



Eileen Thomas's chocolate box photograph of the Waikanae river

Loafing Ducks



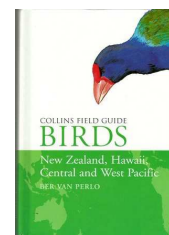
Looking at the photograph, what looks like a little island in the middle of the lagoon is actually a small spot that is sheltered from the breeze. It's like a sheet of glass, with the water surrounding it ruffled by the wind. The ducks find this is to their advantage and can loaf there, quite safely, out in the middle, have a sleep and don't get blown away while snoozing. This is just a natural thing for the birds to do and when the wind is strong they go to the lee side of the lagoon and shelter away from the weather. They always face into the breeze so as not to ruffle their feathers.

Collins Field Guide—Birds of New Zealand, Hawaii, Central and West Pacific.

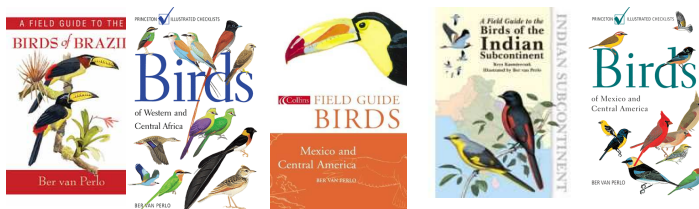
In October 2009 we had a visit from a Dutchman by the name of Ber Van Perlo. He was a keen “birder” and author who told of writing books on birds world wide. I thought no more about it and we went on my estuary wild bird tour as usual although, as he was a keen nature lover, we did spend a little more time on the sand spit.

Through the post I received from Harper Collins Publishers, London, a book “Collins Field Guide, Birds, New Zealand, Hawaii, Central and West Pacific, by Ber Van Perlo”--“With the compliments of the author, who wishes to thank you for all your help and support.” In the acknowledgments within the book, there is reference to Kaikoura, Kapiti Island, Tiritiri Matangi Island and “My guide, Mick Peryer, who showed me round the Waikanae Estuary”

In the eyes of this expert, who has travelled around New Zealand and twenty countries of the Pacific to compile this scientific publication, documenting seven hundred and fifty bird species, -- The Waikanae Estuary is way up there with the best of them. The Waikanae Estuary, next to Kapiti Island, is one of the most significant natural attractions on the Kapiti Coast. Pity it's not recognized more locally and



promoted for the wonderful wildlife haven that it is.



A selection of books by Ber Van Perlo

School Party



Manawatu Home Educators touring the estuary. We started off at the playground at Queens road for morning tea, then to the estuary and around the lagoons. What a great bunch of children and the parents weren't too bad either. When we came to the big shag tree, with its around fifteen nests and up to forty birds roosting. I suggested that when they walk under it, look up at the nests, but keep mouths shut. The birds put on a good display on the tour with around twenty species on show.

White Swan

The white swan that visited our lagoons and was caught with the help of the resident black swan [see newsletter No 25 March 09 and No 40 June 10] settled down quite happily at Nga Manu Nature Reserve. The two resident swans gave it a hard time and it was relocated to a lagoon by itself, where it resided for over six months. The resident swans had their wings pinioned; our swan could fly away if it wanted to. One morning the complex had a power outage. The white swan had taken off for an early morning flight and crashed into the 11,000 volt power lines, cut the power and killed itself. How unlucky can you be and what a sad ending to our tale.



Tom's Story Part Two

When the cygnets hatched, the swans took them up to the top of the lagoon, not letting Thomas anywhere near them. It took another twenty-one months and three more nests, and umpteen babies, with Tom persisting, sitting beside each nest in turn, but again not being allowed near the hatchings. With this last nest towards the end of the hatching period Tom changed his behaviour. He became very aggressive and started to beat the nesting swan up, chasing it off the nest. The swan especially the female, became terrified of him and would quickly move off the nest, leaving the six eggs



exposed to the cold winter weather. She also, was very persistent and would climb back onto the nest from a different side, having great difficulty keeping the eggs warm. The eggs started to hatch, cracking and Tom was keeping mother swan from the nest. To the rescue came the local ladies. With deck chairs to sit on and blankets over their knees, they took turns over two days to keep Thomas away and allowed the swan to incubate the eggs. Because the swans had been chased off the nest so many times, only three eggs hatched.

Belligerent Tom

Tom's story will be featured as a serial over the next few months

Average Hits Last Six Months—Twelve Thousand Two Hundred and Forty Three

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae

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