

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter

No 40 June 2010

www.kapitibirdtours.co.nz partners to Nature Coast Bird Trail www.naturecoastbirdtrail.co.nz



“Then a whole group of kids arrived with little sailing boats”

The stories I have been documenting these last few years are not only stories of the Waikanae Estuary. Most of the Waikanae birds also live on estuaries throughout the country and it just needs a little imagination and observation for you to create your own nature tales. Take note of what the birds are doing and more importantly why are they doing this or that, there will be a story somewhere.

Shags

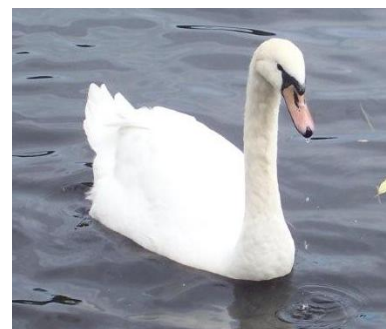


If you look at the shag in the picture you will see it is trying to swallow a fish that is almost too big. There are two black-backed gulls keeping watch in case it doesn't manage to swallow the fish and they may be able to partake in what is left. There won't be any left if the shag does manage to eat it as they don't chew their food. They just swallow it whole. After feeding they like to hop out of the water and onto a log or the river bank to digest the

food and to dry out their wings by spreading them out in the sun. When they decide to fly off they can't fly up up and away as they are a trifle heavy, instead they launch themselves into the air and dip down almost onto the water and use their feet paddling on the water to gain momentum as they flap their wings and gain height.

White Swan

In my story of March 09 I wrote about a lone white swan which had flown into the estuary. It was getting a really hard time from the resident black swan. The men from the Nga Manu Nature Reserve managed to capture it with the help of the black swan, which chased it off the lagoon into their hands. It was undernourished but has settled down well and looks good as you can see from the photograph. The two resident male white swans took a distinct dislike to this new bird. It has established itself on its own lagoon at Nga Manu by itself. It can fly away if it wants to as it has the use of its wings unlike the other two, who have theirs pinioned.



Kingfisher



For the first time we have had a kingfisher visit our front yard. It alighted on our flax bush for a short time, and then away it flew with its swift flight. Kingfishers like to nest in burrows in banks or hollow trees and we have a lovely bank dropping down to the river.

This photograph is from Nga Manu Images Waikanae.

The true story of Henry the wild black swan and Thomas the white goose documenting their thirty year sojourn on the Waimanu Lagoon at Waikanae

New Zealand

Part four

Later Henrietta and Henry the black swans with Thomas the goose had a real upset with their family. One of the seven three months old cygnets has died –with another very sick. The dead bird may have eaten some thing that had poisoned it as there was no indication on its body of any injury, and it had good body weight. The second cygnet was given to Stacey, our wonderful bird lady from the Department of Conservation, who took it to the Vet but nothing could be done. Stacey took it home and crop fed it with a mixture of hulled oats, rolled oats, and bread soaked overnight in water then whizzed in the blender. (Crop feeding involves threading a tube down the bird's neck and into its crop, then squeezing a syringe full of the



food down the tube.) This was done several times each day and after four days the cygnet began to feed itself. We took it back to the Lagoon but were very worried that it might be rejected by the other birds in the family. Not so! They accepted it as if it had never left the brood. In fact, as soon as it hit the water it

was right back into chasing away the pesky ducks that also inhabit the Lagoons. As this brood of cygnets grew up they were led by Henry and Henrietta from the top lagoon, across the roadway to the bottom lagoon for the express purpose of showing them off. And what happened? Some humans arrived and launched a large, smoke-belching rubber dingy which whizzed around the lagoon and dropped buoys all over the place. ***Then a whole group of kids arrived with little sailing boats*** and started sailing from one end to the other. This was simply

too much for our swan family, Henrietta - the only swan who could fly - took off for the river. Thomas the goose then rounded up the cygnets and, with Henry bringing up the rear, swam them back to the northern end of the lagoon, up the bank, across the roadway (thank goodness there were no cars coming), to the safety of their own Lagoon.



This saga is featured as a serial over the next few months

Photographs Eileen Thomas

Hits last Month-10902----Average for four months ----11437

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae

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

Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking