



Photograph Eileen Thomas

Waimanu Lagoon



Bruce's photos is of an aggressive cob exerting his authority over a pesky puke.



The pukeko have slowly crept into the Waimanu Lagoons much to the disgust of the local inhabitants. They are a lovely looking, character of a bird but they do have some bad habits. They like taking eggs, young ducklings or even checking out newly planted gardens and demolishing the plants. When nesting sometimes they pool their resources and have a communal nest.

White-baiting

The white-baiting has finished for the year so our estuary can get back to normal. The sand-spit was out of bounds to the vehicles for the first time. This has helped those endangered birds that use the spit as their nesting place. The spit looks as though there is nothing much happening, however, the birds that nest there, apart from the large black oyster-catchers, are camouflaged. The average person could walk past the little nesting birds without knowing they were there.



Christmas is a coming.

My books are available in our local book shops "The Bookshelf " here at Waikanae "Paper Plus " at Coastlands, "Harrison's garden centre" or direct from me.

What a good Christmas presents they are!

Precise Print have given me the banner shown to help show off our wonderful Waikanae Estuary.

Breeding Season.

Most all the birds are breeding, either sitting on eggs or protecting their young, The estuary is very unforgiving at this time of the year. The most prominent birds are the ducks, the mallard, the shoveler and scaup. These birds can be seen on the lagoons with the little ducklings scurrying across the water trying to keep up with their parents and taking notice of their new surroundings. Along come the predators the large black-backed gulls, harrier hawks, white faced herons and any of the other larger birds that get the opportunity- and the little ducklings become their tucker.

On the sand-spit the New Zealand dotterels are once again nesting for the second season in a row, as are the banded dotterels. And you had better watch out for the oyster-catchers as they are very protective of their patch and will fly at you, then

whack you on the back as they fly past, if you go near their nest.

The stoats will plunder the nests, taking the parents as well as the eggs, given the chance. Trapping does take place within the estuary to reduce this from happening. The pied shags in their shag tree have young, almost all year long. They can be seen in their nests waiting for the food to arrive with their parents, from that great larder, the ocean, this side of Kapiti Island. The birds have a roadway from the shag tree to the sea down the middle of the lagoon.

Frogs

Frogs are croaking within the lagoons, it's that time of the year. Frogs are not nearly as plentiful as they were when I was a kid. I can remember going frogging in a local pond and my dog catching one, unfortunately when breathing, the dog blew the frog up in size I can't remember if it survived or not. There were plenty of eels in the pond and we would feel through the mud, wading in the water, then reach down with our feet to feel for them, then catch them with our hands, only to let them go again. so we made our own fun, then would make our way back home to get hosed down. Mum would have tea ready and as soon as dad came home from work we would all sit around the table and relate our day. There was no television or cell phones in those days, slightly different to today's families.

