



Photograph Mik Peryer

### **Royal spoonbills**

The royal spoonbills are sheltering from the strong southerly breeze, facing the wind so as not to get their feathers ruffled. I was told quite a few years ago that a lot of the refugees from the very hot African countries had to be told to stand out of the wind as they didn't have to contend with the cold previously - they should have watched the birds!



Photograph Gavin Klee

### **Caspian terns, parent and youngster.**

On the sand-spit the Caspian terns can be found, maybe in a group of perhaps five birds, always standing off to one side of the other gulls by themselves. At times they range up the river diving from a height for their food, or they may be just beyond the breaker line out to sea. These birds come and go. Like most other birds they follow the food from place to place. The smaller white-fronted terns can be found resting on the sand-spit to one side of the Caspian's - in a group of perhaps around one hundred birds. These birds can be distinguished from a distance as they appear to be quite restless and invariably there will be a couple of birds flying up and down within the group. The next day they may be nowhere to be seen, off chasing their food elsewhere.



Photograph Gavin Klee

### **Black - backed gull's convention.**

The estuary is in a urban area and its because people walk their dogs, ride horses and all the children run around, that our estuary wildlife get used to all this activity and are unafraid. So its possible to get up really close to some quite endangered birds, even those on the nest. They all keep a weary eye out and , even if the swans are looking apparently asleep with their head under their wing, you will find a beady eye watching every thing you are doing. In other places, like the large lakes in the Wairarapa, the birdlife are very scary and will take off whenever you approach them.

### **Swans.**

We are into autumn and the evenings are starting to be a little chilly but this doesn't worry the birds. The swans were sitting on eggs, having built a lovely large nest at the northern end of the Waimanu lagoon. The seven eggs hatched at the beginning of April which is going into our winter months. It is not unusual for the swans to nest at this time of the year. Previously, one pair, had nests in the months of January, February, March, May, June, August, September. and October.! They laid 82 eggs - and raised 68 cygnets old enough to fly away, This, over a six year period, almost spans the calendar; it appears if the conditions are right that's when they will nest.



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**Fifty two Thousand five Hundred & ninety nine Hits last month.**

*Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae*

Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking