

Springtime

The weather may be cold and miserable, but our wild-life on the Estuary and the



Waimanu lagoons is starting to look forward to the springtime. On the lagoons the drakes are conspicuous with their colourful breeding plumage, and the ducks are nowhere to be seen, hiding up in the undergrowth nesting. The little scaup are also looking very smart with the drake showing a lovely green around the neck, his bright coloured eye showing and visible while the female cannot be seen.

Shoveler drake in breeding plumage Roger Smith photo.

The swans have been sitting for a few weeks now using the same nesting site as last year on the northern Waimanu lagoon. About eighteen geese from the gaggle that frequent the lagoons, swam under the little foot bridge heading towards where our swan was nesting. The cob not on the nest fluffed up his feathers and swam purposefully towards them. So the eighteen geese swam in line, as they do, to the side of the lagoon and up the bank, with the aggressive swan bringing up the rear, herding them onto the bank away from its mate on the nest.



Look what two year old Ethan Fraser saw on the lagoon.

Dabchicks are busy on both segments of the lagoons. Pied shags in the large pine trees on the lagoon fringes are freshening up their old sites –busy bringing new material from the river, ready for the forth-coming season. Up high in the sky the larks are singing their heart out letting everyone know they are also looking at nesting. The little white eyes are about, flitting around gardens with their swift flight, darting this way and that. White-eyes love bananas, so if you tie one to your bird-feeder they will peck a hole through the skin and you will end up with the black skin with all the fruit taken out of the core. Apparently these birds are prolific within New Zealand being one of our most common birds. Blackbirds and thrushes are also very busy and not at all afraid as they scamper along scavenging for worms and other food. Tuis are back and can be seen chasing each other quite high in the sky with that swooping flight of theirs, if they are not in the kowhai trees, which are just coming into flower. The swallows are here in large numbers, to be seen swooping for their food over the lagoons with that swift flight of theirs.

Everyone is very busy looking forward to the spring time.



Glow-worms.

I was in Otaki the other evening looking at glow-worms on a farm. There is a lovely glow-worm grotto where it's possible to see thousands of these creatures, like stars in the night, attached to a large overhanging damp bank next to a stream. You never know what's around an area until you look.

This shows the glow-worm's spindly thread with the lights suspended.

Erosion

The storms in Wanganui recently have been felt here in Waikanae. The beach is strewn with really large tree stumps as well as large logs, branches and driftwood. With the Whanganui River across the sea from here, we end up with all the rubbish from there. As well there has been a lot of erosion to the sand-hills, with quite a steep bank leading to the beach. Give it a week or two and the beach will be back to its usual beautiful self. A lot of the driftwood and logs will either slowly wash out to sea again, or get covered in the drifting sand.



Flying Home



Do I want to go home?
Oh yes I do!
Do I want to land on the old macrocarpa tree?
Oh yes I do
What is stopping me ?
I feel so free yet I can not land on the old macrocarpa tree
You see it is the wind that is stopping me.
The wind sliding in across the sea is lifting me-stopping me landing on the old macrocarpa tree.

Who am I, you ask, to demand that I land on the old macrocarpa tree?
Well you see, I am a tiring shag who has been to sea and now wants to land on the old macrocarpa tree.

I want to return home for I was born on the old macrocarpa tree.

Trevor Campbell



Photo Roger Smith

It is very gratifying to receive correspondence like this, from America.

*Hello Mick and Moira.
Each issue of the Estuary Newsletter I think, "well he will be challenged to top this one!" And then you do it again. Visually and educationally it belongs in "National Geographic" but it's almost too charming for them. Thank you for again enhancing the quality of our lives with your creativity.--David Ryther*

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Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae
Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking