

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter

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<http://www.kapitibirdtours.co.nz/News.htm> partners to Nature Coast Bird Trail www.naturecoastbirdtrail.co.nz

Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001.



Photographs by Gavin Klee

The eels sometime do get away, but not very often.

Fur seal

The eels get the ducklings but the shags get the eels, everyone is eating everyone else within the lagoons. In my newsletter No 49 March 11, I wrote about some teenagers trying to catch the mullet in the Waimanu lagoon. They didn't have much luck and the fish lived to see another day. Well an expert fisher in the form of a young fur seal has slipped into the lagoon and is having a whale of a time. In the photograph it can be seen feasting. I doubt if it will be in any hurry to move on as it has a ready supply of food. A school of mullet have made the lagoon its home for the last few years and when the seal has depleted these it can move on to the many eels, provided the shags haven't eaten them all. I was told by a reliable source that it must be a female as it has a lovely face



Photograph By Mik

People have been worried as they thought it may be trapped in the lagoon. The DOC ranger netted it and lifted it in the net over the roadway to the river and released it. The seal didn't think this was a good idea as he had a captive source of food in the lagoon. It swam to the weir, crossed back over the road, slid into the water back into the lagoon and then onto the large block of concrete beside the outlet where it likes to sun itself. Having found its way through the large pipe under Barrett Drive, it is now terrorising the fish in that segment of the lagoon. When it's tired it has a good hidey hole under a large flax bush where it can't be seen.

Happyfeet the Emperor penguin

Happyfeet is the first known emperor penguin to visit New Zealand in forty-four years, having swum over 3000 kilometres from Antarctica. Having an emperor penguin visit the Kapiti Coast has created a lot of interest both here and over-seas. He was first sighted on the beach at Paraparaumu, and then ended up at Peka Peka beach.



Although the story has been reported widely both here and overseas, I am including it for all of you who are not aware of it.

The penguin was eating sand and twigs, perhaps thinking it was snow and as it wasn't looking very healthy was

photographs Jack Penman transported to Wellington Zoo here it was operated on and the sand flushed out of its stomach. One of our local surgeons then removed the sticks which would never have passed out naturally. The penguin has recovered well, now there is the problem as to what to do next. The bird can't be transported back to Antarctica as it is winter and no one goes down there at this time of the year. Also, it's not known if the bird has picked up any diseases on its three thousand kilometre journey from the frozen south. So, it appears that at the end of the month, it will be taken seven hundred kilometres south of New Zealand to the cooler waters and left to find its own way back to where it belongs. Fitted with a transmitter it will be monitored to see how it fares on its own.



The heaviest snow-fall for many a day on the coast and the whole of New Zealand

Hits this month Twelve Thousand Four Hundred and Twenty Three

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae
Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking