



New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association
Wairarapa Branch Incorporated

Newsletter for **April 2025**



Photo credit **Clare Hodgins** Roaring stag

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Website	http://www.wairarapanzda.org.nz/	
Facebook 	https://www.facebook.com/WairarapaNZDA	
Closed Facebook page	Open only to members. You can apply to join here: https://www.facebook.com/groups/79860064354866	
Newsletter Story Competition	October 2024 to September 2025 – prize of \$50 Stories and photos to the newsletter editor at wairarapanzda@gmail.com	

Calendar

No Committee or General Meetings in April = Gone Hunting!		
Wed 7 May	2025	Committee Meeting. Parkvale Hall – 7.30 pm
17-18 May	2025	Wanganui fallow meat hunt. Full
Wed 21 May	2025	General meeting. Speaker to be confirmed – Parkvale Hall – 7.30 pm
23-25 May	2025	Tararua fly-in trip. Going in Friday afternoon coming out Sunday. Weather dependent. Contact Andrew Dennes on 022 323 6993 to register



Grant Langlands

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 Mobile: (027) 4420 294
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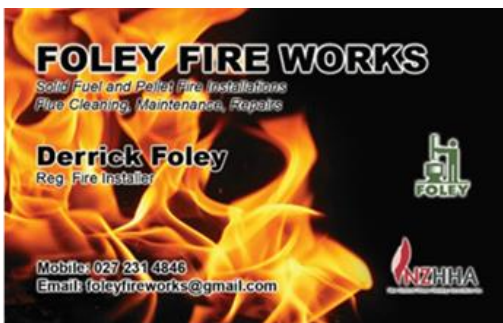
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Wairarapa Branch Annual General Meeting 26 March



The 2025 AGM was held on 26th March with around 30 members in attendance. The President's report commented on the work undertaken during the year by the committee and other members such as working bees and the deer park extension. The Treasurer's report noted the books were in good shape, with the small loss hoping to be covered by some reimbursement from Masterton District Council for the deer park extension costs. Following the meeting the financial statements were filed on the Incorporated Societies register.

We would like to extend our thanks to retiring committee members Shane Lehmstedt and Hamish Graham for their contributions and welcome aboard Mark Wellington. The officer appointments are, President Andrew Dennes, Vice-president Gary Warren, Treasurer Sean Roberts and Secretary Liz Nicholson.

After the formalities we heard from CEO **Gwyn Thurlow** who gave a fantastic overview of the NZDA, its structure and the people who voluntarily work tirelessly behind the scenes to enable all of us to participate in this sport. The NZDA has grown its membership from around 4,000 in the early 2010's to more than 12,000 today which is a fantastic achievement. There will also soon be the addition of 3 new branches, so the momentum continues. Don't forget to take advantage of the discounts offered on the NZDA App. If you don't have it on your phone, make sure you add it (see details later in newsletter). There are deals and discounts galore.

A lucky number draw was also held on the night with 10 members walking away with some great prizes from King & Henry and Hunting & Fishing. We've already seen one member listing their old bino holder for sale as it has been replaced by the fancy one they won!

Please remember to support those who support us. You will see them advertising in the newsletter, and don't forget to tell them you are a NZDA member.

Later this year we will hold a Special General Meeting to adopt a new Constitution to comply with the updated Incorporated Societies Act 2022

Hunting trip reports

March trips to Wanganui and Stewart Island went ahead. Full reports will have to wait until next month because your Editor is all at sea (literally).



Firewood working bee 23 March

Thirteen members finished off all the wood at South Featherston Road, moving onto a new site mid-morning. Now splitting blue gum and some kahikatea.



Committee News and Updates

FINANCIALS

The financial report was presented at the AGM by Treasurer Sean Roberts. The last financial year has been steady from 2024 despite showing a loss of about \$2,500. The main cause of loss was by work on the deer park extension. The branch will be applying to Masterton District Council to help recoup some of this cost.

Term deposits totalled \$23,283 with cash on hand \$12,653.

The branch bank account number for payments (firewood, etc) is 03-0687-0022096-00
(This is not the account for payment of memberships – which go direct to National Office.)

DEER PARK

A further working bee is being planned followed by phase 2 of the enclosure enlargement. All animals are healthy.

FUNDRAISING

See report from 23 March working bee above.

