

## Waikanae Estuary Newsletter

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Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



Three lovely birds on Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve

### Whitebaiting

The whitebaiters are back in the river –not catching much in fact they are still counting the fish which is a bad sign.

I had a friend who was white baiting when a flounder took up station within his net, facing out, and when a whitebait swam into the net the flounder ate it. This upset my friend and he tried to catch the flounder which scurried out of the net and away. Shortly it returned, took up station again, and continued to take the whitebait. However this time it was caught and ended up being a whitebait and flounder pie.

### Our famous love birds –an update



*back to the lagoon with Stacey*



*Whoopee ducks to chase*

The family of Henrietta and Henry the black swans with Thomas the goose have had a real upset. One of the five three months old cygnets has died –with another very sick. The dead bird may have eaten some thing that has poisoned it as there was no indication on its body of any injury, and it had good body weight. The second cygnet we gave to our wonderful bird lady from the Department of Conservation-- Stacey- and she took it home and to the Vet --who couldn't do any thing for the bird.

It was wobbly on its feet so Stacey crop fed it with a mixture of hulled oats, rolled oats, and bread soaked overnight in water and whizzed in the blender-- As it wasn't eating on its own, this gave it some substance, and after a day or two it started feed itself-- in all, over three and a half days it was crop fed. This involved threading a tube down its neck and into its crop then squeezing a syringe full of the food down the tube-- ten times. We took it back to the lagoon –very worried that it may be rejected by the other birds in the family –however they accepted it as if it had never left the brood. It

was wonderful to see that it looked as healthy as the others. If you go down to the lagoon the returned bird is identified by some bright red nail polish on its beak and feet.

### Another swan story

A pair of swans, possibly from one of our love-birds' earlier broods had established a nest on the lower Waimanu lagoon and were sitting on five eggs, and had been for around three weeks. A pair of older swans with five cygnets relocated to this lagoon and they weren't having this younger pair raising a family on their newly claimed territory. So they became very aggressive and chased the swan who was sitting on the nest off the eggs and onto the water. The Cob became especially nasty chasing it across the lagoon until it took off and flew to the river, out of harms way. Both young swans were not permitted to come back onto the lagoon and had to abandon their five eggs.

This outcome was for the best because if the young swans had hatched the eggs the cygnets would have been chased all over the lagoon by our new resident swans and they would have maimed or killed them if their parents hadn't been able to relocate them to the river.

It's the survival of the fittest on our Waikanae Estuary Lagoons.

### Pied Shags

The pied shags at long last have a family. If you look very intently or use binoculars the babies can be observed, high up in the macrocarpa tree next to mum in the nest.

This is great news as it's the first time pied shags have been observed nesting in our Waikanae Estuary.

### White eyes

We have had an influx of the little white eyes for the last few weeks.

I will give you a tip—these birds love bananas –and if you hang one on a post or on one of your trees, the birds will soon demolish it. Leave the skin on, as the birds will soon peck through this to get to the centre. If you have tui around they will also eat the banana. It's lovely to watch them so put it up close to your window.



Otaihanga bridge

Photograph Eileen Thomas

Hope you have enjoyed your copy of our estuary newsletter

*Moira and Mik Peryer*

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[www.naturecoastbirdtrail.co.nz](http://www.naturecoastbirdtrail.co.nz)

**PS –We have babies everywhere spring has sprung /**