

### Harrier hawk



On her morning walks, Pamela has been getting up close and personal with one of our resident harrier hawks,. It likes to sit on the same spot most mornings, and at first we thought it only had one leg!

#### **Pamela.**

Our old chap is still around, I'm not sure he can make up his mind which is his most dodgy leg. Today he appears to be favouring his left leg; The previous photo I sent he was on his dodgy right leg. He appears very old today, although, if he has been busy rearing the fledgling nearby it's

understandable; parenting is demanding work. The fledgling has been flapping his wings quite a lot and hopping from bush to bush. He is now getting the hang of it and I expect to see him gone soon. I feel so privileged to be a witness to this whole Harrier life cycle at my doorstep.

#### **Pamela again**

I saw two young hawks this morning really flying well with the old hawk chaperoning them. They are away now. They flew off and the parent resumed his or her usual perch on the old telephone pole. Job done.



#### **Photographs Pamela Stapleton**



These birds have been nesting within the estuary in the scrub on the southern side of the river forever.

One of these hawks on his own will lift all the blackbacked gulls off the river, maybe thirty birds. I think that as a group the gulls spook each other, but, one of the gulls on his own will attack a hawk.

## Blackfronted dotterel



Can you make out the Blackfronted dotterel in this photograph by Roger Smith? These birds have flown over from Australia not too many years ago and have been breeding here on the \Kapiti Coast at PekaPeka. Now and again they can be seen feeding in the Waimanu lagoon. This photograph shows why it's so important to keep dogs leashed, as the chicks of most of our shore birds are taught to freeze if there is danger about.

## New Zealand dotterel



Photograph Rodger Smith

There was great excitement when the New Zealand dotterels turned up on the estuary with around six birds present. It was even more exciting when a nest with six eggs was discovered, with two birds taking up residence. However, it was also known that dotterels only lay around three eggs in the one nest. It appears that the two birds are female and they don't appear to be sitting on the eggs. Still it's great to see these birds on the sand spit.

### The years go by.

It's been a good year for the birds on the Estuary reserve with nothing too dramatic to disturb them. The pied shags are building in numbers in their "shag trees". It's good to see the New Zealand dotterels back on the spit with the blackfronted dotterels still managing to nest at Peka Peka. Lets hope this year goes along as well as the last one with people taking on board the leashing of their dogs especially when the birds are breeding.

### Newsletters

I really don't know how long I can keep these newsletters coming as the years go by but somehow the stories just pop out each month. One hundred and thirty one letters with two pages equates to two hundred and sixty two pages which is a book in itself.

**Waikanae Estuary and its birds are getting to be, perhaps, the most documented estuary in New Zealand.**

Hits last month—Forty Thousand six Hundred & seven.

*Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae*

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