Firewood prices are:

- \$50 per m3 for members participating on the day
- \$80 per m3 for non-participating members
- \$100 per m3 for public sales

Delivery by negotiation

HUTS

Mike Thrupp represents the branch at Greater Wellington Backcountry Network Inc meetings. Hamish Graham has been nominated by the branch to represent us with the Aorangi Restoration Trust.

SEARCH & RESCUE

No report this month. Luke on 027 630 7640 if you are interested in joining LandSAR

HALL

No report.

MEMBERSHIPS

Memberships for 2025/26 are now overdue. If you haven't yet received your invoice please contact membership@deerstalkers.org.nz

Please pay your subscriptions as there is no carry forward of memberships this year and you need to be a financial (paid) member at the time you shoot that big trophy or take that great photo for entry into Branch and National competitions.

And another reminder that your annual membership payment is to be made to the bank account on your invoice along with the required references. **DO NOT** pay into the branch's bank account.

RANGE & SHOOTING

Gladstone range is available for the use of members. Branch members get six free visits a year.

Hours for using the Gladstone range for visitors including Deerstalkers 9:30 am to 1:00 pm on Sunday unless you're accompanied by a Gladstone WPSSC member.

Please keep to these times to avoid disappoint as with new police regulations, Range Officers are required on active ranges even for casual shooting.

There is a Precision Rifle match booked on range 6 on the first Sunday of the month so late morning is recommended for that day unless you would like to join in with them which you are more than welcome to do.

Hunters fear losing guns for seeking mental health help — but needn't

In mid 2024, our Pou Kōtūi - Senior Partnerships Advisor, Kendra Hill, was filmed as part of a Re: News docuseries project about the lives of regional rangatahi and what it can be like growing up in small-town New Zealand.

This video focuses on a young hunter who avoided seeking mental health support out of fear of losing their firearms licence. For Te Tari Pūreke a really important point is that mental health conditions are not uncommon.

Our key message is for people to always seek help from a health professional. If firearms licence holders are struggling, there are some proactive things they – and those around them - can do before ending up down the path of revocation.

Find the resources here:

ALWAYS treat firearms as if they are loaded

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ALWAYS point firearms in a safe direction

[1 News | Hunters fear losing guns for seeking mental health help — but needn't](#)
[Re:News | Inside the life of a 24-year-old hunter and taxidermist](#)

Secondary Schools' firearms safety training pilot

During 2025 we're piloting firearms safety testing in some secondary schools and we look forward to sharing the results of our pilots as we progress.

We have been working with schools to create a fit for purpose schools-based course. When participants complete the schools course, they will gain 3 credits at Level 2 of NCEA. Once the course is completed, participants will have 24 months to apply for their licences.

Pilots of the course are planned this month in Palmerston North, Ohakune, Fielding, Wairarapa and Hawkes Bay.

If you have any questions, you can contact firearmspartnerships@police.govt.nz



Firearms Reform Update

The Ministry of Justice wants to thank the thousands of people who made submissions on the rewrite of the Arms Act 1983 before the process closed at midnight on 28 February.

The Ministry received thousands of submissions, many of them in the last week of the consultation period. We are now in the process of collating and analysing the submissions. We want to thank everyone who took the opportunity to share how they consider firearms should be regulated, and their views on how the rewrite of the Act can simplify regulatory requirements, improve compliance, and provide greater protection of public safety.

This useful feedback will help inform the draft policy proposals which will be presented to the Associate Minister of Justice, and to Cabinet. These proposals will in turn help shape a bill, which the Government will draft and introduce to Parliament towards the end of this year. The public will then have another opportunity to provide input through the select committee process.

Further updates will be posted on the Ministry's website at:

www.justice.govt.nz/firearms

Prepare for a safe and successful roar this year

With the roar now upon us, the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association (NZDA) is reminding all hunters to take extreme care in the bush and always positively identify their target beyond all doubt before firing.

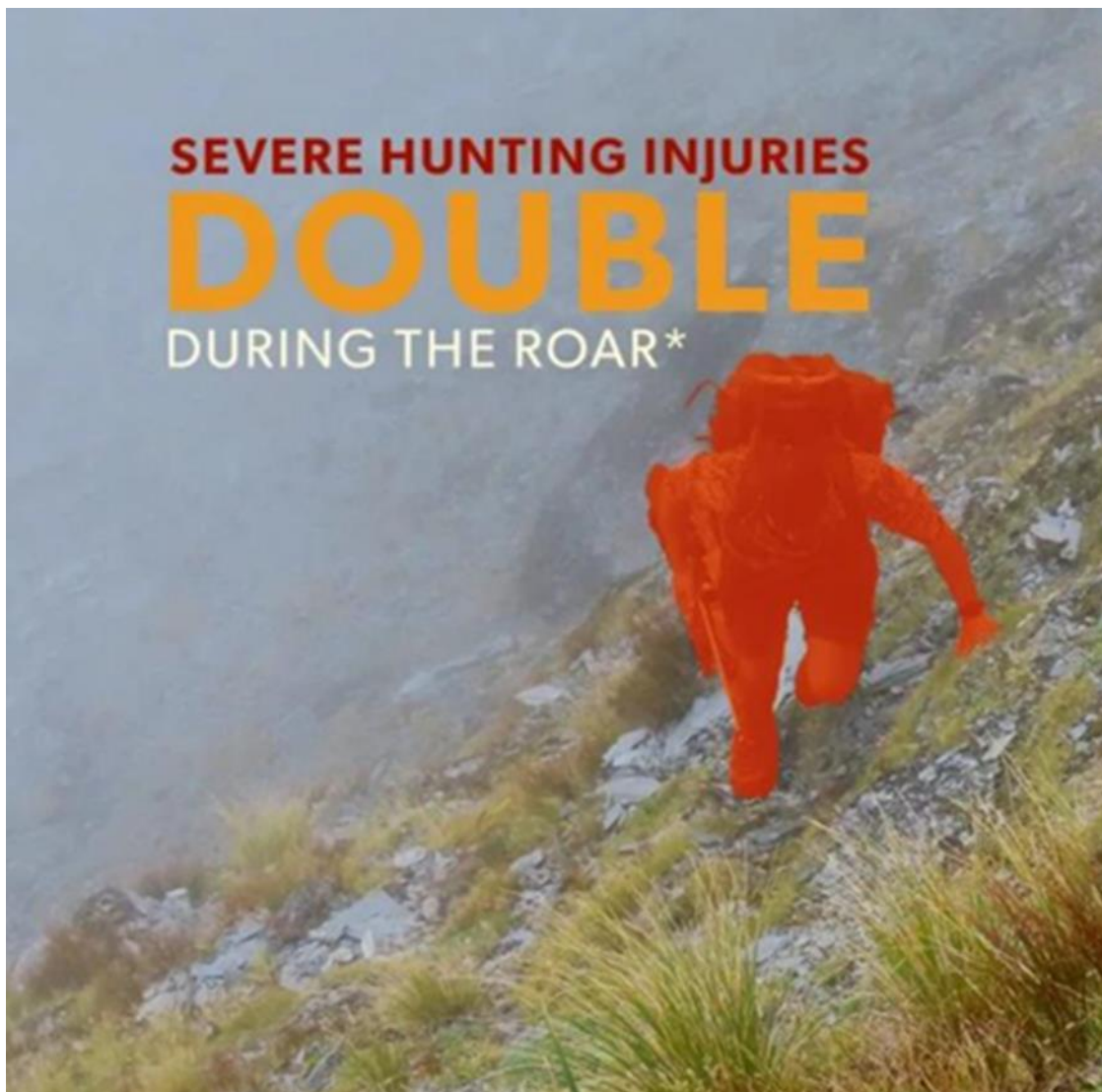
NZDA Chief Executive Gwyn Thurlow urges hunters to remain vigilant, particularly with the increased number of people in the bush over the weekends.

"The roar is the busiest period in the hunting calendar, and we cannot stress enough the importance of always confirming your target with absolute certainty. Every year, we hear of close calls that could have been avoided by following this fundamental rule. We wish everyone a safe and successful roar."

ALWAYS treat firearms as if they are loaded

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ALWAYS point firearms in a safe direction



Thermals: A Detection Tool, Not an Identification Device

NZDA is also calling for responsible use of thermal imaging technology, which has grown in popularity since being legalised for daylight spotting on public conservation land in June 2024.

National NZDA HUNTS Programme Manager Mike Spray warns that while thermals are a useful tool for detecting heat sources, they should never be relied upon as a means of positive target identification.

"Thermal devices can help locate animals, but they do not provide enough detail to confirm species or, critically, whether what you are seeing is actually a deer or another hunter. Heat signatures alone are not enough. If you cannot clearly see the animal and have any doubt, do not shoot."

While handheld thermal imaging devices are now permitted for spotting during daylight hours, it remains illegal to use firearm-mounted thermal scopes or hunt at night on public conservation land. NZDA has observed an increase in adoption of these devices but is also concerned about reports of misuse, including illegal hunting and unsafe practices that put both access and reputation at risk.

"Hunters must use thermal technology responsibly. The offence of illegal hunting carries severe penalties, including fines of up to \$100,000 and imprisonment. Ethical hunting and compliance with regulations are non-negotiable," said Mr. Thurlow.

Increased Risk with More Hunters in the Bush

With Easter weekend coinciding with the roar period, NZDA reminds hunters that more people in the bush means an increased risk of encountering other hunting parties.

"It's vital to assume that any movement or noise in the bush could be another person until you have confirmed otherwise. Communicate with your hunting party, stick to your plan, and wear high-visibility blaze to stand out in the environment," said Mr. Thurlow.


While many assume hunting accidents involve separate parties, history shows that incidents are more likely to occur within a single group. Good communication and clear agreements on hunting areas are essential.

"We all know the temptation to pursue a roaring stag that crosses into someone else's zone, but breaking the plan is not worth the risk. Stay disciplined and prioritise safety above all else."

Key Roar Safety Reminders:

- Identify your target beyond all doubt—movement, sound, colour, and shape can all be deceptive.
- Use thermals responsibly—they are a detection tool, not an identification device.
- Wear high-visibility clothing—blaze orange helps you stand out in the bush.
- Communicate with your hunting party—stick to the agreed plans.
- Carry a personal locator beacon (PLB)—be prepared for emergencies.
- Follow the Firearms Safety Code and the Seven Basic Rules of Firearms Safety.

Hunters, remember to make sure you have your hunting permits for public conservation land, access permissions for private land, and have checked the DOC pesticides summary map.



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Improved hunting permit system on its way



A new and improved hunting permit system will make it easier for New Zealanders to go hunting on public conservation land Minister for Hunting and Fishing James Meager says.

“Longer permits, automatic reminders and better navigation are part of a significant upgrade that will make life easier for 34,000 hunters that hunt on open conservation land,” Minister Meager says.

“The underlying technology of the current hunting permit system is outdated and in need of an update, and is being improved based on the direct feedback of hunters. This upgrade will support more hunters, both domestic and international, getting out and doing what they love.

“This substantial upgrade to the permitting system will make it more reliable and easier to navigate on mobile devices, making it easier to obtain permits on the go. Hunting permits will now be valid for 12 months, an increase on the current four-month period. Hunters will also receive reminders 14 days before their permits are due to expire so they can easily obtain a new permit.

“The upgraded system will also make selecting hunting areas easier. Instead of the 54 hunting areas that hunters currently choose from, the system will be simplified so hunters choose from eight regions, four in the North Island and four in the South Island/Stewart Island. All existing hunting areas within the broader region will automatically be included on the permit, and hunters can also select all hunting areas within New Zealand at the press of a single button.

“These may be simple changes, but they reflect a government which is committed to making it easier for New Zealanders to go hunting and fishing on conservation land, and are willing to listen to the feedback of the hunting community to do so.”

