

Waikanae Estuary Newsletter No 162 July 2020

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Waikanae the wild bird Capital of New Zealand

Janine's Story



Going back to my last newsletter, I told of the death of the male swan just as its mate was hatching their brood of seven eggs. Well as a single mum, she hatched five on the first day and two the next, one didn't survive on the nest and she lost one the first day on the water so she was down to five. Around a week later, Janine, who has taken it upon herself to be the unofficial ranger and protector of our wildlife on the lagoons, found one of the cygnets with an injured leg and took it to Craig's Rehabilitation Establishment in Johnsonville. She was now down to four! Friday about a week later Carrie who lives nearby noticed our mum swan in distress in the middle of the road by a culvert. Her cygnets had disappeared down the drain. The only thing to do when in distress is ring for the fire brigade which Carrie dually did. By this time half of the Waikanae ladies who live around the lagoons, were helping with the rescue or giving advice, as ladies do! Pauline, another local, and Carrie, lifted the grate with the help of a crowbar and Janine tried to catch the cygnets. Mother swan was very distressed and headed back into the Southern lagoon by the pipe entrance and started to call her babies. Eventually they followed her calls and got out. This is when the fire brigade arrived, Janine got them to shine a torch to see if the third cygnet was there as only two had come out, but it was presumed they had lost it the previous night

There are two dominate swans on the lagoons that have been giving our mother swan and her cygnets a really hard time, attacking her and trying to kill the cygnets. Nature is tough! The cygnets were one month old on the twentieth of June so every day they get stronger. Would you believe it! a little miracle happened and Janine found the lost cygnet, which had spent three nights by itself on the lagoon opposite her place. She kept it over night then took it to Craig's where it was reunited with it's

sibling with the broken leg! Hopefully they will get to come back as they recover and are able to look after themselves. Over night the mother swan lost another cygnet so is down to two, with two in care at Craig's.



This is Craig's Bird rehabilitation Trust with a stream out the back with a lovely lawn running down to it where hundreds of ducks and other birds congregate. Off to one side of the house are his hospital sheds where he helps to rehabilitate any sick or injured birds. This is where a lot of our injured birds end up before they are returned back to where they lived or were born, on the estuary lagoons.

Grey Teal



This little fellow was sent to Craig's from Nga Manu Nature Reserve, quite sometime ago. Was in poor health and needed some tender loving care, which it dually got. When Janine was delivering the cygnets from the above story, she told Craig that we have quite a number of grey teal on our lagoons, so she bought it back and it has settled well with the other teal. Janine has become a real treasure around the lagoons.

Swans

The aggressive pair of swans that have been hassling our swans with the young cygnet from the above story, have settled down starting a nest of their own just north of the shoreline on the same side where they have nested before. This gives an understanding as to why they were so aggressive to the other swans, they were establishing their patch and nesting spot.

Goldfinches

There are an abundance of goldfinches at the moment! They can be seen sometimes on the side of the road as the pohutukawa seed has been carpeting the ground and goldfinches and the other little birds just love the seed which can be seen as a red mat on the ground.

Swallows and Fantails

These birds can be seen around the river verges or the river itself but also love to duck and live along the sand hills off the beach. They don't do this for the love of flying, they are chasing the insects that live in the area. The fantails have proliferated this breeding season with these lovely little birds flitting everywhere. When you walk near the bush, they appear very friendly however, they are not silly and are after the insects you disturb.