

**Waikanae Estuary Newsletter
No 53 July 2011**

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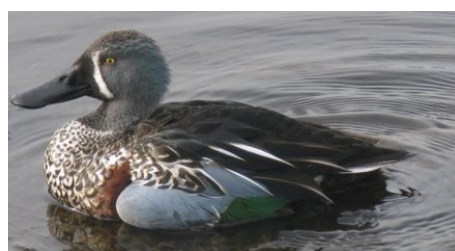


Waikanae Estuary

Photograph by Mik

Australasian Shoveler

This splendid looking shoveler duck was on the Waimanu lagoon the other day just sitting near the bank. I had a ring from one of the neighbours and went down to check it out. It was very lethargic and stayed in the same position, not moving much. I concluded that



it needed help so rang our local SPCA, Peter, their ranger, arrived and we managed to capture it. Peter took it to Craig, an expert 'bird man' in Johnsonville who took it to the Wellington Zoo to their hospital.



Angelina, their Veterinary nurse, xrayed and put on a drip with antibiotics and antifungal medication. It picked up and appears to be on the way to recovery.

An E/Mail from Angelina.

“He was doing very well here at Wellington Zoo so we sent him off to rehab, he was there a few days and started to go down hill, when he was returned to us for treatment he was very lethargic and we were sadly unable to save him. He was a very beautiful bird”

Kahawai



Both paintings by Eric Heath

Mullet



In our newsletter No 51 May 11-- I wrote about the fish in the lagoons that the local teenagers tried to catch. I suggested they may be kahawai. I was told the other day they could also be mullet. They both look similar but the mullet are more at home in the fresh water.

Baby Pied Shag

I had three children arrive at my front door. One had a baby pied shag in her jersey which had fallen out of the nest in the shag tree. Baby shags are fed their food by putting their head down their parent's neck to get to the food regurgitated there. I suggested that the best thing to do was to take it back to the tree and put it underneath it, where the parent shags could hear it crying and go down and feed it. It's very hard, but it's usually for the better to leave these birds where you find them and if they survive so be it. If they don't make it then that is the way of things in the wild. The birds or animals have to survive in their own environment. Having said that I did try and save the shoveler in my early story –perhaps I also should have taken my own advice and left it on the lagoon.



Caspian Tern

We have four Caspian terns on the sand spit. They have made it their home for the last few months. The young one in the photograph was banded by William Cook on the shell bank at Bell Island, Nelson on December 2009. So it has only crossed Cook Strait to our neck of the woods, although capable of long sustained flights across the Pacific to South America.



Photograph –Rob Jackson.

If you wander down the sand spit they can be found to one side of the other birds that roost there, on their own. They range up the river and out to sea and dive from quite high up for their food or wheel and dip down looking.

Tom's Story Part three

With the hatching, Tom stopped being belligerent and followed the three cygnets into the water, to be chased by father swan. Tom persisted, even going onto the bank and following the family from there as they swam in the water. Come what may he was going to be part of the family. When the male swan wasn't looking Tom would hop into the water and swim with the cygnets as the mother swan didn't mind. As the cygnets grew up Tom was able to spend more and more time with them as the parents have started another nest. This would be one of the shortest times between nests on our lagoon, with the cygnets less than three months old, just losing their down and slowly changing into their black overcoats. They can't fly yet, just getting their flight feathers. So Thomas has taken over looking after the babies, he is very attentive and the cygnets have come to accept him as a father figure. This is absolutely marvelous news, twenty one months on his own after Henry's demise and Henrietta taking off with another partner.



This is the last episode of the love story, although Thomas still lives within our estuary lagoons and no doubt will contribute some more stories as life goes on.

Hits last Month ten thousand four hundred and twenty one.

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