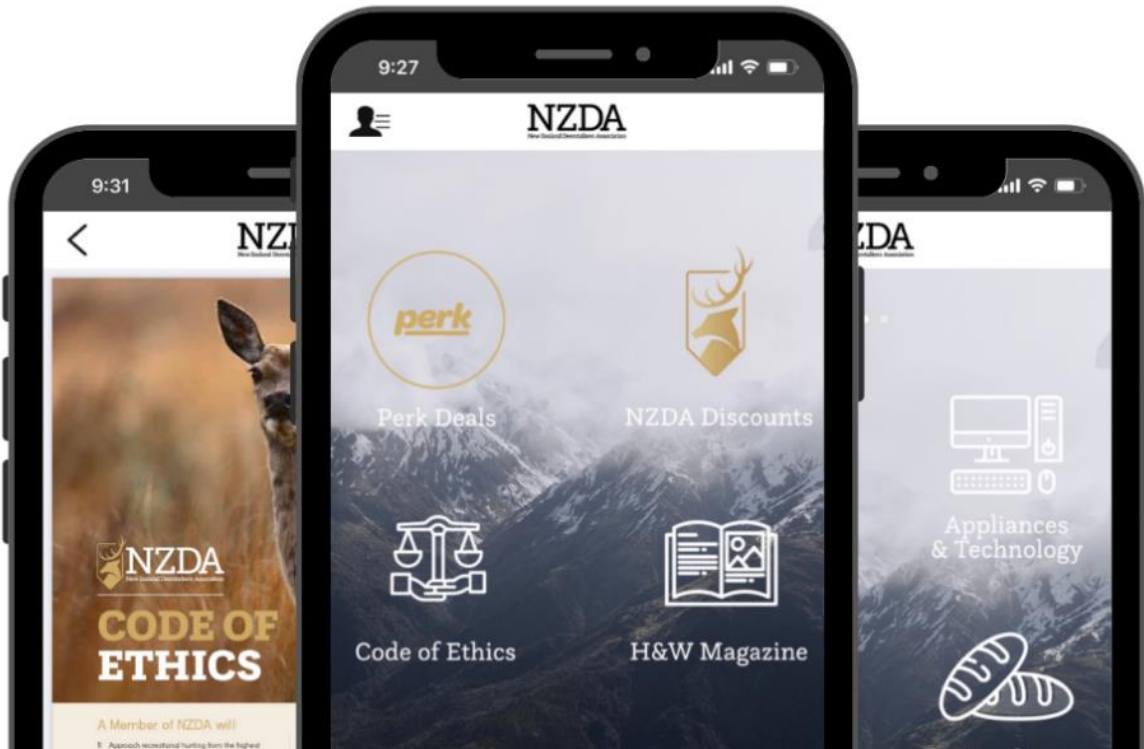
This new system will be launched by the Department in Conservation in May.

Notes:

- Hunters will need an email address to get a permit through the upgraded system. They can either set up an individual verified account or use a guest account. Hunters who have set up an account for restricted hunting blocks on Stewart Island/Rakiura can use the same log-in for the open hunting permit system.
- Hunters who don't have an e-mail address or don't want to use the system can get a permit by calling the DOC Customer Service Centre.

- Hunter information will be better protected through stronger security measures to protect personal information against malicious actors.

A major perk of your NZDA membership is the official app.



DOWNLOAD ON IOS

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What you'll find inside:

- Discounts at major retailers.
- The latest edition of our quarterly Member Magazine: [NZ Hunting & Wildlife](#) - Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter
- Conference and events announcements
- [Competitions](#)
- Link to the NZDA store
- Your membership information
- [HUNTS training program](#) – training courses & certification for HUNTS Instructor

NZDA holds our government to account.

Position of the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association Branches on OSPRI's Aerial Pest Control Operations in the Southern Tararuas



Representatives of OSPRI, the Department of Conservation, and the Hutt Valley and Wellington Branches of the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association (NZDA) met on the 7th of March to discuss upcoming aerial operations in the Southern Tararua (project Kaka and OSPRI operations, Figure 1).

Local NZDA representatives have been engaged by OSPRI during the previous phases of their plan, most recently relating to the Northern Remutaka. We appreciate the ongoing engagement and communication in relation to the plan, and the extent to which our views on the timing of operations and the necessity for the use of deer repellent in areas of high importance to local hunters have been considered and implemented to date.

Throughout our engagement with OSPRI and the anticipated activity in the Southern Tararua in 2025, we have constantly highlighted the importance of the Tauherenikau catchment (Figure 1 and 2) for local hunters and the ***necessity that deer repellent is used in this area during operations.***

The intent of this document is to highlight the views of local NZDA branches on the importance of this particular area. It expands on the information already provided about the area in the submission made to OSPRI by New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association Inc. by CEO Gwyn Thurlow on the 30th of September 2024 ('the Submission'). The Submission also summarises the overarching stance of NZDA on the use of 1080 and the necessity of deer repellent to be used in areas of high importance to hunters. This submission is appended to this document for reference. This document represents the views of and is endorsed by the Wellington, Hutt Valley, Porirua, Kapiti and Wairarapa branches of the NZDA.

The Tauherenikau River catchment – a food basket for local hunters

The Tauherenikau River catchment in the Southern Tararua range offers one of the most accessible public land hunting opportunities to hunters in the Wellington region. For those from Wellington, it is accessible via Kaitoke which is only a 45 minute drive from the CBD (and obviously much quicker for those from the Hutt Valley). From Kaitoke an easy 1.5 hour walk over the Puffer Saddle to Smith's Creek shelter has you in the valley. This is why local Wellington hunters often just refer to the area as 'Smiths Creek'.

