



### Little shag with his dinner

Before the pied shags found their shag tree to nest in and before the explosion of the shags population, I used to put my net into the river and catch flounders, of which there was an abundance. However now inevitably, a shag would get caught in the net and if not released in time would drown. With young in their nests this was a terrible outcome, so I now leave the catching of flounders to the birds as seen in the photograph by Roger Smith.

### Kapanui School

I met up with two busloads of school children, around eighty little ones from the Kapanui School. At Weggery drive, we proceeded



to walk to the swing bridge. Going past the Weggery lagoon we were able to see two little pied stilts daintily feeding at the

water's edge, with a couple of pukeko in the scrub. Along the path were a pair of paradise ducks. The children were intrigued to be told that the one with the white head was the female and she didn't believe it was fair that she had a white head, as it was very hard to hide in a nest with a white head. There were mallard ducks on the river and the drake had a nice blue-green head which I told the children, changed colour as the sun shone through its feathers on its neck. Over the bridge we went to where there were two pekin ducks swimming in the river with some mallards. The children were then told of someone dumping eighteen pekin ducks into the Waimanu lagoon and all but one of them dieing as they didn't know how to feed themselves, as they were domestic ducks and had always been feed by their owner. Continuing along the river bank we came to a tree with one little shag sitting on a branch, I told of these shags liking to be by themselves. In the river were two black-backed gulls and in the rough ground to one side was where the harrier hawk had it's nest. Running back and forth from on end of the line of children to the other to tell first one group then another, my stories wore me out, but what a wonderful morning I had had.

## Winter Reflections By Colin M Mckenzie.



### **The joys of showing the latest bunch of cygnets to my great grandson, Nico.**

We slowly walked around the northern Waimanu lagoon to where the eight, two week old cygnets and their two mature parents were sunning themselves and plucking at the grass beside the water's edge.

Out of the blue rushed a young black Labrador dog coming up from behind, rushing straight at the family. I ran over and dived at the dog, with mature swans and cygnets in panicky mode rushing everywhere and for the water. Birds, dog and me in a heap, the babies fighting through the weed to get away from the dog, to the water and the mature swans rearing up and aggressively flapping their wings and advancing! I tried to boot the dog but I became entangled with the weed and was lying flat on my back at the waters edge. I picked up one cygnet that had somehow ended up on its back with it's feet kicking in the air and on my knees managed to get it to the water just as the parent bird came at me with flapping wings.. At this stage the dog realizing it was in a situation it had best get out off, ran to one side to it's owner, who happened to be a young girl with her sister who were on their bikes, taking a ride around the lagoons with the dog running beside them. I can tell you she got the message from me in no uncertain terms to put her bloody dog on a lead and control it. I also was in a situation it best to get out of and with the help of my son who was with us managed to get to my feet and away from the very aggressive defending swans.



I checked up on the family the next day and unbelievably all the cygnets and the parents got away without any apparent damage.

The dog a lovely young Labrador is not the culprit in this episode its the handler! Dogs, especially a gun dog, will attack anything that moves and its up to their handlers to control them. Keep your dog on a lead!

**Fifteen Thousand Nine Hundred & Fourty Hits last month.**

*Mik Peryer the Birdman of Waikanae*

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