

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter

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The Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve is a Nationally Significant Reserve

Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



Photograph Brendon Doren
Adventure Wellington

Royal spoonbills have taken to roosting with the pied shags on top of the shag tree on the Waimanu Lagoon.

Pecking Order

There is a decided pecking order amongst the birds of the Estuary. Two pied shags were establishing a nest in the shag tree on the northern Waimanu lagoon. One was decidedly larger than the other and they were having an argument over the newly, half built nest, which was high up in the tree. They ended up having a scrap and the big bird grabbed the smaller one with its beak clamped it over the nostril on the beak of the smaller bird and hung on tight. The fight went on for quite a few minutes until the smaller bird collapsed and was released to fall dead, out of the tree and into the water. The larger bird then continued to make its nest. It's the survival of the fittest on the Estuary. There are no prisoners.

Morepork

The estuary isn't the usual haunt for an owl; however, Elaine has one in her back yard. Having a lovely garden that she takes a lot of pride in, she was horrified to find her lovely camellia, out in flower, was being pooped upon. Following the trail backwards and upwards there, much to her surprise, was the culprit. Tucked up tight, high amongst the fronds of her cabbage tree, sound asleep, was a morepork. Owls sleep during the day and come out to feed at night. They are surprisingly compact and have "fingers" on their wings like most birds of prey, so they can fly silently and pounce before anyone is aware they are about. Elaine was both surprised and pleased to have one of these beautiful birds in her garden. Pity about the camellia.

Nga Manu Images



Adventure Wellington

Adventure Wellington arrived with twenty seven people to tour the Estuary the other Sunday. The day dawned beautiful and out came the cameras. After viewing the twenty four species of wild birds, the eels and the fierce guard dog, one hundred and seventy three photographs were posted on their site. A great day was had by all, including guides Barbara and Mik. Moira put on her usual splendid afternoon tea with help from Liz. What a lovely bunch of people! To view the photographs go to www.adventurewellington.co.nz/photos/

Welcome Swallows

The swallows like to nest under bridges or the eaves of houses. See the nest tucked under a porch at the Waimanu Lagoon. Using mud and saliva, they make little mud bricks and round and round they go forming their nest. The inside is lined with feathers very much like an eiderdown. How industrious they are. I wonder how long it takes them from start to finish? Can you imagine how they must have felt on the Waimeha lagoon when having nearly completed their nest some “hoons” came along and broke it down? In this case the birds started to rebuild their nest and again it was destroyed. This time they abandoned the site



Photograph Carl Simons.

Black Swans

The swans are again nesting with a pair hatching seven cygnets on the northern lagoon. These birds have had a very secluded nest with no one realising they were nesting, until they appeared with their brood on the lagoon. Another pair have a nest with seven eggs, on the same lagoon, and, have been sitting for quite a few weeks. They have tucked their nest under a flax bush and it's very hard to find. The first cob is very protective of his babies and confronted the other cob in the middle of the roadway. Cars had to stop and wait until the road was clear. The birds only had one thing in mind and ignored the traffic as they were only intent on each other. With much flapping of wings, hissing and pecking, the fight went on. The pen with the nest made it back and settled down on the eggs. After a while the cobs parted and peace again reigned. The swans also like to establish their pecking order.



Latest brood

Stop Press

It has been verified that there are at least four pairs of fernbirds in the Scientific Reserve. Thomas, the goose, has again mated up with one of his own kind and has a nest by the gravestone, near where he had the last nest. It will be interesting to see if he will be allowed to raise the new brood.



Photograph
Christopher Best

It's not very hard to entice the residents of the lagoons to pose for a photograph
Hits last Month--Eighteen Thousand Six Hundred and Eighty Eight.

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae
Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking