

**Waikanae Estuary Newsletter**  
**No 30 August 2009**

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*Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001*



The bird is a black shag

**Waimanu lagoon**

photograph by Mik

**Eastern Rosella**



The eastern rosella is an Australian import. They have been bred in aviaries throughout the country and released into the wild over time. The population became established in the Wellington area in the nineteen sixties. They have spread northwards along the foothills of the ranges and can be found along the river corridor. Only seldom seen within the estuary proper, they are frequent visitors to Waikanae gardens. Photograph by Ann Smith.

**Harrier Hawk**

The hawk must have been hungry. While walking my dog I saw a harrier sussing out the Waimanu lagoon. It flew with the wind to the far end, then turned and flew into the strong southerly wind and ranged slowly back again, checking out the surrounds of the lagoon. It flew near the scaup, swooping by them, but they appeared to ignore it, not like the other ducks who are very wary and at times will dive under the water if the hawk comes too close. At the river there was one swan and two little shags. The hawk swooped over the shags who immediately dived. It turned and again swooped as the shags popped up; they again dived and the hawk returned and worried the shags for three more times. Then it turned its attention to the one black swan on the river. As it swooped down onto the swan, the swan reared up in the water and beat its wings in the air. The hawk flew in a circle and had another go and the swan again reared up beating its wings. I really can't understand the hawk worrying the swan as there is no contest; the hawk must have got out of the wrong side of the nest that morning.



**Harrier hawk** DOC Photograph

## Fantail

The fantail is flitting around our garden again, hopefully looking for a nesting tree. When we came here fifteen years ago there were no fantails. However, now with more mature shrubs and trees, these birds have proliferated. Doesn't it look beautiful in this photograph, compliments Nga Manu Images.



## Red billed gulls

The red billed gulls have increased in numbers. A month or so ago the numbers of these birds had noticeably reduced within the estuary, so much so, that I made inquiries with DOC as to why this was. The reply I received was that they may have found a new food source. Well things have changed as we now have quite a group of these birds on the river and the lagoons. Two of them have leg bands. One bird has only one leg and has a blue band, while the other has a silver one. They were apparently banded at the Kaikoura Peninsula in the South Island. Feeding the gulls has become a popular pastime during the school holidays. Around thirty birds wait on the nearby roofs of the houses around the lagoons. When the children with adults in tow arrive, there is a feeding frenzy.

## Newsletters

For two and a half years, I have been doing my monthly newsletters and talking on our local Beach FM radio. I really don't quite know where the little stories come from. Every month I say to my wife, Moira, that I haven't any stories to tell this month and then they just come. Living as we do, overlooking the estuary and river does help, also just looking at the birds and asking myself, now what are they doing this or that for, quite often leads to a story. It's lovely to share with others the stories and to paint a monthly word picture of our estuary community for everyone to enjoy. Let's hope that I have been able to make people more aware of the wonders of the Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve, its surrounds and the bountiful wild life that lives there.- Mik



Red billed gulls at our front lawn

photograph by Mik

Sponsored by  
Chris Lee Sharebroking

*Hope you enjoyed our thirtieth monthly newsletter.  
Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae*

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