

Waikanae Estuary

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Waikanae the wild bird

Capital of New Zealand



Aston has an affinity with the birds and can be found talking to them and feeding them out of his hand even when the swans are on the nest.



Roger Smith photograph

New Zealand Dotterel

The New Zealand dotterels have been breeding on the sand spit this last couple of years for the first time. This has been really exciting. They have just returned to the spit after being away for a while. To view these birds, takes a slow walk through the sand spit, watching as you go. They are only easy to see when they do their fast feeding run across the sand; when stopped they blend into the background.

Children's books

My children's books are proving to be very popular especially my "Lost Cows of Kapiti " and the "Sammy the Seal " series with orders coming in from Australia. I have been selling at the odd market, with the night market at Otaki proving to be a big success especially with them running the steam train from Paraparaumu. I managed

to sell over a Thousand dollars worth of books that evening.

Mik's Love Story.

I am in the process of finalizing my love story of Henrietta the black swan and Thomas the goose. This is going to be a love story like no other. I don't know where else two birds of different species lived together, both males; in the wild, for over thirty years. We have had three talented artists compose a song of the life of Thomas the goose which will have the children singing along to the story.

The launch of this book will be in late October, at the car park at the Waikanae Estuary.

Rabbits



The population of rabbits has exploded of late. For the first time we have a family of rabbits invading our Waimanu lagoons! When, during the day, rabbits



can be seen along the road verges, where they nibble the grass and dig holes, they are here in large numbers. When I was a young lad they had what they called "Rabbit Boards" whose job it was to control the rabbits not only here in Waikanae but across New Zealand. The rabbits skins and meat were declared

worthless and you couldn't sell the meat or the skins. Prior to this they were farmed in the wild with the trappers only trapping lightly so that they could come back to the same areas a few months later and harvest another crop of rabbits. Down the river banks on both sides they are settling in with no one controlling them.



Elizabeth Taylor caught this photograph of shags feeding on the lagoon, note how the youngster inserts its beak down the mother's throat to get the fish its mother has brought back from the seas around Kapiti Island.