

## Waikanae Estuary Newsletter

No 59 January 2012

The Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve is a Nationally Significant Reserve.

*Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001*

### Black Swan Cygnet

This young fellow is one of the eight cygnets that were the last swans hatching on the Waimanu lagoon. It was



picked up by Peter McCallum from the SPCA and taken to Craig Shepherd's Rehabilitation Trust as it appeared to be unwell. It is perched on the scales being weighed before Craig [in the background] threads the tube he is holding down the swan's neck into its crop to supplement its feed and give it some extra nourishment. It was returned to its family and greeted by its siblings and parents, then swam across the lagoon with all in tow as though it had never been away.



**Craig Shepherd and Peter McCallum very happy to return the cygnet back to its family after nursing it back to health**

### Welcome Swallows

The welcome swallows are nesting in the Estuary. They nest regularly on the Waimanu lagoon in a secluded spot under a porch where they are quite safe from intruders. On the Waimeha lagoon, on the other hand, where these two birds in the photograph are nesting is another story.



They like to make their nest on the roof beams in the bird hide on the banks of the lagoon. The local idiots, if I can call them

that, find that they can jump up, reach the nests and destroy them. They do this regularly and just as regularly the birds come back to nest.



### Variable Oystercatchers

Not only are the swallows nesting, the variable oystercatchers have babies, with around eight on the sand-spit. It's great that the white-baiters have now left after running their trucks all over the bird's nesting ground. The banded dotterels are now also back on the sand-spit.

## Banded Dotterels

These little fellows are within the Estuary. They are quite hard to see until they run and that is when you can spot them. If you want to photograph them and any of the other birds, the secret is “softly softly” or stop, sit and wait. The bird photographs on this newsletter were taken by Roger Smith doing just that.



## Skylark



The skylarks are singing their heart out. They are very hard to see up high in the sky but their song is just magnificent. The nests are well camouflaged in the long grass or scrub. This one looking at the camera won't go near its nest until all is clear.

## Dabchicks

The dabchicks also have babies, as do the pied and little shags along with the paradise, mallard and shoveler ducks. Most of the bird species either have young, or are expecting. The dabchicks nesting on the Waimeha lagoon have two young. The babies have a mottled face and will travel on parents back given the chance. The parents shown are very busy diving under the water and bring back succulent tucker, back and forth, back and forth endlessly.



**Hits last Month Over Twelve Thousand again.**

*Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae*  
Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking