

was a goat living at Beach Harbour in Breaksea Sound, and we went there to see his effect on the bush. We met him the very first morning, within a few hundred yards of where he was liberated a year before—a fine brown billy in good condition, and so tame that he followed us a little way for company. We stayed fourteen days bird-hunting; often met the goat, and had ample time to understand his work. He seemed to devote his whole attention to the kakapos' favourite trees (*Panax arborum*, *Schefflera digitata*, and another *Panax*). The first and best of these he uses very wastefully, by eating the bark and leaf-stalks, but not the leaves. Near where he lives the place is comparatively open, for it seems that most of this undergrowth can stand very little tramping. Then the unexpected happens, for there is more young *Panax* growing up on his beat than elsewhere, though I suppose he will soon stop that, or at least a few more of his kind would do so.

On the whole, it was evident that goats would be bad for the bird reserve, but a blessing to the dismal bush on the mainland, where the ground bird cannot long remain, for the animals will get there somehow.

When deer are liberated it should be near scrubby land-slips, or leading spurs, so that they would be more likely to reach the grass, for I am not sure that they would thrive without doing so.

After a stay of two years and a half I went away for a holiday on the 8th December, and returned on the 29th January, finding Pigeon Island as I left it, with the exception that it had the appearance of a long spell of dry weather, which was a great contrast to the previous December and January, when it rained 28 in. and 31 in. respectively. Last February was also fine and dry, but unfortunately it rained very heavily just before we came home, and we could not get our patches of bush to burn well. However we gave our house a couple of coats of paint, including iron and shingle roofs. Since then we went to Cascade, shifted camp to the head of the harbour, and cut about four miles of track to get on to some high grass-land, which we did not reach on account of not finding the best way at first, and under-estimating the time it would take. Then, bringing a few birds, we came home on the 10th March, expecting the steamer to call and leave us a larger boat, which I have to receive and secure.

The kakapos did not breed this season in Dusky Sound—not one of them, for there was no drumming heard. It is very curious that they can all come to such a unanimous agreement about it, and the fact is well worth noting by everyone that has an opportunity, because by-and-by it will not be believed.

We saw plenty of opossum tracks on the trees around Beach Harbour, so that some of those liberated have thriven there.

Rainfall for 1896.—January, 31·35 in.; February, 13·74 in.; March, 19·46 in.; April, 12·84 in.; May, 14·87 in.; June, 5·71 in.; July, 9·81 in.; August, 8·80 in.; September, 15·57 in.; October, 16·61 in.; November, 11·04 in.

I have, &c.,

RICHARD HENRY.

Dusky Sound, 7th August, 1896.

So far we have had a beautifully fine winter—very light frosts and bright sunny days—sometimes a fortnight without rain. We were out often until the 7th July, and put out about sixty birds on the islands.

I had given up “our farm” as useless even for goats after the wet of last summer, but now I think the mildness of the winter will make up for the wet of the summer. On the coldest mornings the temperature of the sea-water is 50°, and as yet not a speck of snow on Pigeon Island this year, and it never feels cold. About the house and along our pathways the grass grows well, and keeps growing all the winter, but where the peaty soil is very loose it does not thrive, and lately I have been thinking that the tramping of animals may be of use to the grass.

Since we came home we have been cutting up and burning our fallen bush, and, though it is such a little piece, it may yet be valuable to give animals a start. The surface of Pigeon Island is not covered with moss like the mainland, and the bush on it will stand very little traffic, for our few journeys through it near the house have greatly altered it for the better since we came, and a dozen goats would do more in a week. I would like something more valuable, but there is no doubt goats are the best pioneers, and in years to come they could be replaced by deer. Some one should have a deer-farm to supply others with stock. The month of May is the time to send animals here, because there are few sandflies and milder winter than in Dunedin.

Details.

On the 2nd June we sailed for a place we call “Green Point,” about one mile south-east of Cooper Island. There are two large kakapo gardens, consisting mostly of *Schefflera digitata* (I do not know its common name), which bears a heavy crop of berries, and holds many of them until the end of winter. We heard many kakapos there, and expected to get a lot easily, but we only got eight one day and four the next. It was thirteen miles to Duck Cove, where we wanted to land them. We could not trust the wind for a return, so had to take camp and dogs; and then the twelve cages were enough to stow in our little boat, which is not roomy enough for that, but in every other way suits to perfection. Thus our thirteen miles was a two days' trip, because we cannot pull a dozen miles against a light wind in an afternoon; therefore we were five days putting a dozen kakapos on Resolution, and they were five beautifully fine days, so you may imagine what it would be in a spell of rough weather. I mention this because the explorers were talking about forty kakapos per day at Preservation.

Hunting.—Hunting with a muzzle for live birds is quite a different thing to hunting with a retriever for dead ones. Our dog often drives a bird into a crevice among rocks or stones or up a tree where we cannot get it. And, again, we cannot go near a noisy creek, though it is often the best place for birds, because we cannot hear the dog, and if he finds a bird he will not come away, and we cannot find him, and have a very bad time of it. If we do not find him he will have the poor thing nearly dead, and only fit to chop its head off. Altogether, there is not much fun in the