

**Waikanae Estuary Newsletter**  
**No 89 July 2014**

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

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



Photograph by Liz

**The exotic Birds of Waikanae Estuary [just flown in]**

**Don't tell the birds**

I was taking two English grandparents with their eight-year old granddaughter for a tour. We drove in my vintage car to the Waimeha lagoon to view the birds from the little hide. I drove past 'Helen's Home-stay' and tooted the horn as I always do, as she sends me tourists now and then. The little girl asked why did I toot? I replied that I have a girl-friend living there. We then went to observe the birds and on the way back I tooted again, and said to this girl—"Don't tell my wife Moira that I have a girl-friend will you?". So what happened? When we arrived back home to have refreshments, she couldn't run into the kitchen fast enough to tell Moira "If I tell you something you won't tell Mik I told you will you? He has a girl-friend!"

**Black-billed Gulls on Waikanae Beach**

The black-billed gulls are an infrequent visitor to our area and at times are hard to distinguish from young red-billed gulls. It looks like these two birds have only one leg each or two between them. This is not so, as a lot of the seabirds like to balance on one leg at times, just resting, as they face into the wind. The oystercatcher is another of the species of birds that like to stand on one leg. This is explained by Colin Miskelly, from Te Papa stating "the birds stand on one leg with the other drawn up into their feathers to minimise heat loss, as their legs aren't insulated." So there is a reason for most things.



## Pied Shag.



Look how the young shag gets its meal. Its parent has opened its beak wide and the youngster has inserted its beak deep inside to get to the fish food regurgitated by the parent. If you look at the photograph carefully, the young shag is hanging on to the branch with one foot and flapping its wings for balance. It will have to watch out when it withdraws its head or it may fall out of the tree. This photograph, by Roger Smith, was taken on the Waimanu lagoon at the shag tree. The birds in the shag tree make some hideous noises at times even late at night when more and more of the birds arrive to roost. They are slowly killing the big macrocarpa tree that they have claimed as their own with their acid droppings.

## White Heron

The white heron featured last month was on the south side of the river. I rang Roger Smith, our wildlife photographer. He arrived, saw the bird on the other riverbank, waded with his trousers up around his knees across the river and crawled on his belly towards the bird. The white heron didn't think much of this so it promptly took off. Roger jumped up and got a few flying shots as it flew up the river. After spending a



little time here on our lagoons and river, this iconic bird has now moved on to pastures new and was spotted on the Porirua harbour. Maybe it is making its way slowly back to the West Coast of the South Island where it breeds.

My new book *“Whatever Next –More Tales of Waikanae Estuary”* has now been printed and will be launched at the “Waimea Café” Waikanae Beach on the 20<sup>th</sup> of July 2014. \$29.99 plus postage

**Orders now being taken.**

*Online payments can be made to account*

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*Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae*

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