

**After 30 Years on the Waimanu lagoons at Waikanae New Zealand  
On The 24<sup>th</sup> of February 2009 Henry the black swan died**

**Part 13**

We found him up the creek hidden under a willow branch with his head tucked under his wing. We think old age caught up with him. Thomas the goose and Henrietta were up the creek, where he died, so must be aware of his passing. On the lagoon they look lost without him. We have buried him at the top of the northern Waimanu lagoon on the eastern side. Near where most of his nests were. He had six years on his own--eighteen gay years with Thomas the Goose and six within an eternal



triangle with Henrietta, the new female swan. Until the new swan turned up, Henry had never mated before and at thirty years old is the equivalent of a seventy year old human. The three of them, as Thomas the goose was an integral part of the family, with the baby swans thinking that he was their dad, produced, in the last six years, eighty three eggs, four of which were duds. However sixty eight cygnets survived long enough to fly away.

What a sad day with the breaking up of such an iconic eternal triangle and the passing of such a well- known bird, famous on the Kapiti Coast, New Zealand and Worldwide.

**Goodbye dear Henry with love from San Francisco**

It was October 17<sup>th</sup> 2008, we were to spend the day on Kapiti Island. Those plans were cancelled on us and I was so very disappointed. As with many experiences in life a disappointment might transform into a grand surprise. Meeting Henry and the rest of his family, Thomas, Henrietta and the cygnets, was to be one of those grand surprises. On that gorgeous, sunny day, we found our way to Mik Peryer and the lovely Waikanae Estuary. We were delighted when we came upon the family. Once told their love story, we were enchanted. We knew that we were experiencing something quite unique and special. How fortunate that fate had brought us so far from home and in those particular moments, to such a special place. Knowing that the rest of nature is not available to any one of us, on demand, at any particular moment in time, we knew indeed how fortunate it was to have met this family. For me, It is simply too, too sad to think of a world in which one of the legs of this love triangle is gone forever. However, it seems to me that for those of us who had the privilege of experiencing this love story in person, we will keep within something quite precious for



the rest of our lives. Nature is amazing and whenever humans have the honour to be part of its uniqueness, well, what more could one desire. And so now we must say goodbye to Henry, with love and gratitude. We should thank him and his lovely family for showing us what friendship, family, acceptance and love are in their purest forms, for being a symbol of all that is good in this world

*Sherry Brown-Ryther*

### **An e.mail from San Francisco**

I was going to respond immediately last night after reading your email and the attachment about the passing of Henry. However, I could not. I was so sad that I started to cry and decided to wait until today when I would be better composed. But alas, I find myself tearing up once again. It is just too, too sad to think of a world with one of the legs of the love triangle now gone forever, I knew that when we were with Mik and came upon the family, that we were experiencing something quite unique and special.

*Sherry Brown-Ryther*



**Celebrating Henry's thirty year sojourn at Waikanae**

*Eileen Thomas*

This story has a sequence---What happened to Henrietta and Thomas, how did they take the demise of Henry? See future newsletters for Tom's Story.

### **Hits last Month—**

*Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae*

**More wild birds visit Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve than any other area in the Wellington province**

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