



Waikanae Estuary-- Photograph Vishwa Kairvors

Our Love Birds, Henrietta and Henry the two Swans with Thomas the Goose.

Last Month I told of how our birds had an upset by losing one of their cygnets and the other being very sick and how Stacey from the Dept of Conservation saved it –well it recovered and is doing very well –however being only four months old it can't fly away yet and along with its brothers and sisters is getting a really hard time from their parents, who have started yet another nest, sitting on six eggs. The swan not sitting will attack the youngsters and try and chase them over the road to the lower lagoon.

Two mature swans relocated to the top lagoon where Henrietta and Thomas live and had views of establishing a nest there for themselves. They became very aggressive towards our love birds and attacked poor old Henry –well Henry is getting on for 30 years old and has an injured wing so he couldn't account for himself very well –then three more swans who happened to be on the lagoon helped attack our poor swan.

They hopped on top of Henry and tried to drown him by holding his head under the water with the other birds pecking and flapping their wings, it was a real kerfuffle. Eventually Henry managed to extract himself and get away and back to his nest. Thomas the goose was of no use, he didn't help at all, however he did stay with the four, four month old youngsters.

Checking on Henry the next day he seemed to have survived quite OK and both he and Henrietta are still sitting on their six eggs –things have settled down –maybe they look and sound more aggressive than they are.



Pied Shags

The shags in the macrocarpa tree were doing well with babies in the three nests almost as large as the parents.

Here the adult shag is feeding one of the young by regurgitating the food and allowing the youngster to reach into its throat to get it.

Shortly after this photo was taken they were hit with gale force winds which were just too much for four of our around six week old babies.

Pied shags in nest with young

They were blown out of the nest to the base of the tree. One died the other was mauled by a dog and subsequently died and the other was kept at Nga Manu Nature Reserve where the wonderful staff looked after it until they realised it needed more specialised attention and it was forwarded to the Wellington bird Rescue, who now are looking after it with a view of returning it to the wild. This may be quite difficult as they need their parents to teach them how to feed and behave as wild birds do. The fourth youngster is doing very well on the lagoon by itself, with the parent birds still feeding it, however it is very vulnerable as it tends to sleep on the grass verge and has no fear of dogs. Let's hope they don't get him as well.

Godwits

The godwits are now in our estuary with six sighted the other day. They fly 11,000 kilometres non stop from the Arctic to New Zealand. This takes them six to eight days and nights averaging sixty kilometres per hour. The longest over water migration of any bird.

This is the reasons it is so important we all look after our estuary reserve, and why our Waikanae Estuary Care group is restoring the dunes and wetland areas.

It's The Breeding Season--With babies everywhere

Our Swans have young, although they will breed any time of the year if conditions are favourable. The paradise shelducks have a brood along with the mallard ducks, the swallows also have been very busy along with most of the other birds on our estuary either with young or making nests. A mallard duck was taking her brood of fifteen ducklings for a stroll, with them strung out behind her. Bringing up the rear was a cat sneaking along on its belly, intent on having a duckling for dinner. A pair of swallows saw what was going on so proceeded to dive bomb the cat, which froze and hugged the ground even tighter, not moving. The duck with its ducklings managed to move out of harm's way

This is the interplay between the species that always impresses those who witness it.

The Waikanae Estuary Care Group Restoration



This photo on the left is a shot of part of our estuary reserve with the oxbow to the top of the picture.

We haven't done any planting here, apart from being involved with the Waikanae School children on the



Looking upstream over the reserve- photo Tim Parks

One of this years planting nodes -photo Tim Parks

northern bank of the river, where there has been some quite extensive planting carried out by these students.. The photo on the right, with the light-colored weed mats showing is part of our past planting season's planting. As can be seen, it's right on the water's edge, in a very exposed site, with the extent of the proposed subdivision and housing almost encroaching upon it. In the last planting season, just finished, we managed to plant approximately 8000 plants which was quite an achievement, and we have hundreds of plants and seedlings potted up in our shade houses in preparation for next year's planting season.

Every picture tells a story.



Hope you have enjoyed your copy of our estuary newsletter

Moira and Mik Peryer

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