

Maternal Instinct

Clive decided to feed the birds as he does from time to time. Finding a large crust of bread he deposited it on his front lawn. A pair of blackbirds had been nesting in a nearby bush but were nowhere to be seen. Down fluttered a very young brown bird minus its tail. This was a fledging blackbird just out of the nest: it alighted on top of the bread and started to squawk with its beak open and prance around flapping and fluttering its wings in a circle, still on top of the bread. A couple of sparrows flew down for a feed but could only get some crumbs from around the edges. Next in flew a starling intent on having some bread- the blackbird continued squawking out loud with its beak wide open- so to shut it up the starling started to feed it, putting bread into its wide open beak. The maternal instinct of the starling obviously took over and the blackbird must have



been fed by its parents up till this time. **Blackbird feeding skylark in the nest. NgaManu images**
This is not an isolated case as the photograph shows a blackbird feeding a skylark baby in the nest. The blackbird must have been foraging for food on the ground and came across the skylark nest and thought the baby looked hungry so fed it. The parent skylarks are waiting to one side for the blackbird to finish so that they can also feed it --one very content baby!

Black-fronted dotterel

The iconic black-fronted dotterel has made its home locally and has been nesting. If disturbed will do the broken wing ploy to entice you away from its nest. On the sand-spit the oystercatchers have three young and also do the broken wing ploy, they will also dive-bomb, sneaking up from behind where you can't see them coming.



Photograph Roger Smith

Moreporks



All the birds in the bush were going crook sounding their alert cries. The problem was a morepork roosting on a branch. During the day its no problem, its in the evening that the owl comes to life and the birds had better watch out.

There are more moreporks around than we have seen in a long time. This one was photographed at QE2 park by Roger Smith the other day.



Photograph by Pam Stapleton.

Black swan in distress

With two fish-hooks and a sinker imbedded in its wing this poor swan needed to be caught and rescued from its predicament!

It was sighted on a few occasions but always managed to elude capture as it could swim alright although leaning to one side. The SPCA inspector, Peter, scoured the river and sand spit from one end to the other but still couldn't find it. Eventually I contacted our Waikanae Estuary Care Group as they were doing the last planting and weeding for the year, I asked them to keep an eye out for this bird. Shortly after, Pam from the Care group rang me. She had spotted it on the southern side of the river by the new walkway bridge, in the backwater. The SPCA decided to mount a rescue using their specialised recovery unit squad from Wellington. Gina and three helpers arrived with a four wheel drive ute and a trailer full of rescue gear including an inflatable dingy. Taking them to where I thought the swan was, they launched the dingy and rowed up the little creek looking for the bird, then we spotted it further over in the backwater. Eventually they managed to flush the bird into the reeds and capture it by jumping into the water and throwing a net over it.

The swan was taken to their veterinary surgeon who had to amputate its wing, unfortunately it didn't recover from the operation but at least it is not now suffering. The squad consisted of four volunteers who gave up their Saturday for this rescue effort and they have to be thanked for their dedication.



Up the creek with a paddle.

Hits last month—Twenty-Six Thousand four Hundred & seventy four.

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae
Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking