



Photograph Mik

Feeding Frenzy

It was a lovely day without a breath of wind. The sea was as calm as a mill pond with just a ripple where the last wave came to shore. Out to sea just off the beach the seagulls were having a feast. There were thousands of birds, including, hundreds of fluttering shearwaters, white-fronted terns, black-backed gulls, red-billed gulls and a few southern skuas. All these birds were strewn along the sea, just out off the breaker line for what must have been a quarter of a mile. There was a frenzy of feeding. The shearwaters were dipping under the water and coming up with little herrings, the terns were diving, even in about six inches of water right on the shore line and also coming up with a herring. Then the skuas would chase the terns until they dropped their fish and catch it on the way down. Skuas are scavengers and like to pinch other bird's catches. Under the water there must have been hundreds of little school fish and I have no doubt kawhai as well as other large fish intent on having their share of the abundant food. This doesn't happen so close to the shore very often and is a spectacle not to be missed.



Photographs Roger Smith

Fluttering shearwater. Southern skuas, intent on having the tern's catch.

The tern looks like a little fighter plane and isn't called the swallow of the sea for nothing, with its swept-back wings and forked tail. The skuas are the bully boys of the ocean.



Photograph Mik

Every picture tells a story



Photograph Roger Smith

Pied shags with the fog that closed Wellington airport in the background.

Shoveler Ducks

There are quite a number of shoveler ducks, just below the outlet to the weir. They are very distinctive with their large spoon-bills, a very fast flying bird that travels the length and breadth of New Zealand. These birds won't come to feed like the mallards, rather stay out in the middle of the lagoon as they feed differently.



Photograph Adam Walding



Photograph Roger Smith

Hérons

The white-faced herons must have had a good breeding season, as there are more of these birds on the Reserve than we have seen for a long time.

My new book is progressing well and should be published early May all going well.

Hits last Month—Twenty thousand six hundred & forty two.

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae

Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking