

The Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve is a Nationally Significant Reserve

Waikanae Estuary bird tours 9051001



Photograph by Mik

Waimanu Lagoon

Feral Geese

Four years ago, before he became blind, Thomas the goose mated with one of the two geese deposited onto the lagoon by people unknown and had eight young of his own. George the other gander who lived on the lagoon mated with the other, had four babies, and then started looking after Thomas's brood. Thomas wasn't allowed to look after them, after all the years of being a father figure to over eighty cygnets. He was chased to one side and his young ones were brought up by the other geese.

[See newsletters No 75 and 79.]

As a result we now have over thirty geese on the lagoons. The geese will rush over if you approach them with their necks extended, honking, with flapping wings and demanding to be fed. To little children, they are quite frightening, although they are not really aggressive just looking for extra food. The geese are grazers and there is plenty of nourishment in the grass around the lagoons for them to feed on. It's hard to establish which of the geese are Thomas' progeny, but I would venture to suggest that around half must be his descendants. One of the geese has a problem, with a growth on its beak. See photograph by Eileen Thomas. This has been worrying it for a while and the other geese have been quite nasty having chased it out of the gaggle. Caroline



from HUHA Trust [Help You Help Animals] was contacted and with a helper, arrived armed with a net and cage and off to find the goose we went. The gaggle was at the far end of the northern lagoon and the goose we were looking for was off to one side by itself huddled up looking very dejected. Caroline put some bread down and as the goose was hungry, it immediately started to eat. She put the net over it, wrapped it into a towel, tucked it under her arm and back to the van and into a box it went without any trouble. I will report on its progress next month.



Photograph Roger Smith

The above is the result of two resident males and two females deposited on the lagoons over four years ago. Over the last two years the local ranger has taken over one hundred eggs trying to keep the population at a manageable level.

Little Shag Tree



Photograph Roger Smith

The little shags have claimed the tree on the side of the Waimanu lagoon by the weir as their roosting tree. At times they may be joined by the little black shags and a few pied shags. This royal spoonbill decided to roost at the top of the tree next to the little shag, who didn't think that was right. It nodded up and down stretched out its bill in the spoonbill's direction,

fluffed up its feathers, squawked and made itself look very fierce. The spoonbill ignored the shag and after a while they both settled down and the spoonie stayed where it was. It wasn't having a shag half its size bullying it.



Local artist Vanessa Owens was taken on a tour of the estuary and the lagoons to give her inspiration for her paintings on the Kapiti Arts trail 2015. The result is these lovely portraits of a royal spoonbill and a white-faced heron.

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