

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter

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Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



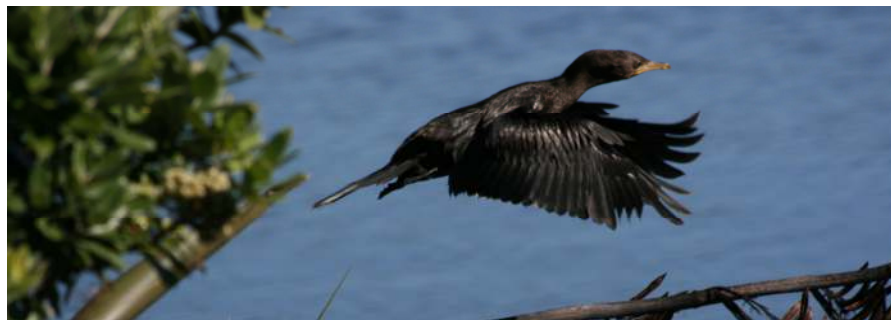
Photograph Eileen Thomas

Moira's birds

Moira my wife has made friends with two red-billed gulls. They sit side by side on our bird feeder during most of the day, waiting to be fed. At times they will walk right up to our window and peer inside as much to say—where is our dinner? We think they are a pair although it's very hard to tell their gender. If another gull happens by, one of the resident birds will screech and posture at it with its beak extended until it flies away. We were having coffee on our outside table on one of those wonderfully rare fine Sundays after a cold southerly spell. Relaxing with a full cup, I felt something brush past. It was one of the gulls, which had flown overhead, taken careful aim and pooped into my coffee. Gratitude for you. Mind you I was lucky as I saw it happen and didn't drink the coffee. Just as well cows can't fly.

Fishing Shag

It's wonderful how all the different species interplay with each other, seemingly getting on together. This isn't quite right as there is a decided pecking order. I saw a little shag fishing the river and this took him right to the shallow edge where three mallard ducks were dabbling. Ignoring the ducks the shag continued to chase his prey between them, almost bumping them out of the way in its quest for food. The ducks then swam away from the shag and continued to do their own thing. The large pied and black shags along with the little black shags like to roost on the fallen tree in the river and don't mind the royal spoonbills also sharing the tree. Most of the time the different species tolerate each other as long as they are not competing for food or are birds of prey.



Little Shag

photograph Jim Harris

A Lucky Tui

Looking out of my lounge window I spotted my dog Meg with a bird in her mouth. It was a tui and it must have hit a window and fallen to the ground to be pounced upon. It's a natural thing for a spaniel to do, being a gun dog also meant she has a soft mouth. Reluctantly, Meg opened her jaws and allowed me to retrieve the bird, which promptly stuck its claws into my little finger. Have you ever looked at a tui's claws? I certainly hadn't. They have a razor sharp point which hurts like anything when stuck into a finger. I released the bird onto an outside table; however it didn't look too flash. So I put it into a box and delivered it to those helpful people at Nga Manu Nature Reserve. Phoning in a couple of days later, I was told it was doing fine and would be released shortly.



Note point of rear claw
Photograph Howard Chamberlain



It wasn't me I did nuffing
Photograph Eileen Thomas

Pamela's Surprise Delivery

Pamela heard a noise outside and upon investigating, low and behold, found a flounder flapping on her rear terrace. She lives near the sea, but not right on it, and a long way from the river. Flounders can't fly and live both in the sea and the river. Not to look a gift horse in the mouth she had it for dinner that evening. What a great provider our estuary is, not only feeding the birds but now delivering fish to the multitudes.

[Don't tell anyone but I have a suspicion it may be undersize]



The Waikanae river cycle and walkway

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae

More wild birds visit Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve than any other area in the Wellington province

Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking