

**Waikanae Estuary Newsletter
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Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



Photographs by Mik

A black fronted dotterel nesting at PekaPeka just north of our estuary



I had an e-mail from a guy at Peka Peka to tell me he had a bird he couldn't identify, nesting at the side of his driveway. It is a black-fronted dotterel which, chose to place its nest just at the side of the drive about a meter from the vehicles using it. The bird was first noticed doing the broken wing ploy in front of a car and then its nest was discovered. I went to see it, parked my car with the window down meters away from the nest and until I had it pointed out, couldn't see it. It was so well camouflaged amongst the stones and the brave bird stayed so still. It was sitting on two eggs which again, after it flew off, were really hard to see.

These birds were self introduced from Australia in the 1950s and have spread from the Hawke's Bay area to the Wairarapa and to the top of the South Island. It is good to see them nesting on the Kapiti Coast. They have been documented previously, as having been seen at our estuary reserve.



Photograph Eileen Thomas

brought under some control especially in the reserve here at Waikanae. They are still a huge problem in Otago in the South Island.

Eileen's friend

Looking out of her lounge window Eileen spotted a little wild rabbit having a clover sandwich for breakfast. At the slightest noise it would hop into the near by garden and hide. She was very pleased to think that it might take up residence in her garden here in Waikanae. However, Eileen, I would be careful as before long there may be many more as they tend to breed "just like rabbits". Rabbits were brought into New Zealand by the early settlers to supplement the larder. They soon became a real pest and assumed plague proportions in the Wairarapa and the South Island as well as other places. They have been



Red- billed gull

was the bait was draped around its neck as was the line which also was tangled in its wings. The feathers around the neck were in disarray and were discoloured. We managed to cut the stainless steel hook with a pair of side cutting pliers, thread the barbed end from the bill, untangle the line and let the bird go. After fluffing up its feathers and running along the lawn, it launched itself into the air and flew down to the river, where it preened itself in the water. It looked no worse for its ordeal apart from the damaged feathers around its neck. I have no doubt it would recover.

Red-billed gull in distress

I was out in my car when my wife Moira phoned to tell me of a red-billed gull in distress. A lady had called around to our house to report a gull was at the edge of the lagoon with a fish hook in its beak. We had previously had a couple of phone calls reporting about the same bird. On my way home I diverted to the lagoon, walked its edge and couldn't find it. Later in the day my friend Rod along with his wife Jan and friend Hannah, arrived at my home with the bird wrapped in a jacket. The bird looked dreadful with the hook protruding completely through its beak from one side to the other. The large chunk of decaying meat which

**The true story of Henry the wild black swan and Thomas the white goose documenting their thirty year sojourn on the Waimanu Lagoon at Waikanae New Zealand
Part seven**



Henrietta, Henry and Thomas the goose are sitting on five eggs, having established another nest on the Northern Waimanu lagoon. This lagoon is their lagoon and they like to keep it that way. In addition to the five adolescent cygnets, normally chased off by now when a new nest is established. The lagoon has been invaded by around thirty mature swans and has become a trifle crowded. It has been impossible for the one swan not on the nest to chase off all these interlopers. There are just too many and Thomas the

goose is too good natured towards the cygnets to harass them. So it looks like our swans are going to have to accept the fact that the others are here to stay.

The two mature swans with the two adolescent cygnets –one of which the vet saved --relocated to the top lagoon where Henrietta and Thomas live and had views of establishing a nest there for themselves. They became very aggressive and attacked poor old Henry. Well Henry is getting on for 30 years old and has an injured wing so he couldn't account for himself very well. Three more swans who happened to be on the lagoon helped attack our poor swan. They hopped on top of Henry and tried to drown him by holding his head under the water with the other birds pecking and flapping their wings. It was a real kerfuffle. Eventually Henry managed to extract himself and get away and back to his nest. Thomas the goose was of no use, he didn't help at all, but he did stay with the four, four month old youngsters.



This saga is featured as a serial over the next few months

Hits last month--eleven thousand two hundred and fifty

Now is a good time to order one of my books as a Xmas Present—copies limited

Tour vouchers available

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae

Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking

This is the last Newsletter for 2010 –Moira and I would like to wish you all a merry Christmas and a Happy New Year