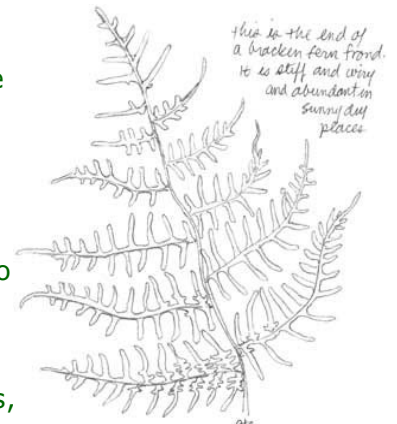


# SAMPLE PAGES 12 AND 13 FROM DAY 3



our campspot on lovely Lake Te Anau

Last night and this morning we took long walks on Lake Te Anau's beach. It rained during the night, so this morning we got to try out our new rain gear. Seems to work okay, thank goodness. The beach is covered with rounded rocks, many of them all shades of jade green. I wonder



bracken ferns are tough and springy

if this is the famous greenstone (jade) of New Zealand (later — they're probably not jade). Our campsite was surrounded by bracken ferns, which we've been seeing everywhere in this part of New Zealand. I love their springy feel.

And now we're in downtown Te Anau having hot coffee and breakfast of quiche (me) and pizza (Daniel). Delicious, though not my usual buttered toast. And the (\$3US) coffees here tend to be teacup size with no refill. Spendy for what you get, but delicious. They appear to offer all the mochas, lattes, grandes, and other coffee styles you'd find in Seattle. We're really appreciating the New Zealand paper money! It's absolutely gorgeous and makes our U.S. dollars look like dowdy old scrip from the 1800s. Even our newer bills! How embarrassing.

## 6:10pm (it's dark), Lake Gunn on Hwy 94



under the beeches at Lake Gunn

We had originally planned to have a do-nothing day today, waiting for our Doubtful Sound Cruise to start tomorrow, but then we decided to put off the cruise one day and go north to see Milford Sound. We'll be heading south after the cruise, which is in the opposite direction, and we couldn't bear to miss Milford Sound.



an elvish scene at Totara campground



this South Island robin was very trustful

But first, we located the gas bottle with the help of the campervan rep in Te Anau, who discovered it behind the side door. The person at the rental place had told us "don't open that side door," but we MUST open it to turn on the gas and again to turn it off before we drive. Duh! If I were running this campervan business, I'd provide a little instruction book with every campervan! But the rep was very helpful and courteous, coming down to the service station on a Sunday morning to help us out of our dilemma.

The trip to Milford Sound was wonderful. We drove up into the ancient, tiny-leafed beech forests with mossy floors and ferns of all kinds. Daniel says the beech tree is *Nothofagus*, and since he's a nurseryman, I expect he has it right. The boles of the trees are gnarly and huge — a sign at one viewpoint said they may be as old as 600 years. We stopped many times to explore.



mountains rise, cold and magnificent

At Totara campground/picnic area on McKay Creek within Fiordland National Park, a small charcoal-gray bird with long legs and a yellow breast dropped down out of a tree and hopped right up to my foot as I talked to it. This delightful little companion, followed alongside me as I explored, searching for and finding things to eat (the bird, not me). I've just identified it as a South Island Robin.

Where US signs say "Yield Right of Way," the New Zealand signs say "Give Way." Since every bridge we've seen so far on the South Island is only one way, we've seen these a LOT. If the red arrow is on YOUR side, you wait for the other vehicle to cross first.



many NZ bridges are one-way

New Zealand road departments have undoubtedly saved millions of dollars by making the bridges one lane wide. Now that's what I call an elegant solution to budget constraints. They apparently use some of the money saved on bridges to mow the verges back up to 15 feet on either side where terrain permits. This gives the roads a wonderfully groomed and parklike look.



the dense beech forests are deeply mysterious

We have to pull over frequently to let other drivers pass. They usually honk a friendly toot of appreciation while passing — which we took for frustrated venting until we saw smiles. Lots of pullouts are provided for poky campervans like ours, so we don't have to rush.



