



Redpoll.

These beautiful little birds are not seen on our estuary very often. This one was photographed at the Pharazyn Reserve, just north of here, by Roger Smith.

Springtime.

Spring has sprung and the babies are about. Ducks have their usual brood of around fifteen ducklings which unfortunately will dwindle down as the days progress, with the



predators --- the pukeko, hawks, herons, and eels really enjoying the springtime. The sky larks are singing on high, letting everyone know that they are also nesting, along with all the other birds on the estuary. Blackbirds, and thrushes, are particularly friendly as they follow you around the garden, looking for worms and other food for their babies.

Roger Smith photograph

Swans

We have a swan sitting on six eggs who also has two cygnets thirteen weeks old and just starting to change colour. They are not ready to fly yet and it's unusual on our lagoons for the parents to start a new nest while their last brood is still around. The pen was on the nest, with the two cygnets lounging beside it. The cob was minding its own business at the top end of the lagoon, when a canada goose landed. Ducks, herons, scaup, shags and feral geese are tolerated but our swan wasn't having a canada goose on his lagoon. With much flapping of wings the cob took off straight at the canada, who also took off ahead of the swan and off the lagoon it went. The cob then swam around the corner and checked out it's mate on the nest.

If you would like to tour the Estuary from your lounge, go to verbal stories.

<http://www.kapitibirdtours.co.nz/tales-of-the-waikanae-estuary/>

The wildlife within the Waimanu Lagoon

What a pig this pied shag is, as the eel it is trying to swallow is almost too big for it. The eel was part way down the birds gullet when another shag flew down to check it out and spooked the first bird, the eel slithered out and away it went, while the two bird squabbled. How lucky can you be! They are the only fish able to swim backwards. Shags have been known to choke and die on eels around this size. The second photo taken by Pam Stapleton in the estuary reserve, shows the very rare endangered bittern, also having a eel for it's lunch. The bittern can be seen in all it's colour in newsletter No 87.



Photograph Roger Smith

The eels have a hard time as the kids like to fish for them, as do the birds--and the mullet in the Waimanu lagoon are fair game for the odd seal that visits now and then. Mullet don't like any form of fish bait and therefore, are very difficult to catch on a fishing line, much to the disappointment of many kids (and their parents!). They can be caught if you are sneaky enough, as seen in the photograph.

"This mullet was caught by Michael, my grandson and myself one day when the river water was pouring into the lagoon due to the fish weir pipe floodgate jamming open with driftwood. The mullet were playing in the current surge, in the pipe entrance on the lagoon side. As you can see, they were quite big, in fact the biggest ones got away as they were too big initially for the butterfly net and then the fish net and flopped out!"

Laurie Petherick



What a good fisherman Michael is, showing his grand-dad how to catch fish!

Hits last Month—Sixty Six thousand two hundred & ninety two

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae
Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking