

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter

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Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



Waikanae Estuary photograph Eileen Thomas

Royal spoonbills

There have been around six royal spoonbills in our estuary for the last few months, however another seven have just flown in, and are feeding up our little creek. It's lovely to see this many within our estuary, although this number can increase to around twenty two at times, with forty birds being the most I have counted on the river.

Tourists

I have been taking more tourists around the estuary this year than at this time last year. I love to get Colin the white-baiter to show them his catch. He tells them that by the time you take the eyes out of the whitebait and gut them there's not much left. Some of them believe him although I tell them that all fishermen are liars except me.

The eels fascinate our tourists, with Trish our eel lady feeding up to fifty at a time. Arthur her husband has made a lovely landing level with the water, and Trish puts the feed on this. The eels sliver over the concrete slab, completely out of the water, and put on a lovely display. Missy the Sidney Silky guard dog with the pink ribbon in her hair chases the ducks away and tries to pinch the feed off the eels.

They had an upset the other weekend with new tenants in the bach next door. They went fishing in the creek and barged in, trying to catch the eels, with their dog helping them. They didn't realize the eels were tame. The outcome was the eels have gone into hiding, except for a couple, who are still on display. It is expected that it may take up to a fortnight for them to recover. A few of them have scars where they have been injured. Trish has been feeding the eels for around six years. She started off sitting beside the creek while the builders were building her house, saw a couple of eels and started to feed them – they told their mates and now she feeds up to fifty of them.

Pied Shags



The young pied shag that ended up in the lagoon, having been blown out of his nest, looks good. He sits on a rock at the side of the lagoon or on a wooden pile in the water and looks very healthy. He is almost full size.

The other shag that was taken to Nga Manu reserve, then to Wellington bird rescue, is back at Nga Manu and is doing well. {See last month's newsletter}

Two more babies have fledged and are on the lagoon, having flown from their nest. They spend their time in the water, diving and swimming then drying their wings at the side of the lagoon, and fly after their parents demanding to be fed.

All the activity of people and dogs walking by doesn't upset them, which is a worry.

It's really good to see the pied shags nesting and fledging in our estuary for the first time.



Little Egret

The little egret has moved on. We haven't seen him for quite a little while; however I managed to get a lovely photograph of him sitting on the little wharf on Waimanu lagoon, from Phil Palmer. I used the photograph as the cover of my newly updated brochure. It looks fabulous, sitting on its legs, which I dare say it doesn't do very often.

Our love birds

Our love-birds, Henry and Henrietta the black swans with Thomas the goose have hatched another six eggs. This makes it sixty nine in the six years since the nice young female swan, now named Henrietta turned up.

When the cygnets hatched and Henrietta moved off the nest onto the lagoon, five of the babies followed, but the last one was a little hesitant. The result was that when they all started swimming across the water this one was left behind.

The two parent swans didn't seem to worry about this straggler, however it upset Thomas the goose and he swam back to the little cygnet and stayed with it till it managed to catch up with the rest. This family is a threesome without doubt.

They now only have five cygnets as one was taken by a large eel. People think this is terrible as the baby swan is so cute and fluffy, however all creatures on or in the estuary have a right to live, but it's the old saying "the survival of the fittest" that prevails.

Newsletter

Our monthly newsletter goes out to around five hundred people which is wonderful. It goes to the UK, America, Canada and Australia, as well as the local and national libraries. I have people wanting to subscribe {at no cost} regularly

What a great way to promote our wonderful Nature Coast



Kite surfing photograph Eileen Thomas

Hope you have enjoyed your copy of our estuary newsletter

Miranda Miskin

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