

**Waikanae Estuary Newsletter
No 66 August 2012**

The Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve is a Nationally Significant Reserve

Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



**No, this isn't the West Coast of the South Island. It's the Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve.
Photograph Roger Smith**

Fishing Lines and the Swan

I had a ring the other morning from Peter the SPCA Inspector. Someone had reported a black swan in distress, entangled in a fishing line. Down to the lagoon I went with some bread to entice the swan out of the water. There are quite a number of swans on the lagoon at the moment. A lot of them will move away in the next month or two as the birds mature and seek out their own territory. The swans swam down the lagoon to where I was spreading bread on the grass. They waddled out of the water and I was able to inspect them closely. They all looked in splendid condition and I couldn't see any problems with nylon fishing lines. I wandered around the lagoons, then off to the river where a young fur seal was exploring. It was wonderful to watch as it swam so effortlessly in the river, spinning round and around, lifting its flippers into the air and scooting through the water. I then continued around the lagoon. There swam the only remaining cygnet from the brood of five that Thomas the goose had looked after. It did have some nylon protruding out of its beak. As I still had a little bread I enticed it out of the water, reached down, picked it up, tucked it under my arm and held its long neck with my other hand, just like bagpipes. Eddie who lives nearby helped me inspect the bird. The nylon happened to be some water plant that had a long thin stem that shone in the sunshine and, hanging from the swan's beak, looked just like nylon. I think this is what had everyone worried. I put the cygnet down and into the water it went, back to its parent. What a good outcome!



The plant the swan had in its beak could have been one of these long stems---Ruppia polycarpa.

Dabchicks

Birders from the South Island wanted to see a dabchick. There are apparently very few dabchicks in the South Island; a couple were reported recently at Takaka. At the moment, we have more dabchicks on the lagoons than I have seen in a long time. They are getting ready to nest if they haven't already. Looking in extremely good condition with their russet chest and white rump, there are pairs on both Waimanu lagoons. When a large mallard duck encroaches on their patch the dabchick will rush over and shift the duck on, by pecking it with their small bill. They are not going to be bullied by anyone even though they are the smallest bird on the lagoons.

Fish By-Pass

When the new fish by-pass is operational it will be interesting to see how this affects the fish life. I would imagine it will change the ecology of the lagoons, with different fish species being able to access and exit the lagoons. I wonder how long it will take the herons to realize the little fishes are coming out of the pipe, and if they stand on it they may be able to get a feed without working for it.

Elusive fern-bird with a long tail



Look at these two photographs taken by Roger Smith. It's no wonder the fern bird was never reported in the reserve before. How it manages to wend its way through the scrub, let alone fly, beats me.

Cockatoo



This cockatoo was quite intrigued to have his photograph taken at the Otaihanga reserve.



Waimanu Lagoon
Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae
Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking

Photograph Mik