

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter
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<http://www.kapitibirdtours.co.nz/News.htm> partners to Nature Coast Bird Trail www.naturecoast.co.nz/

Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



View from the little steel bridge looking towards the roadway-the shag tree is on the left just out of the picture.

Laurence's story

Laurence was standing on the little steel bridge at the Northern Waimanu lagoon admiring the pied shags in their tree, the scaup, mallards and dabchicks, along with the three swans on the water. He could hear a black swan coming up behind him from further up the lagoon. Swans make a large "thump, thump, thump" as they power off the water. It's their wings hitting the water until they gain enough height to be above the surface. When a large group of swans take off from a body of water like Lake Wairarapa their noise can be heard right around the perimeter of the lake until they gain enough height and speed to get above the surface. Laurence didn't know if the swan, coming up behind him was going to fly over the bridge or under it. The swan came into view from under the bridge and it looked as though it may lift up and over the roadway to the lower lagoon. However, at the last moment it changed its mind and crash landed into the group of three swans minding their own business in the corner of the lagoon beside the roadway. It was quite comical as Laurence had never seen birds crash into each other before. Mind you neither had I. The birds appeared to have survived without any major injuries and after standing up in the water fluffing up their feathers and flapping their wings, carried on as if nothing had happened.



Australian Coot

For the first time in around seven years we have a coot visiting the Waimanu lagoon. Whilst taking some Japanese tourists across the little steel bridge on the northern lagoon, we spotted one swimming with the mallard ducks. A coot visited the southern lagoons by Manly Street in Paraparaumu about two years ago, but it's a rare visitor to the Waimanu lagoons. Self introduced to New Zealand they are established in the Manawatu and at Virginia Lake at Wanganui, among other places.



Harrier Hawk



The harrier hawk flies silently helped by the shape of its wings. Note the fingers on the tips which make for silent flying. It can glide along and pounce on its prey, before they even know it's about. This photograph was taken on the estuary reserve by David Greaves, an overseas visitor on holiday.

Once upon a time

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 one

The story of Henry, the injured black swan, begins at least 30 years ago ... not long after the Waimanu Lagoons were formed between the Waikanae River Estuary and Waikanae Beach. Black swans have flown over from Australia to New Zealand but they were also introduced as a game bird in the 1860s. At times there



have been up to thirty swans on the lagoons and they would frequently fly away to the South Island or to the Wairarapa lakes, leaving Henry alone on the lagoon as, with a damaged wing, he couldn't fly. Early on before we knew better, someone named the swan Henrietta. After being alone for a number of years, the swan mated up with a white goose which became known as Thomas. So Thomas and "Henrietta" were mates on the lagoon for over eighteen years ... longer than some humans stay together! Thomas the goose was very protective of his "Henrietta". A local resident, Rex, was once walking his Corgi dog, Megan, around the lagoon when Thomas rushed over and grabbed the Corgi by the foot. Megan had never been eaten by a goose before so you can just imagine the squealing! Rex was also a bit scared so they beat a hasty retreat. During Henrietta and Thomas's duo partnership, there were twenty or so geese living on the Waikanae River and they decided to relocate to the lagoons. The 'powers that be' decided that, whilst it had been acceptable for these geese to live on the river, it was not OK for them to pollute the edges of the lagoons. The order went out to get rid of the geese but no one wanted Thomas to go, as "Henrietta" needed him. A plot was hatched and Ethel, who lives nearby, sprayed Thomas with bright red food dye so when the baddies pounced in the middle of the night, they knew which one was Thomas and he was saved. .

This saga will be featured as a serial over the next few months

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