

De Reszke of course!



CORK TIPPED OR PLAIN

Wild Life in the Sub-antarctic

(continued from previous page)

case by the presence of the attendant gulls hovering hopefully overhead.

Two of the common New Zealand gulls are found on the southern islands; the large black-backed gull, and the smaller red-billed gull. Both are more or less harassed by the skua-gulls or sea-hawks, but they retaliate by attacking the skua during their nesting season. Another delightful bird of the gull family is the sub-antarctic tern. It is smaller than the white-fronted tern so common about the New Zealand mainland and has a dark red beak and legs. The plumage is a soft shade of light grey. This little tern is bold and fearless and attacks any other bird which comes near its nesting-place. Nor do human beings escape its attention should they venture too near a nesting site, although the attack is merely a warning, and one is not actually struck.

The sight of a large skua gull being pursued by a tiny tern is rather ludicrous; but the tern is in earnest, and well the skua knows this, for it will twist and turn in endeavours to evade the small attacker. But the terns are wonderfully agile, and often a loud squawk from the skua announces the fact that it has received a peck from the tern's sharp beak, usually on the wing.

Our Pet Penguin

A certain number of birds stray from other islands to the Campbells. One such straggler was a king penguin which came ashore for its annual moult near the camp. Taken to the camp for study purposes, and later released when his moult was completed, "Kingy" became very tame and even seemed to enjoy human company.

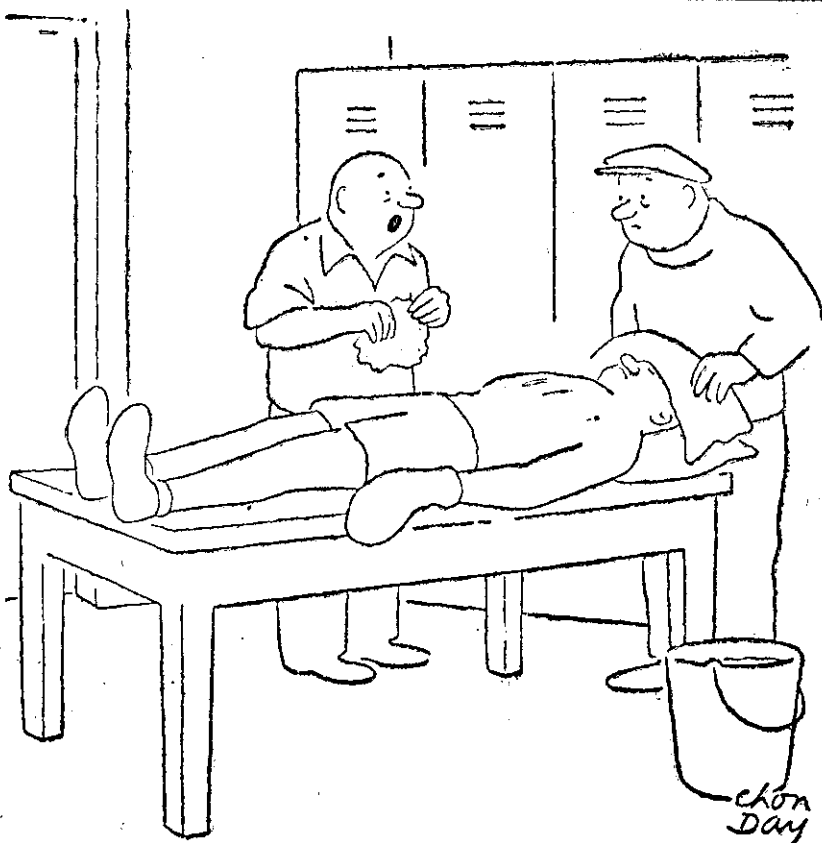
Penguins, like the majority of sea-birds, are incapable of recognising food on land and, in order to keep him any

length of time, it was necessary to feed "Kingy" forcibly. Standing astride the penguin, with the powerful flippers tucked behind one's legs, raw meat, or even bully beef saturated in salt water, was thrust down the bird's gullet. Once the food was in his throat, "Kingy" did the rest and after a meal was usually given a dousing with water, to his evident enjoyment.

His loud bray when spoken to, and quick waddling gait towards the oncomer, showed that he had become well used to human company. Nor was he ever vicious or bad-tempered; always he was the "perfect gentleman." When taken to the harbour to be released, "Kingy" showed a decided disinclination to enter the water, preferring to waddle back to his human friends who were watching to see him depart. Perhaps he had discovered that a supply of food brought to him, even it was pushed down his neck, was a simpler way of obtaining a living than having to wrest it from an ocean wherein lurked so many competitors and dangers.

Finally "Kingy" had to be taken out in the boat and rather unceremoniously dropped overboard. Then, when he really felt the water about him and really tasted it, he made out for the open sea. A close watch was kept in the next season because we all expected to see the penguin turn up again. But there was no re-appearance, and we trust that "Kingy" is now happily mated somewhere on Macquarie Island, and that he lives to a ripe old age.

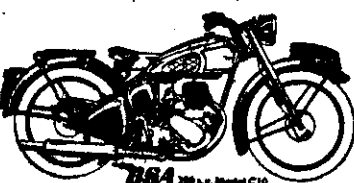
And so with these brief sketches of wild life not treated in my former articles, I make my farewell to Listener readers. If I have aroused in readers a little of the interest and pleasure I myself obtained from the study of wild life in the sub-antarctic, then I am satisfied.



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