

Shark Eggcase

Have you ever seen a shark eggcase?

Pam Sinclair found this on our local beach and sent a copy to Te Papa where they identified it as coming from a shark! I never thought of sharks having eggs, However that appears to be the case.



Rob a friend of mine remarked that as a youngster he came across some on another of our local beaches, so they may be more common than thought. In a lot of cases we tend to go blissfully along not seeing half of what nature provides. Around fifty years ago I took a newly arrived English family to the Wairarapa where we stopped by a river and "Chris" took out his camera and started to take photographs. I knew this area intimately and asked what he was photographing. He replied, "look at the beauty of those mountains!" Fifty years ago, as a youngster I never ever noticed them. So from that day to this, I stop now and then and take in the beauty we in New Zealand are surrounded in and can be either too busy or young to even notice.

Stormy Weather



The weather has been shocking with gale force winds and driving rain. The birds survive this by seeking the lea shore of the lagoons and any shelter they can find. Up in the trees the nests have taken a battering with the shags in their tree abandoning them for the safety of the calmer edges of the lagoon, under the bushes at the water's edge. Unfortuallly any babies in the nests have had to stick it out and hope they don't get blown away. Most of the nests and the

babies in them have made it through the storm. I think its because of the nests being impregnated with the parent's dropping acting like glue, adhering to the branches. The Waimeha lagoon has seen an influx of birds, as it's very sheltered and the paradise, mallard and shoveler ducks have flocked in out of the weather; I am not sure where the royal spoonbills sheltered as they are nowhere to be seen.

Scaup



Pam Stapleton took this photograph of a scaup with four ducklings. Sometimes called a black duck these birds with the sun shining on their bodies are very pretty in browns, the males have bright coloured eyes. I wonder how long before she loses some of her brood to the lagoon predators? There are a lot of new arrivals on the estuary lagoons and the fledging youngsters can be seen flying very erratically as they test their new flying skills.

Tourists



I love telling tourists that wherever they come across a black swan anywhere in New Zealand -- if it has a white band across its beak, it's a Waikanae bird. I paint that on their beak when they are cygnets so they can be identified as local birds. Some of them believe me and I have been asked -what sort of paint do I use!

I also tell them that the swallows in the Southern hemisphere are more intelligent than the Northern hemisphere ones as they make their nest up the other way, down here, so their eggs won't fall out.

They also have to be very careful of the snakes, when going through the long grass.

I won't tell you what I call the little humped island at the southern end of Kapiti with the nipple on top. As for what I call the ducks feeding under water, with their bums in the air, I also will leave that for you to work out. They go away having learned something different.

Hits last month—Twenty-five Thousand six Hundred & fifty four.

Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae
Sponsored by Chris Lee Sharebroking