

PIGEONS

While checking out some goose nests on the eastern side of the little foot bridge on the Waimanu Lagoon I saw a different bird on the far bank. it was very hard to make out what it was, so over the bridge I went to find a young wood pigeon sitting on the bank. The thing that brought it to my attention was how it was reacting towards two large ganders that were on



the bank beside it. The pigeon with a hop and flapping of wings flew at the geese but was careful not to get too close. The geese shied off

to one side then continued to pluck the grass and ignore the pigeon. The bird then took off from the bank swooped really low, almost into the water, to be chased by a large swan that was minding its own business also on the water, then a pied shag stretched out it's long neck towards the pigeon as it flew past. The pigeon with a great effort and flapping of wings managed to just get enough height to clear the far bank and make it into the trees. If it had landed on the water it may have been a different story. This was a very young bird and I wonder if it came from Kapiti Island as it was feeding on the ground when I first saw it and this is typical of Kapiti Island birds. Wood pigeons are not a bird of the estuary and don't visit very often.

This photograph by Colin M McKenzie shows where the bird was first sighted.

Orphie the Peking duck and it's Mallard mate

See last months newsletter

The Mallard in this case is really a grey duck mallard mix. The majority of our so called mallards are. Grey duck drakes do not have the curl in the tail. Our bird has inherited this from his greyer side so to speak. The green patch on his head comes from the mallard side and only occurs in males. It is not as intense as in a pure mallards but enough to show his male gender. Another certain sexing method is the voice. Drakes cannot make a loud quake. More of a whisper or rasping sound. This method of sexing is used commercially on farms a lot. They pull the birds tail and get an instant result. The Peking to me looks like a duck. No curl in the tail and to me just looks like a female. I bred ducks for years and you get to know. If she hasn't already she will give the game away by her loud quaking. Pekings are generally very vocal, especially when food is on offer. They are lovely birds. Because the Peking is really a giant domestic mallard any offspring will be fully fertile. I have seen the crosses in the past. They range from large looking mallards to birds showing white patches. Because the Peking has no grey duck genes the green heads on the male offspring should be nice and green. White 'colouring' is recessive so I doubt that you will get any white ducklings. Contrary to what some people say most Peking ducks make model parents in a natural environment.-----**Malcolm**

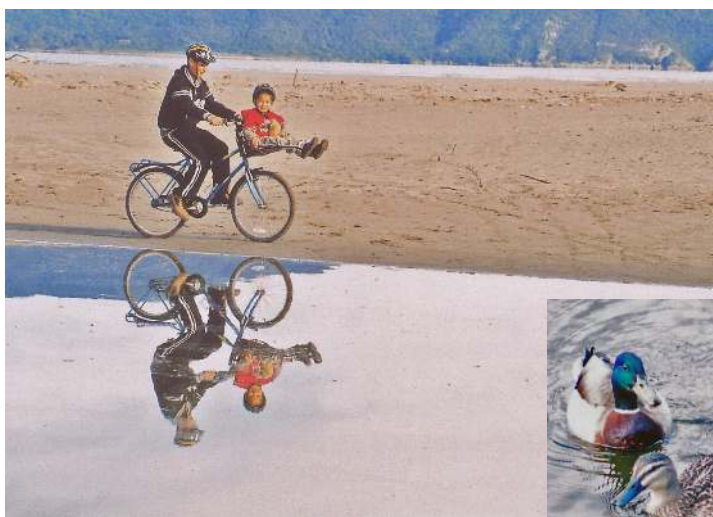


Photograph Annette Fisher

Thomas the Goose

Iris went visiting Thomas the goose at Craig Shepherd's Establishment. Look at the joy she has as she talks and cuddles him. Thomas is in very good health considering his age [at least 35 years old] and the fact he is blind. In the background you can see where he spends a lot of his time during the day, plucking the grass or swimming in the pool with a blind mallard duck as company. Over the years, when he was on the Waikanae Lagoons he spent a lot of time with Iris, even waking her up first thing in the morning ,with his tapping on her back door demanding to be fed.

See newsletter No 79 September 2013



Photographs Colin M Mckenzie

Waikanae Estuary is not all about the birdlife



Look what turned up last week!

Hits last month—Twenty-Five Thousand six Hundred & forty six.

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae

Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking