

## Waikanae Estuary Newsletter

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<http://kapitibirdtours.co.nz/>

The Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve is a Nationally Significant Reserve

*Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001*



Photographer Gavin Klee

Not a feather out of place. This white-fronted tern is in splendid condition. Mind you if the birds don't stay in good condition, if they can't keep the food intake coming, if the weather turns bad and they get blown inland and injured – they die. No two ways about it, it is the way of things in the wild.



A Caspian tern, on a mission. These birds are the largest terns on the Estuary Reserve. They can be found usually sitting by themselves, maybe two or three in a group, to one side of the other birds on the sand spit. Conspicuous by their bright red bill. When fishing they hunt by themselves. Whereas the white-fronted terns like to fish in packs chasing the schools of fish together.

Photographer Gavin Klee

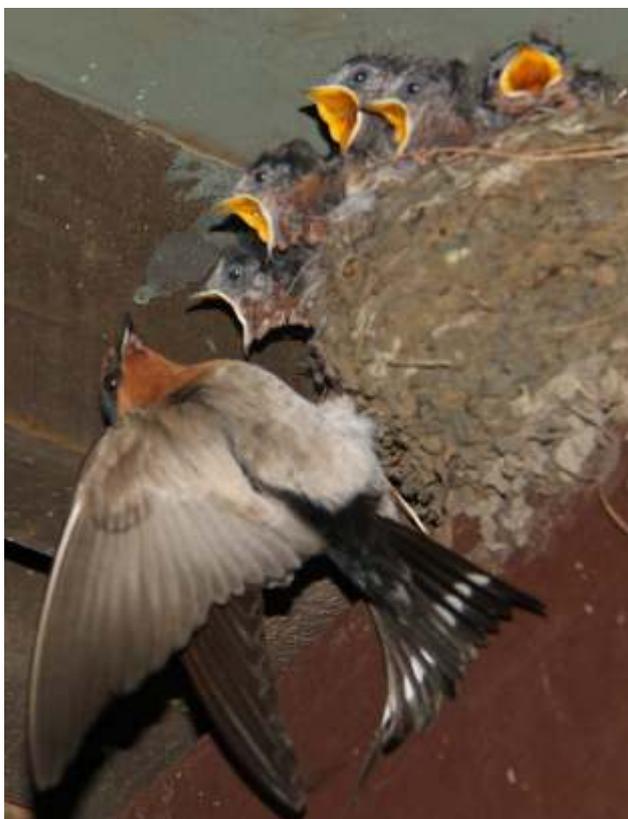
Most people ride their horses – others like to take them for a walk on a lead.





Whilst walking near the lagoons I heard the thump, thump of a swan taking off on the river. When they take off they paddle flat-out and their wings hit the water as they gain speed, hence the thumping. The swan flew up-stream then peeled-off and dropped into the Waimanu lagoon. On the lagoon was a swan with three

**Two swans fighting, with mother swan and three babies looking on.** cygnets. The one on the lagoon must have been the pen with three babies and the one that landed, the cob. It's very hard to distinguish the gender of mature black swans. The cob swam up to the pen and both swans nodded their necks up and down, up and down and talked to each other. There was one other swan on the lagoon, a younger bird and the cob, after greeting its mate, took off, paddling flat out towards it. The other swan saw the cob was intent on chasing, so started to paddle away. They caught up and a fight started. Both swans grabbed each others neck and hung on tight, their wings were belting each other and the water was "boiling". The larger one slowly took over and the younger bird broke away and swam flat-out for the bank, only to be chased and pecked on the backside. The aggressive swan not only pecked it but took successive bites as they swam along. Up to the bank they swam only for the young swan to get caught up in the weed and really get a hiding. Eventually it managed to extricate itself and get away. The mother swan and the babies were very interested in what was going on. I have no doubt this is how the babies learn to become aggressive. Even when quite young the cygnets will chase the ducks away with a peck on the backside if they can catch them.



How many insects does the mother swallow have to catch on the wing to feed these hungry mouths? The nests are usually hung under an overhang of some sort. Under a bridge is usually a good spot. This one is under the rafters on the little hide on the Waimeha Lagoon. I don't know how many times the swallows have tried to raise a family in this spot. The vandals have destroyed their nests many times before, "fingers crossed," they may be lucky this time!

Stop press—the babies have fledged, the nest is empty.

Photographer Roger Smith

**Sixteen Thousand Seven Hundred and Seventy Eight Hits last Month**

*Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae*

Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking