

On the 11th the rain commenced, and next morning the hillsides were roaring. There had been 2·8 in. of rain. Next day was wet, and I only got home to-day.

There were always robins on Pigeon Island, and especially on Parrot Island, until the rats left, and then the robins left. I have been to Five Fingers Peninsula and various places to look for them, but not one have I seen. I cannot believe that a weasel ever came on to those islands, for my new dog was just mad for hunting the last of the rats, because I helped him with axe and spade, and made a great game of it to teach him to hunt a weasel, so that I am sure he would not pass the scent of a weasel now. And he is very keen-scented. The few rats we got were poor miserable little things, which suggested a long-continued sickness, and the same may have taken the robins, the rats being the distributors. Pigeon Island is just swarming with woodhens, and I have not missed a single chicken from those that live near the house. But it is evident that we had no useful information about weasels, even at Home, or we would not have brought them to New Zealand.

There is also a great scarcity of fish and sea-birds in the Sound all this year—and it cannot be the weasel that is affecting them, but it illustrates the want of order in the seasons here, and the coming and going of things. Numbers of moki usually appear in October, but now it is December and I have not seen them yet, nor the shoals of other fish, but the mysis have just come, and I suppose the fish will soon be here now, and then the birds and the cow-fish.

The parakeets are also absent, for the first time since I came here.

6th January, 1903.

The "Tutane kai" called this evening, and has anchored till morning. A lot of visitors ashore, and a jolly day for me.

17th February, 1903.

I went to the head of Dusky Sound on the 22nd January to call on the roadmen, because I thought I ought to do so, but did not stay long. That night I camped on Cooper Island, and there were plenty of kakapos drumming on the north side of the sound, but hardly one to be heard on the south side. This is the first time I have known them to breed two seasons in succession. Where all the drumming was there was no place to leave my boat in safety, or even haul her out, so I had to stay on Cooper Island and go over when it was fine enough.

My dog soon found me two nests of grey kiwi, with a pair in each, but would pass by a kakapo in a hole just as he would a penguin. The only ones he found were those that happened to be out in the ferns in the daytime. However, I brought home a pair on the 27th, and they turned out so sulky that they would eat nothing but grass, and worked their lives out cutting their cages, so that they were dead in a week. One of them laid an egg in the cage. The four kiwis I put on Cooper Island. They are defenceless little things, and their presence shows that the weasels are not there yet.

I went to the same place again on the 3rd February, and stayed ten days, most of them too wet and rough for me to cross. I had to let my dog kill a kakapo and praise him up for it, and then he soon found me some, for there are plenty up there in that high valley.

They are a queer lot; some of them are tame the first day I get them, while others are as fierce as wild-cats, no matter how long I keep them. The first year I was here I had some tame like that, and by great good luck I got a pair to fill my order for Rotorua. One of them is a big old male that will eat out of my hand without ever attempting to bite.

I brought home three on the 14th, after being two days stormbound on Resolution, where I let two others go. I kept the best ones, and have penned off half my store for them, so that they have plenty of room to climb about for exercise. Two of them are eating well—blue peas and oats steeped, also gooseberries—so that they will live. There is no use me feeding them on the wild berries, for they would only starve on the steamer, or where they are going to live, if they would not eat what food is available there. The soft peas are sure to be good food for them, and it is a valuable discovery for me. Yet one of those I have will not eat them, nor anything else satisfactorily. It is very hard to starve it into eating, for this is the twelfth day in the cage. Of course, I give it all sorts of leaves and moss, and everything I can think of.

20th March, 1903.

I was out from the 7th to the 12th, and had beautiful weather. When it does come fine here it is grand, especially at this time of the year. I wanted to photograph some of the young kakapos, and found two nests with two in each, but the dog destroyed them both before I knew that he had them, and it was so vexing that I would not let him hunt any more. They make their nests in very open holes, so that any dog could get at them, and I cannot keep sight of him in the bush, so that I do not miss him when he goes in a hole. The young ones are just like young kakas, only a purer white in the down. I saw several parties of teal—very much to my surprise, for I thought they had gone for good, they had been away so long. Also three of those that used to live at Pigeon Island have come back after being absent over eighteen months. I know that they are the same ones, because they will pay no attention to me. If they were strangers they would show a little surprise at all events.

The fish and sea-birds came back in their old style about the end of February; and to-day I caught some fine fat cod very easily within a hundred yards of the boat-shed. There is one thing pleasantly remarkable about the blue cod, in the fact that they never appear to have any sickness, or parasites in their gills or flesh, as is commonly the case with all the wrass family—the ling, and the barracouta; and even the moki have a little ring-worm in the cavity of the body, which I never saw in the cod. But it is quite a common thing to catch cod that have been bitten by other fish. I caught one recently that had nearly all its tail off, and its body so badly crushed that it was stiff, so that it would have been easy game for the next proper that saw it. These two things naturally go together—that is, the police are efficient, and the cod are kept in good order, while, on the other hand, such fish as the ling and *Sebastes percolides* are nearly always sick with something or other,