For hunters from the Wairarapa, access is through the Waiohine River road end which is a 45 minute drive from Masterton. From here, similarly, a 1.5 hour walk drops you down into Cone Hut and into the greater valley. While the entry point to the catchment requires a climb at both access points, once there, the track is mostly flat and easy going, making it a suitable area to hunt for people of most levels of fitness.

The accessibility of the area makes it one of the most convenient areas for a quick overnight meat hunt for local hunters. From Wellington, driving further afield over the Remutaka hill to the Aorangi or more northern parts of the Tararua or Ruahine is a much longer expedition. This convenience is essential for those from urban areas working busy jobs and managing families who need to get away quickly to top up the freezer. For many hunters wild game is the primary source of protein for them and their families. A large reduction in the deer population in this area will have a real impact on mahinga kai, which is especially relevant in the time of a cost of living crisis.

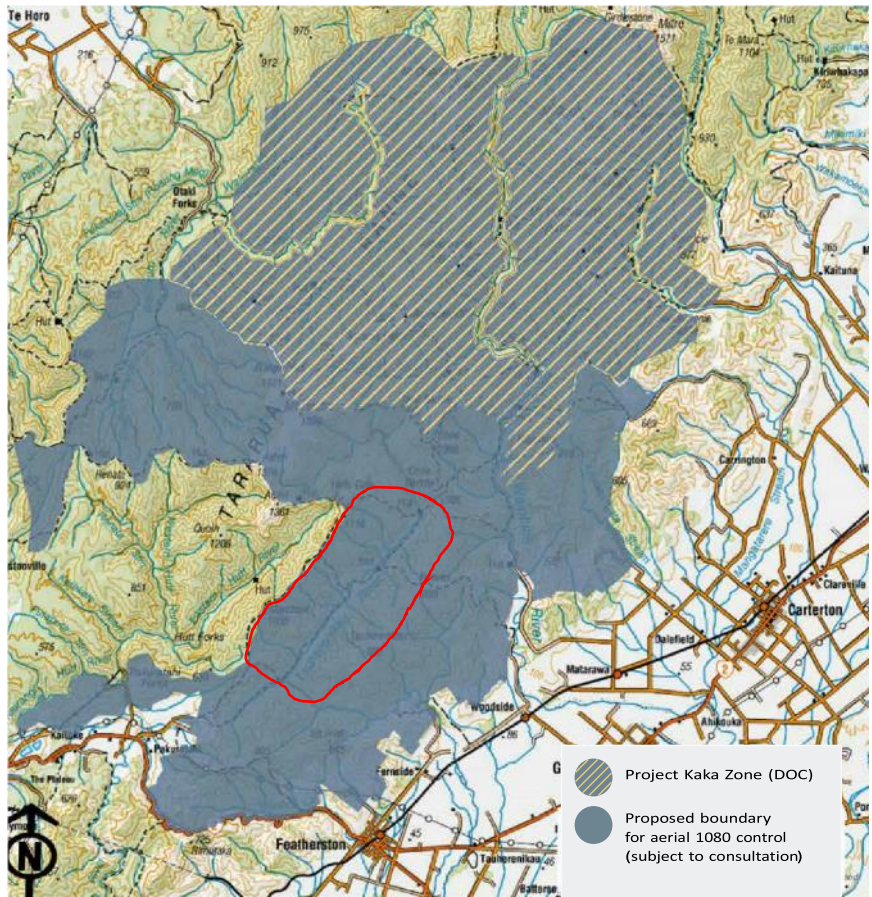


Figure 1: Map of the Southern Tararua ranges showing Project Kaka Zone (DOC) and proposed area for OSPRI aerial 1080 control. Red line approximately delimits the area of interest – the Tauherenikau River catchment.

