

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter
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Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



All is not as tranquil as it seems on the Waimanu lagoon

We have two pair of swans with cygnets. One pair hatched six cygnets and lost one early on and the other younger pair raised five and also lost one. On our lagoon it's uncommon for the swans to lose any of their babies.

As swans are very territorial, having two families on the one lagoon has put a strain on things. The larger swan is very bolshie as can be seen in the photograph. It has been chasing the younger cob around the lagoon and up the bank until it could grab the other by the neck and hang on tight, and then whack him with his wings. However the younger one also grabbed his attacker by the neck and it also hung on and used his wings to fight back.

This went on for about ten minutes and I am not sure who won, however after this photograph was taken, they parted. The younger swan, [that's his partner and babies in the background] waddled over the roadway and onto the lower lagoon. The older aggressive one then swam up the lagoon to where his partner was waiting with their five youngsters and things quieted down once again. The swans are only bullish towards each other, when they have young. If they recognise you they will swim over to say hello, and show off their babies, especially if you have food for them and, as long as you haven't a dog in tow.

The Young and the Restless

It's the time of the year when you would not expect to see many baby birds on the lagoons. But that is not the case.

We have two pairs of black swans with cygnets. One has four and the other has five. We also have dabchicks with young and the royal spoonbills also have babies. Red billed gulls along with the black backed gulls and the scaup all have youngsters, with the large pied shags still nesting in their tree.

We have an influx of around one hundred young paradise ducks, who visit the river in the evening and fly away to graze during the day. The Canada geese visit the estuary with their young birds, also in the evening. They come in late at night and leave early morning.

So all in all, we have quite an influx of young birds, within the Waikanae estuary scientific reserve.



A story which chronicles a charming story of love, companionship and family life.

Birds of a Feather

They found the old swan, gently gone
The willow shading his rest
Beak tucked into his cold wing's fold
Henry lay in his final rest.

Three decades old, this big black bird,
Love found him a curious mate.
A white goose, Thomas, shared his life.
And his estuarine estate.

Other birds came and swam and went
None cut between this pair
Till one day Henry's neck arched up
As great black wings beat the air.

She came down red beak a-flash with fire
Soon sinuous necks entwined
Thomas, chilled, bobbed in their wake
As two swans, hearts aligned.

What Henrietta saw in the old swan's eyes
Was a loyalty ever true
Henry wanted a family, yes
But Thomas was family too.

And so the three enjoined their lives
Rearing scores of cygnets chicks
Companionably swam and spooned and such
But for lovers, time still ticks.

Two birds now, lulled it seems
By cicadas' dull summer buzz
Even a great heart like Henry's dies,
But a great love never does.

Pinky Agnew Feb 2009



Henry



Family bliss



Keep your distance – Waikanae Beach-- Photographer Charles Lloyd

Hope you enjoyed our Twenty-seventh newsletter

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae

www.wgtn.wotzon.com/waikanaebirdtours

More Wild birds visit Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve than any other area in the Wellington Province