Later up the mountain, we stopped at Mirror Lake, a popular tour bus stop with a boardwalk. A bellbird sat 3' above our heads and preened, then later started to sing — a loud, series of melodious calls interspersed with "Grakk!" and "Phsst" sounds — which sounded as though they must be coming from a duck-sized bird, not one barely 9" long. Then a fantail flaunted its tail fan overhead, between sorties out into the air to snag insects. Flashing that black and white tail is very

attention-catching and I wonder what purpose it serves.

We are charmed by the ferns no wonder a fern is New Zealand's national symbol! Today we saw an amazing assortment of shapes and sizes, surely 30 or more kinds, plus many types of mosses, mushrooms



orcs could live in these wrathful mountains...

# SAMPLE PAGE 49 from DAY 13

Day 13, May17 ~ I get pecked by a weka, we marvel over Pancake Rocks, then visit a fascinating fur seal colony at Cape Foulwind. Brrrrrr!



Daniel greets the wacky weka

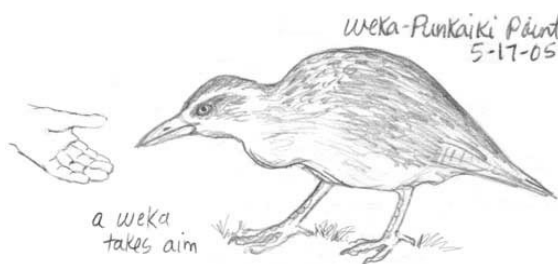
## 11:09am, sitting at a picnic table near Punakaiki Rocks

This morning, as we prepared to leave last night's campsite on the beach, Dan got out a plastic bag to collect previous camper trash (this trash was unusual, as most camping spots we've stayed at have been tidy). Hearing an odd sound, he turned around to discover a weka (a flightless, chicken-sized



the weka stalks Daniel as I stalk the weka

rail) peering at him. As I tiptoed over, it stepped out of the shrubbery and walked directly up to us, eyeing us sternly as we gawked in amazement.



as I remember it — look at those beady eyes!

Suspecting what would happen, but unable to resist, I gingerly held out a finger toward it, muttering an aside to Dan, "It's gonna peck the heck outa my finger..." and sure enough, WHACK! It hurt a bit, but I was really tickled. I've Been Pecked By a Weka in New Zealand! What a kick!

I got out my camera and took some

pictures as it followed Dan around, very inquisitive about the activities.



well, I was movin' backward pretty fast

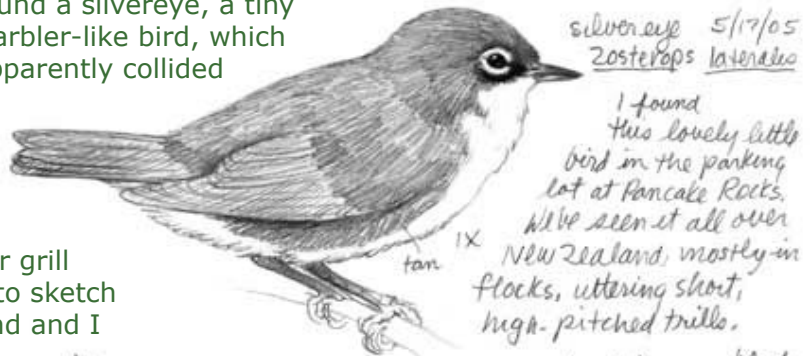
Then I squatted for some ground-level close-ups, only to spring back in alarm as the weka headed for me with glistening, wicked eyes. No WAY, you bloodthirsty beastie ~ my nose is NOT the same willing target that my finger was! About the time we got the place clean, the weka disappeared back into the shrubbery.



Pancake Rocks — quite a scenic wonder

About a kilometre up the road, we stopped at the Information Center at Punakaiki [Pancake] Rocks, and crossed the road for a short walk to quite a geological wonder — layers of rock eroded by wave action for millennia — probably one of New Zealand's most photographed sites.

A few minutes ago in front of the Information Center I found a silvereye, a tiny warbler-like bird, which apparently collided



its mostly greenish yellow with gray shoulders, a black bar below the eye and a sharp white ring around the eye. a pretty little bird, swift and fidgety. The belly is pale yellow and there is a tan patch along the sides of the belly below the wing.

fatally with something — a window, a car grill — who knows? I've tucked it into a bag to sketch later. There are quite a few people around and I don't want to preside at a circus.

These little birds came from Australia in 1856 (according to my bird book) and are quite aggressive (and with such a pretty face, too!).