



Photograph by Dr Jacqueline Cummings

One little shag making sure the pied shags keep to their separation.



Photograph Laurie Petherick

The red billed gulls are sticking strictly to their pecking distance from one another.



Swans

Our swans are again nesting in the Waimanu lagoons. This time on the western bank - which they have never done before! I don't know why they have never nested on this side of the lagoons but it may have something to do with the eastern side getting more sun. However they have picked a lovely sheltered spot this time, tucked under the overhanging branches and surrounded

with tussock.

People by and large are a little afraid of these birds, but they don't need to be, as having been raised on the lagoons they are used to dogs and people and will come rushing over to you if they think you have food for them. If you hold the food in your open hand they will pluck it off without devouring your hand or fingers, *hopefully*.

Having been sitting on the nest and its mate indicating "its my turn to sit on the eggs" the sitting swan slid off the nest and waddled over to "Janine" who feeds them regularly, again out of her hand. We are very lucky to be able to observe these large birds first hand from the time they mate, form their nest and incubate their young! Also to watch the bird not on the nest protecting its patch- paddling flat-out at any other swan that dares to invade and if it can catch it, giving it a real hiding. If you notice a swan with a quite large mark at the base of its neck, then at some stage it has been attacked by an aggressive bird protecting its patch, biting the base of the neck.

Stop Press Unfortunately as the eggs were hatching, one of the parents was found dead in the water. This was an upset as the locals had been following the nesting birds from the time they started to nest, making sure they had enough food and keeping them safe. Five of the eggs did hatch, but mum is now a solo parent. We will follow their fortunes and hope the one parent can raise the cygnets by herself. *Photograph Barry Cullings* **The fifth one is under mum's feathers.**



One hundred & sixty newsletters.

Another milestone, with 160 newsletters, which represents thirteen years, every month, of producing a snapshot of what the wildlife get up to on the Waikanae Estuary Scientific Reserve and lagoons. This must be the most comprehensive study of an Estuary anywhere in New Zealand. The most rewarding part is the feed back I receive world wide. The difference in my writing, which seems to resonate with people, is that there is nothing scientific about it -- its all from a layman's observations. How I keep them coming every month is quite remarkable as usually at the end of the month I don't have any stories to tell -- then someone may send me a photograph or as I walk around the Estuary I see some little thing that the birds are doing and can weave a story around that. For example I had a phone call to tell of two black-fronted dotterels on the Weggery lagoon, then an e/mail telling of a shore plover on the sand-spit - two new stories for my newsletter. My "Bird tours" have come to an end with the drying up of the tourists and by the time they pick up again I am afraid mister time may have caught up with me. We will see.

Roger Smith Photographs



Blackfronted dotterel



Shore Plover



Young royal spoonbill

Last month I wrote about the two Frenchmen or rather the Frenchman and his wife who were stranded in a converted van come campervan at the car park here at Waikanae beach. I included in the newsletter an e/mail I received from them as they were about to catch a flight back to France. They eventually made it home, here is another e/mail I received from France.

Bonjour !

After a long travel across the world, we are finally arrived in Monclar de Quercy. We stay in a small cabane for a self isolation away from the family. We will get back home next week when we will be sure to be safe.

It was a very long travel..

8 hours wait in Auckland airport, then 8h fly to Perth.

Fuel stop for 1h, and let's go to Doha. 11h30 later new fuel stop for 1 h in Qatar. For finally reaching Paris 8h later.

Arrived at 12.30pm, sunny and warm weather we were very happy to be back in France. After 3h to get our luggages and rental car we drove to Montauban, 6h far from Paris.

Alone on the way, we slowly realise the strange situation in France.

Very tired but so excited we take place in our cabane at [11.pm](#).

The jet lag was so hard at the begining, but now we are getting use to it.

Very good feeling to going to summer ?

We wish again Thanks all of you for everything you did to us.

Really happy by New Zealand solidarity and specially Waikanae's people !

Cause of you we felt very safe and supported in the crazy situation.

We miss you all and this little paradise too, this carpark might stay ink in our mind for a while. We will be back !

Take care of you, stay safe and really hope to see you again.

Love, xxx

Erwan Pentec?te and Chlo? Potet, the Frenchies !

PS : please share this email to all people we met and dont have email adress

**Mik Peryer [The birdman of Waikanae]
Hits last month-----Sixteen Thousand Nine Hundred & Thirty Five.**