

THE KERMADECS have some of the largest breeding populations of seabirds in the Pacific. In the evenings the sky darkens as millions of petrels such as the black-winged petrel return to their nesting burrows which riddle the islands. Fast flying and acrobatic, this species migrates northwards, spending from April to October in the North Pacific. Photo: Alan Tennyson



THE "PACIFIC RING OF FIRE" includes the Tonga-Kermadec Island arc, which lies along the Pacific/Indian-Australian plate boundary to the north-east of the North Island. The Kermadec Islands - Raoul, Macaulay, Curtis, and L'Esperance Rock - are part of a classic subduction zone, where the Pacific plate is being forced down into the mantle underneath the more continental Indian-Australian plate. New Zealand scientists on Raoul Island in 1964 witnessed the island in one of its more volatile moods before they were evacuated. Photo: Don Merton