



Photograph Eileen Thomas

Thomas the Goose.

Thomas has recovered from his operation [see newsletter No 75 May 13] and has managed to entice one of the female geese out of the gaggle. We suspect it may be the same female he mated with the last two seasons. Like Tom, this goose has not been allowed to go back into the group. We expect them to start another nest any time. As reported previously Tom spends quite a lot of his time at Iris and John's home on the top lagoon. He has been visiting their place for quite a number of years and has come to expect breakfast to be ready when he is. This consists of cat-meat leftovers spread on two slices of slightly damp mixed grain bread and cut into squares, half an apple or banana, a handful of duck pellets, and the same of corn. If his breakfast isn't ready when he is, he will bang on the back door and at times get Iris or John out of bed. After breakfast he settles down on their front lawn which overlooks his lagoon and has a snooze, before making his way back to his girlfriend.

We now have an update on Celine, the injured Canada goose. She is settling down on the lagoons with three other Canadas as company. Her injured wing or rather her amputated wing isn't apparent until she flaps it and then the right one shows up a lot smaller.



Tom & girlfriend Photo by Mik

Sea Birds.

I have pointed out in previous newsletters how the ducks congregate on the lagoons at the spot where the water is like glass with no ruffling of the surface. This is where the birds can safely loaf or snooze as they will not get blown around. It is usually just a small spot, where it is sheltered from the breeze.

Recently just out from the beach beyond the breaker line were hundreds of birds that had rafted up. It looked like they were sooty shearwaters and white-fronted terns. Having found a spot parallel to the beach and not very wide it is probably the same as happened with the ducks. With very little wind or sea movement, the birds could rest without getting blown about. They were spread out in a long line for about a kilometre. Every now and then the terns would lift off and go fishing, diving from high for their food. Funny enough the previous day, I had tourists out and there wasn't a tern to be seen. Sooty shearwaters very seldom come this close to shore. It's when the food is about that the birds turn up.

River.



imported nectar laden plants, especially the gums and bottle-brushes and increasing in numbers because of all this abundant food. It is not only our native plants that feed our birds.

Have you ever seen a kowhai tree in full flower with maybe twenty tuis feeding off it? Or maybe a Monarch butterfly, feeding off a Daphne or even a Japonica flower. These plants are on the south side of our river, and apart from the kowhai are not native species. Tuis and other native birds have been feeding on all these



Photos by Roger Smith



Damsel-flies.

These dainty insects inhabit the reserve –Look at their articulated body it bends at the joints.

Coot.

We have a coot visiting. These birds don't visit very often but now and again turn up on the Waimanu Lagoon. Different species do visit now and then. They don't tend to stay long and as this bird is on its own, it probably will take off to pastures new anytime. It would be nice to see a pair nesting here. Talking about nesting, the ring-necked pheasant has youngsters and they can be seen if you are lucky, darting about in the scrub on the escarpment at the northern side of the river. The swans have a nest on the Waimeha lagoon and we have three cygnets on the Waimanu



Stop Press

Thomas the Goose

Photo by Mik

Thomas the goose was seen swimming in circles, leaning to one side and was discovered to be cold and wet. Peter the SPCA inspector was informed. He was captured and transported to their clinic where he was kept overnight in a warm environment. In the morning he seemed to have perked up and had a good breakfast so was put into an outside pen to recover. Kept over the weekend it was decided he was best in his own environment so he was relocated back to the Waimanu Lagoon.

The ganders in the gaggle of geese on the lagoon didn't think this was a good idea as they had previously been very mean to Thomas. So he was chased away by these nasty birds to be rescued by Iris [of the earlier story]. It soon became apparent, that Thomas who had been blind in one eye for quite a number of years had also lost the sight in the other. So Thomas is blind, which means he can't be left on the lagoons and has gone into care. The alternative is too bad to even contemplate. Craig Shepherd's bird rehabilitation trust at Johnsonville has taken him. Craig will look after Thomas as he sees out his remaining days. What a sad ending to a love story spanning around thirty-five years.

Hits last Month—Twenty three thousand five hundred & twenty two

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae
Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking