

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter No 159 May 2020

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Waikanae the wild-bird Capital; of New Zealand.



Its very hard to tell which are the wild birds!

Changes

A couple of things have happened in the last few years. The first is the pukeko invading the Mairangi Lagoons where a year or two ago there were none in the lagoons - just a few on the northern side of the river. The second thing that has happened is that the Canada geese are using the lagoons as a stop off point having some rest and recreation between feeding in the farmers fields or the open grass paddocks. The geese flock up in quite large mobs and usually keep to the river. I wonder what has changed? Has the river changed? Has the build-up of shingle changed the geese's habits? It's a bit like "Why have the little black hags taken to hunting the lagoons where a few years ago they didn't?" Its because the dynamics of the lagoon have changed in their favour, with the fish bypass obviously letting fish into the lagoons for them to feast upon.

Canada Geese



The

lee

shore.

We had a terrible storm with very high winds. Most of the shags in the shag tree took off for more sheltered water and the young ones in the nests hunkered down and squatted as low as possible. The older birds still in the tree, clung to the swinging branches for dear life and also squatted as low as possible, facing into the wind, clinging to the branches with clenched feet.

The little black shags had been fishing the lagoons as usual, in their packs of over twenty birds. They had also been roosting in the shag tree, but found it more prudent to find a more sheltered spot. The photograph shows where they ended up, sheltering from the very high gale force winds along with the red-billed gulls just over the bank, where the wind whistles over the top. It's easy to tell which way the wind was blowing by looking at the birds.

It's very apparent when the ducks are resting on the water and the wind isn't too strong where the birds end up. If you watch the surface of the water you will see where there are spots within the surface that are smooth or not so rippled maybe to one side. This is where the birds like to rest up, they can peacefully go to sleep knowing that the wind is not going to blow them around.

Yaba Daba doo The delightful French couple Erwan & Chloe are heading **HOME!**



After being caught in the shut-down at the Waikanae river mouth, the young French couple moved to the car park by the boating club and stuck in their small van motor home for the month - can you imagine it! What a honeymoon! A lot of people took pity on them. Over a little time I gave them a copy of most of my books, six in all, to remind them of their fabulous trip, halfway around the world to the Waikanae car-park.

A nice gesture.

The French flag, with thank you notes on it.

Hi Mik !!

Very happy to read from you

We are actually just arrive in auckland, we gave back the van to the owner and wait for our flight tomorrow morning at 11am.

It was very hard for us to leave waikanae, all the People have been so lovely with us and the place is really beautiful.

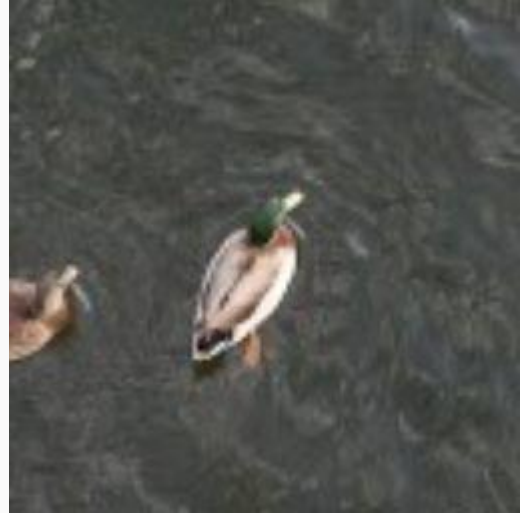
But every good thing come to a end and at least we were very lucky to be stuck here.

We will be in France on sunday at 9am, or at 7pm in New Zealand

read" you later

Erwan and Chloé

Look at me



The breeding season is a little way away, however, the drakes are getting their breeding plumage, as shown by the mallard and shoveler ducks. Our swans have a lovely large nest with seven eggs, near the little foot bridge on the Northern lagoon.