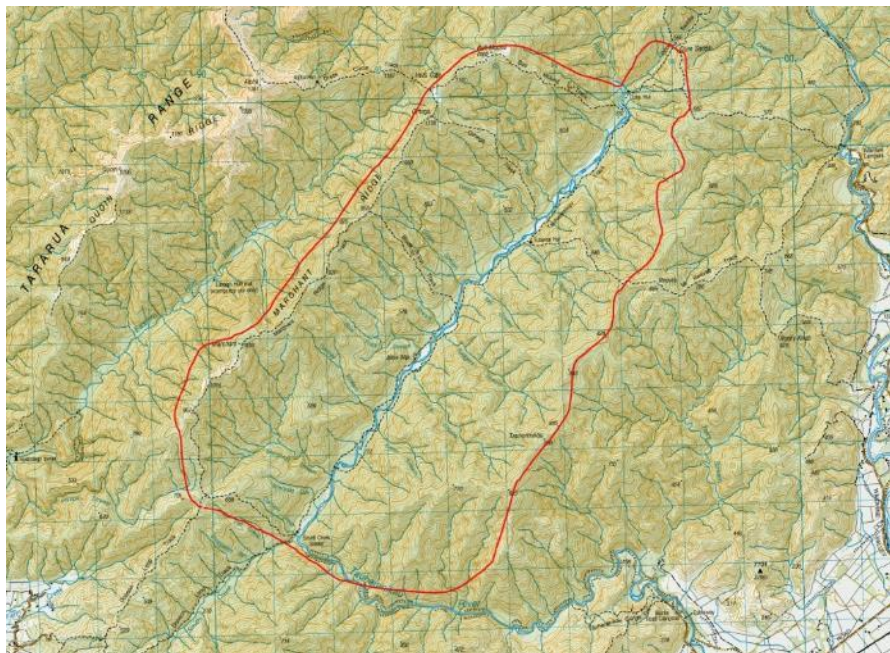


Figure 2: Topographic map of the Southern Tararua, red line approximately delimits the Tauherenikau River catchment

There is a moderate population of red deer and a low population of pigs in the catchment. The animal numbers are high enough to make it an exciting place for hunters of all levels of experience to want to go in there, knowing there is a reasonable chance of sighting game, but low enough to present the challenge that all hunters love, knowing that everything has to be done perfectly to secure an animal and meat to take home. Animals taken from the area are generally in good condition, and while it is not an area highly regarded to

produce large trophy stags, the occasional respectable stag is taken from here. Both of these factors suggest that animal numbers are what we as hunters would consider as being about right and in line with NZDA's game animal management objectives for a popular hunting area. We consider deer in this area to be a 'High Value Herd' as defined in section 42.2.11 of the Submission – *"Deer present near large urban populations of hunters who value those game animals for recreational and food-gathering values"*.

The catchment has a range of different terrains and hunting opportunities ranging from the open river flats, the terraced bush faces and gullies and creeks with small clearings and slips. There are two huts Tutuwai and Cone Huts, but there are numerous great camping sites along the river for those who want the more remote experience. It is a relatively safe area, making it suitable for children and families to have their first hunting experiences.

It is also one of the areas that we suggest people initially explore after completing our HUNTS program. The HUNTS program is delivered through our branches and trains new hunters the knowledge and skills necessary to operate safely as a hunter in the outdoors, teaching the ethics of fair chase and principles of managing a sustainable game resource. This area is therefore a stepping stone hunting ground for many new local hunters to gain experience in a safe area close to home. These new waves of hunters are the future for the ongoing management of our game animal resource which also support DOC's conservation objectives.

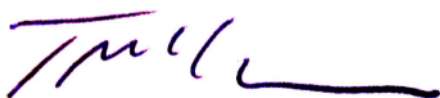
It is also a high use area for local trampers. If deer repellent is not used in this area there is a high chance that deer will eat baits and expire near the tracks or river flats well within public view. This would be very disturbing to the average trumper who is not accustomed to seeing dead animals. There are often reports of this happening in after DOC 1080 drops. These instances reflect badly on DOC and OSPRI, especially when deer are not supposed to be targeted with 1080.

If deer repellent is not used during the upcoming operations in this area, it will have a severe impact on the deer population for many years. This has been the experience of hunters generally after 1080 drops, and specifically with regard to the wider Tararua, it is simply just not worth hunting most areas until several years after a drop. A prime example is the upper Ruamahunga catchment in the northern Tararua where there are two huts maintained by the Wellington Branch of the NZDA: Roaring Stag Lodge and Cattle Ridge Hut. The Wellington Branch maintains these annually for DOC, but there are currently not enough deer present in the area to make it worthwhile visiting as a hunter.

Summary

To date we are grateful for the engagement that we have had with OSPRI and the use of deer repellent in areas of high importance to local hunters during their Aerial Operations in the lower North Island. The Tauherenikau River catchment is an area of utmost importance to hunters in the lower North Island, in particular those near Wellington City. Deer repellent must be used in this catchment during the upcoming aerial operations by OSPRI in the Southern Tararua. Failure to use repellent will have a significant impact on the ability of local hunters to secure meat for their families and will devalue an area that is critical for the progression of hunting and the conservation benefits that carries with it in our local area.

