

The grey warbler is just what it's name suggests. Its beautiful warbling call can be



heard but the bird itself is very small and hard to spot, flitting from branch to branch. If it knows you are there and just when you think you can pinpoint where it is -it stops singing. It is often called the rain-bird as its call can be heard before rain. Cuckoos use the warbler to incubate their young throwing out the hosts eggs and laying their own. The warbler then brings up the young cuckoo as it's own. In England some years ago I was delighted to hear a cuckoo in a thicket, saying cuckoo over and over. Our cuckoos are disappointing, they don't cuckoo at all- their call is a series of sharp chirps with a shrill downward cry at the end .

grey warbler

Photograph Imogen Warren

Hot News

We have been fortunate to be featured in the "Motorhomes Caravans & Destinations Magazine" last month. [Readership 67.000] Gavin Klee supplied a landscape photograph looking up the river with a shot of seven royal spoonbills reflecting in the water along with two kingfishers, one in flight. Jill Malcolm had written very enthusiastically " *The estuary is a scientific reserve one of the jewels of the Kapiti Coast and the wild bird capital of New Zealand. But its not only the birds that are the attraction the estuary itself is a beautiful ever changing part of this fascinating coastline*"

What a good reference for the Kapiti Coast - to be featured full page in a magazine like this.



Cuckoo

Photograph Gavin Klee

The local council have been draining the Waimanu lagoon to kill the weed that tends to choke up the area. This in itself is a good idea as it frees up the channels and stops the midges breeding and the weed from smelling.

Cygnets Consequences

One of the six cygnets followed a juvenile swan away from the parents through the now exposed large pipe under the roadway and made it to the bottom lagoon. This put the cygnet on its own, away from the protection of both its parents. It looked vulnerable- a little pimple on a large sheet of water-just made for a large seagull or a hawk to pluck up and away for its tucker.



That's it in the middle

On this bottom lagoon live more mature swans, along with some younger ones. The mature swans spend a lot of their time beating up the younger ones and chasing them off the water. Our cygnet wasn't aware that these swans could be aggressive and swam up to them quite innocently. I suggest it's because of its size and innocence that the mature swans accepted its presence on their lagoon and left it to its own devices.



Danger

Maybe because the water level was so low and there were no parents to teach it of the dangers that lurk within the lagoons, a large eel took off the cygnets lower leg including its webbed foot. So now the baby had to fend for its self with a stump and one webbed foot; the stump was quite long as it was its lower foot it lost. While on the water it could get along quite well with the stump held high, but on the verges of the lagoon the mud was very thick and our cygnet got stuck with the stump digging into the mud and it didn't have the strength to pull it up. To the rescue came neighbour Warren and freed the bird.

When the council filled the lagoon again- with the dead weed on the edges and the live weed in the middle the food was too deep for the little fellow to reach. Something had to happen! Black swans are a game bird and are the responsibility of Fish & Game; I rang DOC to be put onto Fish & Game who rang SPCA and they came to the rescue. Armed with some bread and a net on a long pole, Merv and Briar arrived and down to the lagoon we went. The swans were very cooperative and came in for the bread, bringing the cygnet with them. Briar netted the bird and the first phrase of the story unfolded. It was decided that the bird should end up at Craig Shepard's Rehabilitation Establishment at Johnsonville. [See newsletter No 104]. If anyone could help this little fellow Craig could. It is hoped eventually a prosthetic foot may be able to be fitted. The problem is that swans do a lot of grazing and are very heavy and use both feet to help propel them along in the water, to get up to lift off speed. We will keep you informed as to the outcome but I feel this little fellow has a very hard row to hoe. The moral of the story is - it pays to stay with your parents.

PS--Unfortunately it didn't make it and succumbed to an infection!

Hits last month—Forty One Thousand Seven Hundred & Seventy Two

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae
Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking