

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter
No 15 May 2008
www.kapitibirdtours.co.nz
Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



Photographer Tim Parks

Waikanae Beach looking south to Paraparaumu

The lagoon in the foreground is the Waimeha. It is surrounded in reserve land and is a wonderful secluded breeding ground for our waterfowl. The middle of this lagoon is very shallow and is an ideal dabbling area for our birds. The next lagoon is the Waimanu; it is bisected by a roadway and has houses backing onto it. It is still a good breeding lagoon, however it is a little busy with dogs and people walking its perimeter. It's because of this activity that the birds get used to people and it's possible to get up quite close to some quite rare species.

The Waikanae river in the background and with the land directly to the south, is the Waikanae estuary scientific reserve. The river is curling to the south and will eventually eat into the sand hills that protect the houses in Paraparaumu. This happens on our west coast rivers as the prevailing wind and currents tend to push the rivers south. Eventually when the Waikanae river gets too close to the houses our regional council will send in the bulldozers and they will cut a channel and straighten the river out, only for it to start the process all over again. It takes about five years for this cycle to happen. The sand spit at the mouth of the river is a great place for our sea birds with a variety of species sharing and roosting together. Around sixty four species of birds visit at times, with at least twenty on display at any one time. There are more species of coastal and aquatic birds visit this area than any other site in the Wellington district. It's on the scientific reserve that our Waikanae estuary care group is planting and restoring the estuary.

Watch out birds here we come



St Patrick's primary school Paraparaumu sussing out Mik's tour of the estuary

We have been busy on the estuary with school children. Inset are some photos of St Patrick's primary school primers, to whom we had previously given a presentation on the wonderful Waikanae birdlife. We then took them to see the estuary, bearing in mind that the birds are wild and don't always cooperate. During our tour we managed to see dabchicks, herons, black-backed gulls, red-billed gulls, scaup, hundreds of



white-fronted terns putting on a good showing, a black swan just hatching its eggs with one cygnet on show along with its un-hatched eggs. We saw the pied shags nesting in the trees along with black shags, little black shags and little shags.

The black swans also put on a show for us with one of the mature swans getting really nasty with a younger bird on the lagoon and chasing it on to the bank then when it went to fly away this large swan flew after it trying to chase it off the lagoon. The children were most intrigued. We also introduced the children to our famous love birds Thomas the goose, who did his show piece of extending his neck and clucking loudly. Henry the cob with his bad wing; he kept hitching it up as he does, as it tends to droop. Then Henrietta did the same as the swan on the other lagoon and chased one of her previous brood all over the lagoon, trying to get it to fly away and make its own way in this world. These lovely children were a delight to show around our estuary lagoons and at the end of the morning I was exhausted, but loved every minute.



Shadows over Waimanu

Hope you have enjoyed your copy of our estuary newsletter

Mira-Mik Bayen

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