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Articles

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COVER PHOTO: The sub-Antarctic islands, here illustrated by East Cumberland Bay, South Georgia, host some of the most complex and well developed terrestrial communities found anywhere in the Antarctic. At low altitudes these are characterized by often regionally endemic flowering plants, some of which have evolved into "megaherbs" in the absence of terrestrial grazers larger than microlepidoptera. Marine vertebrates (seals, penguins, seabirds) rely on these islands for breeding and resting areas, providing a major transfer of nutrients from sea to land. At higher altitudes (up to 2-3000 m on South Georgia), conditions become rapidly more extreme, and diversity and community structure increasingly resembles that typical of the Antarctic Peninsula (maritime Antarctic) further to the south (see Convey et al. pp. 203-244). Photo credit: P. Convey.