

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter

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www.kapitibirdtours.co.nz



Waikanae river, just upstream from the Estuary Reserve. Photograph Eileen Thomas.

From the Kapiti Island nature reserve, the Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve to the Tararua mountains, our river is a conduit for our bird-life, from the mountains to the sea.

Our Love Birds

Well we now have another family—Henrietta the female black swan, twenty-eight year old Henry its mate of five years and Thomas the white goose, who has been around for about eighteen years. They, the three of them, as Thomas is very much part of the family, have hatched another five eggs. This makes the score sixty three babies in around five years –bearing in mind that Henry at twenty eight years old, hadn't mated with anyone before the new swan turned up five years ago. He has a deformed wing and can't fly; so would be left on the lagoon by himself with Thomas the goose when the other swans flew away, as they did from time to time.

The black swan cygnets have just hatched and Thomas is checking them out—I don't know of any other wild birds that allow a different species anywhere near their babies.



Photograph Eileen Thomas

Estuary Memorial Signage

About two years ago I was approached by a design student by the name of Kay Batt who wanted to design a sign with birds, as a project for her studies, and needed some inspiration. I gave her some photos and a rough copy of my book.

Three months later I had a gentleman by the name of Bruce Milne ring me as he wanted to put a memorial for his wife down at the lagoon ---she had passed away---- having spent some lovely hours around the Waimanu lagoons.

Bruce had in mind perhaps a seat? I suggested a seat and a sign might be appropriate.

I rang Mike Cardiff, the director of parks and reserves, to sound him out and the outcome was a sign showing the abundant bird life on the lagoons with photos by Eileen Thomas and Colin M. McKenzie and stories from my book “Tales of Waikanae Estuary”.

With a lovely abstract surround designed by Kay Batt depicting Kapiti Island and the birds-----Sally Rodgers of “The 1st Actual Design Co” designed the sign and it was completed by Rob Pollick Signs, with a seat nearby.

In a subtle way the sign is a memorial to not only “Sally” but also to three other people.



John Bycroft whose list of birds is on the sign, was badly injured in a motor bike accident in his early twenties, and his parents set him up in a house in Manly Street, overlooking the estuary, as he had a passion for birds. He studied the estuary birds from his bedroom through his telescope—I acquired his diary when he passed away, about five years ago, in his early thirties.

There is also a small reference to the two gravestones, which are by the little bridge over the lagoon. One belongs to a Margaret Marie Durie, the three year old daughter of one of our early pioneers, Major Durie. He has a street named after him near by—she died in 1848. Right next door is another gravestone belonging to a whaler by the name of William Browne, who drowned at Kapiti a couple of years later.

So not only does it tell about the birdlife, there's a little bit of history there also.

The sign can be viewed on the Southern Lagoon on the Eastern side.

What a lovely memorial to 'Sally' by her husband Bruce.

Goldfinches

We have an influx of the little brightly coloured goldfinch, with groups of around thirty to forty within the estuary. They fly in a jerky motion tightly packed together, twitting as they fly. These birds come and go, one minute they are here, next they have gone.



Photograph David Mudge

Little Egret

Our little egret is still about, having been missing for a few days, he has turned up again. I think he rather likes our estuary –never mind that the other residents don't think much of him-he was feeding on the lagoon next to a little shag which was also feeding. The shag indicated to the egret that this was his patch and the egret moved on.



Kapiti island from the Waikanae estuary scientific reserve Photograph copyright Ralph Bolton

Hope you have enjoyed your copy of our monthly estuary newsletter

Muir & McKelvey Lawyers



I have added another page for your interest

Thought these extracts from the assessors of the Electra 2007 business awards may be of interest.

2007 ELECTRA BUSINESS AWARDS

Assessors Report

Applicant: ...**Kapiti Bird Tours**

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| Leadership The vision – for the love of nature – is so apt for this applicant. |
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| |
| Human Resources There is a significant risk concerning succession, which the applicant is aware of. However, it would be bordering on criminal to not attempt more than is currently undertaken. Whilst the replacement guide will not have the same basis from which to continue the tours (different home etc), and clearly will not inject the same personality into the tours, training the next generation of guides must start now if this community activity is to be sustained. |
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| Overall This applicant is <u>not</u> a business. It is a wonderful, environmentally sound, under-funded, under-publicised, community asset that has evolved from a personal passion. Not only is it unique in the approach taken – birds in the wild – but it is also extremely unique in terms of the character of the two principals. Whilst the low key approach is in accord with the vision and values, this should not prevent it from receiving financial assistance from the community. |

The joys of showing my power-point talk on the estuary birds to the school children are in their response at the time and their wonderful letters.---mik.



