ago the Auckland Islands rose from the ocean, followed by Campbell Island (between five and ten million years ago) and Antipodes Island (one million years ago). The volcanic activity which gave birth to these islands is linked to the volcanoes of the eastern South Island, such as those which created Banks Peninsula. The subantarctic islands therefore play a significant role in unravelling the volcanic history of the South-West Pacific Basin south of New Zealand.

Photo: Kim Westerskov

