

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter
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Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



Patterns in the sand

White-eyes [Wax-eyes]



The white-eyes are about. If you hang a banana up close to your window you can observe them at close range. They flock in small groups to feed in the long grass, and will as you walk, just keep ahead of you. They also like flitting around the trees in the garden taking the seeds they find there. I last wrote about these birds October last year.

Swans

white-eyes

[the cup holds sweetened water]

with six on Waimeha lagoon. Thomas the goose with Henrietta and Henry our black swan love birds are up the creek, [without a paddle] having got rid of their last brood and have started another nest. It's hidden away behind the children's play area in Queen's road, where the creek meanders through the wetland from the Waimeha lagoon. What has happened is, our love birds have been bullied by the younger swans so have relocated well away from everyone. They have never ever nested away from the two Waimanu lagoons before. It will be interesting to see how they cope with their new cygnets, and where they will take them as the Waimeha lagoon has a family with six babies and the lower Waimanu has a very aggressive pair of swans who have claimed that lagoon as their own and are sitting at the moment.

White-faced Herons

These birds feed treading daintily around the edges of the lagoons and appear to be very timid. However 'ducklings beware' as they have been observed taking a duckling out of the water whilst in a full diving flight.



White-faced heron
photograph Colin M Mckenzie

Flying Ostrich

I know we haven't any ostriches in our estuary, and they can't fly. However after the terrible storm we had a few weeks ago I went up to Shannon to my friend Ross's Tourist complex 'Owlcatraz' to see what I could do to help them. With twenty years of mature trees flattened they were devastated. They have two ostriches appropriately named 'Storm' and 'Windy'. Well Storm the male, was picked up by the hurricane winds tossed up into the air and over the deer fence to the next paddock. Look at the height, first of the bird then of the fence, and it's a heavy bird. It wasn't hurt; however it was traumatized, and ran back and forth along the fence line trying to get back through the fence to its mate. After cutting a large hole in the fence, it took four men three quarters of an hour, to entice it through the hole back into its own paddock.

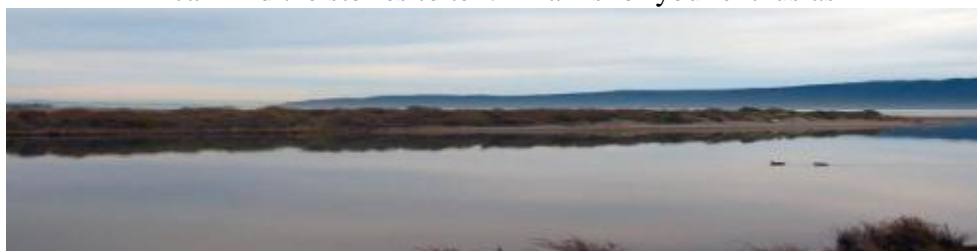


Spotted shag



Last month I talked about the shags and showed photographs of the birds on our estuary which included a picture of a immature spotted shag. Whilst walking around the lagoons I came across a dead one on the bank. It was a mature male in full breeding plumage. We don't know what killed it as it was in beautiful condition, almost the same as the one shown, photographed by Peter Morrison from D.O.C. At the same time I found a lovely fluttering shearwater which had washed up onto the beach. I think the rough weather we have been having was just too much for this bird. I delivered both specimens to Jean Luke, who collects them and identifies most of the birds that die on and around our beach. She forwards them, in the case of the shag, to Te Papa, for their collection. I believe the shearwater may end up at Massey University where d.n.a. samples will be taken. If I find out what killed the spotted shag I will let you know.

Last month I asked for feedback as to whether I should continue with my monthly newsletter--well the response was overwhelming-- so we will continue as long as I can find the stories to tell. Thanks for your enthusiasm--Mik



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Hope you have enjoyed your copy of our monthly newsletter

Mik the Birdman of Waikanae

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