

**Waikanae Estuary Newsletter  
No 61 March 2012**

The Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve is a Nationally Significant Reserve  
*Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001*



**Pied Shags**

**Photograph Roger Smith**

When the young pied shags on the Waimanu Lagoon are ready to leave the nest, they end up in the water below their nesting tree. They swim to the other side where there is a nursery of juvenile shags congregated on the grass bank. They are unafraid when you approach them. At times, they will fly and alight on the little steel footbridge over the lagoon. They like to sit on the top hand rail and will stay there when you



**photograph Eileen Thomas**

slowly make your way across the bridge. You will need to shuffle side ways when you get opposite the birds as there isn't much room. You will pass within inches of a wild bird. I dare to say this would be an experience that would not be shared by many people. They make a great photograph as shown by Roger Smith. In the bottom photograph, a young shag has failed to make it to the top rail and has ended stranded on the second. It has been rocking back and forth trying to get up courage to launch itself across the bridge to the other side top rail. Eventually launch itself it did, with much flapping of wings and made it. When you observe the shags, the ones with the motley chests are the juveniles, the adults have that lovely white breast.

## Roger and the Pied Shag

You would be hard pushed to be able to stroke the throat of a wild bird anywhere. But here at Waikanae it's possible to get up close and personal with some of the inhabitants of our lagoons as they are in an urban environment, living with dogs and people. They get used to living in harmony with everyone. This doesn't happen by accident, Roger has been talking to the shag and getting its confidence and quietly extending his hand until being able to stroke its throat. He has a feeling of having achieved something quite remarkable.



## Fernbird

A fernbird which is a little bigger than a sparrow and has that distinctive long serrated tail has been photographed by Matt Ward the 'Kāpiti Coast District Council Environmental Restoration Officer'. He was collecting native seed at the time of sighting the bird, within the Estuary Reserve. I had been told quite a few months ago that fernbirds could be there. However, this is the first photograph. They don't fly much, preferring to hop through the undergrowth and scamper along the ground. So we now have another to add to the list of birds that reside within the Estuary Reserve.



Photograph Moira Peryer