

**Waikanae Estuary Newsletter  
No 73 March 2013**

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

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



Photograph Suzie Mills

Hey big-bird, what are you doing in the surf with us black-backed seagulls? This is our territory. The sea is not the usual haunt for the royal spoonbill so I don't quite know why it is here. Perhaps it has followed the food source down the Waimea stream to the convergence of the fresh water with the salt; also it may have been hungry, so kept going while the food was there.

### **Crab**

Wendy found this lovely sea-shell on the beach, but to her horror it contained a tiny little crab. Not wanting to harm the crab she gave it to me and I deposited it into our fish pond thinking it might do well there. The resident fish thought this was a good idea and the crab lasted about five minutes as the fish feasted on it. Not a good outcome.



### **Geese**

Someone deposited two female domestic geese onto the Waimanu Lagoons. The two ganders Thomas and the other one George thought this was great. Both mated up and the result two years later is a gaggle of around twenty-one geese polluting the surrounds of our lagoon. When they first arrived two years ago Thomas's goose raised four babies and George's two--a week apart. Thomas was chased away by George and was not allowed anywhere near his own babies. Again this year the same thing happened. Tom raised five goslings only to again be chased away. He can be seen to one side of the gaggle, or even at the other end of the lagoon on his own. It is really sad.



Photograph Roger Smith

## The great swan rescue

I had a ring from a lady to report that one of the juvenile black swans had a fish hook and spinner hanging out of its beak. Down to the estuary I went after grabbing some bread to entice the bird out of the water. No sooner had I arrived at the backwater by the weir when Rachel and Tania from the SPCA also turned up. The swan could be seen by itself towards the river side of the weir with its head tucked under its wing. Rachel had brought a large net but our bird was in the middle of the water. I suggested we herd the other



Swan with fishing hook and spinner

five swans resting on the bank of the Waimanu lagoon on the other side of the roadway, across to the side our swan was on, and then it might swim over to them and maybe we could net it.

The five swans didn't think this was a good idea and hissed at us and one whacked me with its wing as they were slowly herded across the roadway to the other bank then down to the water. This worked as the injured swan swam over to its mates.

Rachel tried to net it but it was too quick for her and the net was a trifle small. After a few vain attempts we realised the swan was getting upset so we decided to leave it and come back later when it had settled down. As we started to leave, two swans including our one, swam parallel to the bank along to the entrance to the weir and then around the corner into the large square concrete chamber.

Realising we had them cornered we quickly raced to cut them off. Tania passed along a large sheet and this was stretched across the opening of the chamber to the sea, we had them trapped.

Rachel passed me the net on its large pole but hanging on one-handed so as not to fall and reaching over to net the swan again one handed was a mission. It swam to the far side so a young lad grabbed a large pole and using this, frightened the swan my way. I reached down and netted the bird and tried to lift it out of the water, but one-handed it was too heavy and it tipped out back into the water again. A guy on the other side reached down and grabbed it by the neck but again one handed couldn't handle it.

Both swans made it past the sheet and back onto the backwater out of our reach.

We all came away very disappointed until someone said 'Look, the hook has gone.' So it had, then we wondered if the swan had swallowed it. Back home about one hour later, Tania rang me to say they had found the hook and spinner tangled in the net as they put it away.



. Mik, with the net, and the young lad looking into the chamber at the swan

What a good outcome

***If You tune into 104.7 fm- Access radio – Every -- Sunday at 7pm- Monday at 10am or Wednesday at 1pm you will hear Tales of Waikanae Estuary written and narrated by The birdman of Waikanae –Mik.***

**Hits last Month—Eighteen thousand five hundred and eighty-seven**

***Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae***

**Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking**