

The Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve is a Nationally Significant Reserve
Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



Photograph Mik Peryer

Pied Shags

Pied shags have taken over roosting on the tree in the river that the royal spoonbill used. The royal spoonbills have had to make way for these birds as they are now prolific breeders within the Estuary Reserve. The royal spoonbills are still to be seen but don't appear in the large numbers of a year or two ago. Just to make a liar of me, while the Waimanu lagoon was quite low, as the council was draining it to get rid of the weeds and to stop the midges breeding, the royal spoonbills must have told their mates as there were a few of them feeding around the perimeter of the lagoon.

Rescue Effort

I had a ring from a friend telling me about a cygnet with a fish hook in its beak. My wife Moira and I went to the Waimanu Lagoon to look for this bird. I found it with its parents and another cygnet at the top end of the southern lagoon. The hook was visible, embedded in the beak. Not having anything on me to catch this bird, I went to where Eddie and Barbara live, and volunteered their help. We returned with a large towel, sheet, side cutting pliers and some bread. Enticing the swan onto the bank with the bread I chucked the towel over the bird and grabbed it with Eddie's help and held it like bagpipes under my arm.

Barbara held its beak and Eddie managed, with

some difficulty, to twist the hook out. The swan suffered just a little blood on



its beak and was put back down

and into the water, picking up some bread on the way. It appeared no worse for wear.



Photographs Moira Peryer

Black-fronted Dotterels

As you make your way around the southern Waimanu lagoon you may come across a black-fronted dotterel, feeding in the lowered water. It's unusual to have one of these birds in the lagoon, as they are usually found on the sand spit, or on the river flats.

They have a very distinctive orange ring around their eyes [not shown in photograph]. These birds are not common on our coast so it's pleasing to have it visiting. They were blown over from Australia in the 1950s. I first reported on these birds in December 2010, when a pair nested at Peka Peka.

[See newsletter No 46]



Photographs Roger Smith

Dabchicks

The demise of the two dabchicks I reported in my last newsletter has been established as being incorrect! My friend Ian from DOC has informed me that looking at the photograph I sent him of the remains of the two birds showed one webbed foot. I well know and should have picked it up, that dabchicks don't have a full web. So the birds may have been scaup. There are quite a lot of scaup about but very few dabchicks. With the estuary and lagoons being in a built up area with people, dogs and cats, not to mention stoats it is inevitable we will lose some of the inhabitants, but, because it's an urban area the birds do get used to all this activity and they tend to tell each other with loud calls when they see intruders. Now to the good news, my friend Roger has photographed a dabchick on the lagoon with a baby on its back, so we have not only, not lost any, but we have a new family.



Stop Press

At long last I have a new book on the way, with around 80 pages, incorporating some of the stories from my newsletters. I am excited as I am sure it will be very well received. Hopefully it will be available in a couple of months. [Anyone interested?]

Hits last Month—Seventeen thousand Five hundred & Ninety two