

September to January whereafter their captors had to make do with offshore whaling for right whales each January and February and some whaling inshore from the schooners between March and September, mainly for humpbacks.

The seasonal habits of the sea elephants at Desolation are also clearly evident. A few juvenile males and females were taken in September and October, adult females and their pups in November and December, and adult males in December and January.

The New Land Reported to the South and East

When the New London bark, *Hannah Brewer*, arrived at Pot Harbour on 21 January 1855, Captain Smith brought the news, probably obtained via Captain Maury, that in November 1853 Captain James J. Heard of the barque *Oriental* had discovered a new island some 260 miles south of Desolation.¹⁶

Thus, on 10 February 1855, Rogers wrote 'At 9 a.m. started from Pott Harbour for offshore and to look for the land reported to the S & E of Desolation.' After steering south-south-west in bad stormy weather for five days, he wrote on 15 February:

'At daylight raised land ahead bearing SSW dist. about twenty miles. Made sail and stood in to land with the wind from the W. run in to leeward within a mile and a half. Saw plenty of elephant on 3 different beaches, all within 3 miles on the east side of the island. Found no harbour. To leeward landed with one boat [NB First landing on Heard Island] and sounded off the beach with another. Found 5 fathoms water close in and good beaches to work. Hard bottom. I should think it was 40 miles from E to W and looks like two islands or a deep bay is on the N side, and looks as though there was harbours in the bay. There is a large rock to the NE of the land about 10 miles.'

'It blows so heavy I could not work up to find a harbour as I would like to. Should think the three beaches had 2,500 barrels of oil on them, mostly cows.'

'The lat. 53.00 S and long. 73.29 E point.'

[The correct figures are 53.06 S and 73.30 E]

Rogers had 'discovered' a lizard shape island some 25 miles by 10 miles, with a high mountain range from NW to SE. Almost all the island is covered in permanent ice which, between bold, black-cliffed headlands, flows in deeply crevassed glaciers to the sea where they terminate in high ice cliffs. Bleak, stark and inhospitable, the landscape is more desolate than Desolation, under 300 miles to the north where the glaciers have retreated into the interior. On Heard, the 9,000-foot volcano, Big Ben, provides a vast catchment whose glaciers cover everything except a few parts of the north-east coast, and even these are frequently covered by winter snow. Freezing winds blow constantly, snow falls even in summer, and the climate is truly execrable.