

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter

No 65 July 2012

The Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve is a Nationally Significant Reserve

Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



Photograph by Mik

Windblown Weggery Lagoon

Looks like a Michael Hill haircut

The Weggery lagoon is tidal and at times is very shallow. It is where the little pied stilts like to feed and breed at times. Bittern have been known to visit along with the royal spoonbills and the paradise ducks as well as shovelers. It is very sheltered and hard for people and dogs to get into and as a consequence the birds find it a very good refuge. From the seats situated at strategic spots around the lagoon eels can be observed in the water.

Little Black Shags

The little black shags have taken a liking to the Waimanu lagoon. They have been fishing it in their usual way. Not having a shingle bank to herd the fish against, they are having to speed through the water to catch their prey. In the photograph, there are around sixteen little black shags, four black swans, a white-faced heron and a mallard duck. Children love to feed the birds from the little wharf.



Fernbird

It's great that the planting the Waikanae Estuary Care Group is doing is showing such good results throughout the Estuary reserve.

Fern birds have been heard on the Waikanae side of the river for the first time. They weren't seen but when the Care Group was planting beside the river at Waikanae the other weekend they were heard by some very reliable people.

Fur Seal

It's the time of the year when the young fur seals start to leave home and go exploring. We have a youngster in the river at the moment. I hope it doesn't get caught in one of the nets. Seals spot the fish caught in the set nets. As the fish are easy prey, they rush in and get entangled themselves in the net. The only way out, provided they don't drown, is for some kind person to wade in, cut the net and get out of the way before being bitten.

Black Shags



Paul Webb took this photograph early one morning. It's of two black shags fighting over their tucker. One caught a good sized eel and as it tried to swallow it the other keep pulling it out of its beak. Shags swallow their food head first, alive. I am not quite sure what happens when the live eel reaches the shags stomach. In this case they had quite a tussle, with the first bird eventually winning and the other one going hungry. I wonder how long an eel that size sustains the bird? It may not

need any more food for quite a number of days.

Black Swans

The black swans on the lower Waimanu Lagoon are thinking about nesting. The cob is very aggressive towards the younger birds and spends a good proportion of his day chasing them across the lagoon and up the bank. The only problem is that he then swims off after the other birds and the first ones come back onto the lagoon again. It must keep him very fit. The pen isn't nearly as aggressive. I haven't seen where they are thinking of nesting but I am sure it will be very soon. Most of the birds in the area have mated up and are busy looking at nesting. It won't be long before the young appear. This is when they have to be very alert as they are very tasty, especially to the hawks, herons, pukeko, seagulls and eels, who just love the breeding season.

The Waimanu Weir

Look what they are doing to the weir where the Waimanu lagoon empties into the river. Cranes are pounding in piles with loud bangs. I can't believe it but the swans and the shags couldn't care less. Even little dabchicks are swimming in the lagoon right next to the piles and all this noise isn't bothering the birds at all. The finished article will be a state of the art automatic stainless steel weir with a fish by-pass incorporated in it, imported from America. We hope the white-baiters don't spoil things by fishing the by-pass in the name of the "Iwi" as the fish transverse it.



Hits Last-Month Seventeen Thousand Four Hundred and Forty Eight

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae

Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking