

## Waikanae Estuary Newsletter

No 92 October 2014

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

The Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve is a Nationally Significant Reserve

*Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001*

### Dabchicks

The dabchicks are looking to nest. Their nests are found on the fringes of the lagoon in the water. These birds can't walk on land like ducks as they don't have webbed feet like other water birds. They have loose webs and feet right at the rear of their body. I was walking the lagoons the other day and a dabchick was feeding under water right next to the bank in quite shallow water beside a



mallard duck. I frightened the mallard, which took off with a flurry of wings. This scared the dabchick and it powered up to the surface of the water and straight into flight in one movement. They have a swift flight often just above the water as they fly from one side of the lagoons to the other and usually fly at night. These birds have a russet chest and white under their wings and can be found on farm ponds as well as the estuary, they are not well known on the South Island lakes.

### Swallows

These swift flying birds come and go on our lagoons. At times they will arrive in large groups and can be seen on the river ducking and diving, this way and that after insects. They can also be seen skimming the lagoons almost with their beak in the water obviously getting their food as it hatches. When these birds take water they again just skim the surface but this time scoop the water into their beaks to quench their thirst. They have a characteristic and erratic flight at higher levels.



Photographs Roger Smith

### Celine the Canada goose

Someone deposited two female domestic geese, [Pilgrim geese], on the lagoons some years ago, much to the pleasure of the two ganders, Thomas and George. Over twenty geese are now frequenting the lagoons. There is one white gander that isn't allowed to integrate into the gaggle and is left to one side by himself, much like Thomas the goose, when he was on the lagoons. If you read newsletter No 77 you will see that Celine the Canada goose was nursed back to health,



although she now can't fly as one of her wings has been amputated. Well, these two birds have taken a fancy to each other and can be seen by themselves away from the other geese, quite happy in each others company.

## Miks New Book

We live in a beautiful part of New Zealand with such a variety of birdlife for all to enjoy. However, it's amazing how many people are not aware of what is in their own backyard! So this new book tells the story of the comings and goings of both the birdlife and the humans who mostly interact in harmony with each other;



Photograph Gavin Klee

Having a young lad approach me, to help save a black-backed seagull, was quite special and sparked a response from a manager at D.O.C. who was thrilled to think a young lad like that was so caring as to try and save, a common 'old black-backed gull'.



Making people aware that the harrier hawk, commonly seen on the country roads sussing out the road kills, has such an important role to play in keeping our estuary in good health.

Photograph Roger Smith

Finding a herd of young cows grazing on the regenerating plants and trees planted over the years by the Waikanae Estuary Care Group, and no one knew from where they came;

Having pied shags nesting where everyone, even people with disabilities, can observe their day-to-day comings and goings, how they build their nests and feed their young.



Living within the area, seals some with pups, like exploring, both the river and lagoons;

Photograph Gavin Klee

Showing how the royal spoonbills can succumb to the ravages of ticks, which a lot of the estuary birds have and how the bio-security scientists became involved to try and find the source of this infestation.



Photograph Roger Smith

Photographs within the book have been provided by a group of local experts with high quality results.

**These are some topics of the stories in my book  
And, the reason I wrote it.**

**With Christmas approaching this book would be an ideal present. It is available from local bookshops or from the author--Mik**

***“Whatever Next --More Tales of Waikanae Estuary”***

**Is now available! e/mail--mick.moiraperyer@paradise.net.nz**

**\$29.99 plus postage local \$1.40 Aus \$2.50 O/Seas \$3.00**

**Online payments can be made to account**

**03-0774-0881067-000 MF or MB Peryer Westpac bank New Zealand**

**Swift code for use by overseas readers WPACNZ2W**

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

**Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking**