

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter

<http://kapitibirdtours.co.nz/>

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The Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve is a Nationally Significant Reserve

Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



Just as well it was a horrible day with very few people on the beach walking their dogs.

The weather has been shocking with gale force winds, thunder and lightning. Huddled up tight in our houses us, “townies” had no idea what was happening on the local farms. At Te Horo, on a farm, late in the evening, with the flashing lightning and the crashing thunder, the milking cows became terrified and took off. Through the fences they went with the young heifers in pursuit. The heifers didn’t stop, went through the older herd, crashed

through three more fences and onto the roadway.

This was about 8/30 on a Saturday night. You couldn’t see your hand in front of your face, it was so dark. On to the beach raced the heifers, then



eight kilometres later they arrived at the Waikanae Estuary. Carl who voluntarily, does the beach patrol, for the local council, contacted the animal control lady and they managed to herd the exhausted animals into the little isthmus beside the weir. This was where the Care Group had planted about eight months ago. The cows thought this wasn’t a bad place and started to browse, as well as fertilize the plants. Finding a herd in the Estuary Reserve created a problem-where had they come from? Whose were they? A farmer from Otaihanga up-river was contacted, as it was thought that’s where they came from. They weren’t his although he turned up with some hay and fed



them. An ear tag was read and they were traced through this. Kerry the farmer from Te Horo was contacted as it was thought they may have been his stock “No way” he said they are in the middle of the farm miles away from the sea with two large sand-hills and a pine plantation between. Perhaps I had better check-- Goodness they are missing”!

Realizing 42 young cows, 8km from home, could be a problem he called for volunteers and with two farm bikes, five people and a ute off to Waikanae they went. The cows were rounded up and the only way home was the way they had come, along the beach. By this time the tide had come in and with the gale force winds the waves were crashing into the sand hills with very little beach to run them on. The cows followed the farm bike down the beach with another bike in the rear and the ute stopping at all the side roads to keep the herd on the beach.



The wind was creating a lot of foam and out of the foam loomed seals, sheltering from the storm, some with pups. The young cows had never seen a seal before and the seals; had never seen a cow before. There were around eight large seals with pups spread along the beach. The pups took to the water, stopped, and looked back to see who had come pounding along the beach, while the

mature seals stayed put. The cows spooked and ran into the surf, the waves washed the sand away from their hoofs and they slid into the water, all very scary stuff. By this time the heifers had been on the go from 8.30 Saturday night to late Sunday afternoon and were absolutely exhausted; they were walking with their heads drooping.

No bikes are allowed on the beach and an irate lady came rushing down shouting “get those bikes off our beach” and threatened to get the police. Little did she know that a rescue effort was going on. Not only the cows were exhausted, Kerry the farmer and his helpers were also worn out. Down to the local shop he went and 10 pies later the boys were feeling better. What a relief it was, both for the heifers and the farmer when they were ushered into their home paddock. A good outcome, with the local animal control officer “Ani” to be thanked for all the effort she put in to create such a happy ending, and farmer, Kerry for his donation to the Care Group and the free fertilizer and pruning supplied by the heifers.



Home at last and worn out after a day at the beach

Kerry's biggest regret was missing his mate's birthday lunch at the Waimea cafe but said friends were very kind and waved heartily from behind the cafe windows as the animals were herded slowly past!



The heifer's paddock is in the distance behind the trees and the beach is a couple of km this side with another 8km to our Estuary reserve.

Hits last Month—Seventeen Thousand two Hundred and twenty six.

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae
Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking