

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter
No 32 October 2009

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Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



Hi. You, get out of my swimming pool

This large wild black swan made a mistake by powering down and landing in Loma's pool. It is one thing to fly into it for a swim and for a look around and it's another to fly or walk out. The pool is fenced and the swan needs to be able to take a run across the water, flapping its wings faster and faster, using its feet to propel itself until lift-off speed. There's absolutely no way it could do that in this small pool which is completely fenced, with self-closing child and swan proof gates. It couldn't walk out.

Despite all its posturing, hissing, honking, neck-dipping, and wing flaring, Loma eventually got past it to a gate. The blighter headed up the other way instead of out the just opened gate, gave up looking for a way out and slid back into the pool. Then it was left alone and eventually it disappeared through one of the opened gates. There's a stream in her back yard where it may have grown up with Henry and Henrietta and it would have been able to swim along this and then take off back to its normal haunt.

Taking Note

There were six pied shags sitting on the fallen tree in the river. This is a favourite resting place for the shags. Around thirty red-billed gulls were wheeling and diving in the middle of the river. They must have found a food source. Perhaps there was a shoal of whitebait making their way upstream to spawn. This was too much for the shags and off they flew as a bunch, just skimming over the water using their feet to gain traction before diving under the water below where the gulls were feeding. They weren't going to miss a chance of a likely feed. All the birds on the estuary take note of what the rest are up to.

Thomas

The swans have hatched five of the six eggs. After three weeks on the lagoon, one of the five had to be put down as it had a compound fracture of one of its legs. Don't ask me how this happened.

The cygnets were taken up the Waimanu lagoon to where the little creek meanders into it. Here they were hidden away from everyone, including Thomas the goose, who I am sure, thought that when the eggs hatched he may have been allowed to be part of the family. He is looking decidedly miserable on his own, without any babies to look after.

The Skylarks Are Flying On High

They are nesting and are staking out their territory by flying high into the sky and hovering whilst singing their heart out. When they have finished their song they dive down, land away from their nest and walk to it. Sometimes they hover and rotate down, still singing, getting lower and lower until down they go, again, away from their nest, which is hidden on the ground. What a wonderful little bird they are. Compliments to our forefathers, who introduced them to New Zealand, to remind them of the old country.



Skylark at nest with young
Compliments Nga Manu Images

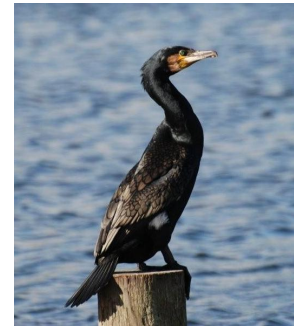
The Shag Tree

It was reported that at the very top of the shag tree, two black shags are nesting. They have decided that if this tree is good enough for the the pied shags to nest in, then it is good



A pair of black shags nesting

enough for us as well. The black shags haven't nested in this area before so it's a first for the estuary, which is pretty exciting. Not only have the black shags started a nest in this tree, the little shags have also started. So we now have three different species of shags nesting within the estuary lagoons.



A handsome black shag

Henry's Memorial

Henry's memorial will be unveiled at the lagoon on Saturday the 14th of November at 1pm. This consists of a large bronze plaque with Pinky Agnew's poem and a ceramic photograph of the family. Councillor Sandra Patton will do the introductions, Mayor Jenny Rowan will officiate, Pinkie will recite her poem and I will tell a short version of Henry's thirty year life on the lagoon. Refreshments will be provided. A guided tour of the lagoon will follow.

All Welcome



The Waimanu lagoon

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