



Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve. Photograph Eileen Thomas

Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve is quite unique--being in an urban environment. Scientific reserves are usually miles from anywhere. They can be controlled to a large degree by excluding, cars, dogs, people and fishing, especially when the natural inhabitants are breeding.

However here we are in a built-up area with people fishing and swimming, with school groups of umpteen children running around and kite surfers pounding the surf and heaps of dogs being exercised on the sand spit, not to mention all the cars.

It's a wonderful place for all these activities—Long may they continue!

Now despite all of this, it is a haven for 64 different species of birds, with around 20 different species on show at any one time.

It's because of all these activities that it has become quite unique, because most of these wild birds are used to people, dogs, cars and children and can be seen, up really close. In fact you can get up really close to some quite rare species, despite all these activities. The birds are living in harmony with us humans—let's keep it that way.

Moira and Mik Peryer

The interaction between the species

Last month I told you about the little black shags herding the fishes against the shingle bars in the river, where there was a frenzy of feeding.

I told of the little fishes being so terrified they actually would throw themselves out of the water to get away from the shags and about the herons rushing over to get the fish.

Well it's not only the herons that do this, our little egret has been following the herons on their feeding run as have about four royal spoonbills.

I don't know if this is normal behavior for the spoonbills and the little egret, but if it isn't then they have picked it up pretty quickly.

So here we have four different species interacting one with each other, never mind that the herons don't like our little egret muscling in on their feeding run and try to chase him away.

Royal Spoonbills

We have around twenty four royal spoonbills in our estuary. They love to roost in a fallen tree in the middle of the river, where at times they are joined with around thirty little black shags. Together they make a lovely sight with the black birds contrasting with the white.



Royal Spoonbills and Shags

Our Love Birds

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. However it has been invaded by around thirty mature swans, and along with their five adolescent cygnets –who are normally chased off the lagoon by now, when a new nest is established, it's become a trifle crowded



changing partners

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 young cygnets to harass them, so it looks like they are going to have to accept the fact that the other swans are here to stay.

Waikanae Estuary Restoration

Our care group has been very busy with our planting season being in full swing. We have to date this planting year planted eighteen hundred plants. This sounds a lot however the Estuary is a vast area and the planting is long term.



If you would like to be involved in this worthwhile event please contact our secretary Maureen phone 9024892

Planting



*Waikanae estuary
Painting by Mary Oldham*

Kapiti Bird Tours
Delivering
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Hope you have enjoyed your copy
Of our monthly estuary newsletter

Maura & Mik Laryer