On behalf of the Wellington, Hutt Valley, Porirua, Kapiti and Wairarapa NZDA branches:



Tom McCowan – President, NZDA Wellington Branch
tom.mccowan@deerstalkers.org.nz



ALWAYS treat firearms as if they are loaded

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ALWAYS point firearms in a safe direction

Buy, Sell, and Swap

If you have hunting or outdoor related items that you want to buy, sell, or swap, then we'll include these in the Newsletter free of charge (better than TradeMe). Send items (with picture if you wish) to wairarapanzda@gmail.com

- **WANTED .300 WSM HORNADY BRASS**
Please contact Luke on 027 630 7640.
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20 litres for \$90. Selling at cost. Please contact Aidan on 027 432 3410
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- WAIRARAPA BRANCH SHIRTS
We have arranged to get some fancy Stoney Creek Corporate shirts printed with our branch logo. See the below link for shirt details and sizing.
<https://www.stoneycreek.co.nz/index.php?route=product/search&search=HMM-8206-TSC%20> These can only be ordered by attendance at a general meeting at a cost of \$70 per shirt (pay via electronic transfer or cash on the night). We will submit orders every couple of months.
- NZDA MERCHANDISE <https://nzda.shop/collections/>

TAHR HUNT vs DOC 8 to 14 MARCH 2025, RAKAIA

By Steve Wagner

Introduction. As a latecomer to the NZ sport of hunting deer the thought of hunting Tahr has always in the back of my mind – as is hunting Wapiti. I have enjoyed a successful three years hunting our local Reds and Fallows with the head count of confirmed kills of 45. It was now time to go for Tahr.

Background Which Resort would you like to go to to celebrate you turning 65 I was asked by my wife. Well I have been to a few and thought a trip down south to the land of the Tahr might be a better option. And so it began, the planning, the research and then more planning. JE Wilds on You Tube set the scene and Scott from Heli Rural in Methven was soon contacted. He proved immensely helpful and pointed us in the direction of some good Tahr hunting country. My wife (Debbie), daughter (Tatjana), son in law (Sam) and I (Steve) took the plunge and committed to this adventure. The dates were set, coming straight after a niece's wedding in Christchurch. It was to be a start date of 8 March and last for a week – in the deep end and questioning everything but doing it nevertheless.

Insertion. Wedding and family commitments over the day finally dawned with some trepidation as we had been advised by Heli Rural over the lead up that the weather was suspect. At the heli base Scott gave us the thumbs up and we got a late afternoon insertion. The clouds were low, dark and broody but our spirits were undimmed. Once on the ground in the chosen area with some words of encouragement from Scott we were into it. Camp was established but the temperature dropped and the rain started. The first evening was very much an in-tent activity staying dry and warm. Welcome to living at 2,000m in the Canterbury high country.



Day 1. I had spent several months in anticipation planning for this very day. Thankfully it dawned clear and fine – time for a pre breakfast scout around but nothing to report. We were in a high basin

surrounded by the typically imposing scree ridges dominating in every direction. The morning and midday scout was more extensive but nothing was spotted although numerous animal tracks were in evidence. After a snooze and a feed on top of a pretty high ridge morale was about average, with nothing to get us excited – this was about to change! The plan was to scope the next Kings Valley system as we were seeing no animals were we where. On the move again and then “F**k me days there is a Tahr” was uttered by the wife. It was 2pm and to see one at this time was totally unexpected. Game on.

As the birthday boy I was up first and the move to a shooting spot of around 200m was required. As the Tahr was below it meant a quiet descent to close the distance to what turned out to be 257m. Once settled we waited and he eventually re-appeared on top of a rock. A steady shot hit him high in the spine and he was found dead about 30m away. It happened quickly but I took some private time afterwards to reflect on the outcome and the satisfaction of doing this at an age when it doesn't get any easier as they say.



Steve's first Tahr, 11.25 inches and a 257m shot. Tatjana, Sam, Steve and Debbie. Browning X bolt in .308 for all. German Precision Optics 2.5-15 X 50 Centuri 6xscope courtesy of last King & Henry evening, shooting Hornady Whitetail 150gr InterLock bullets.

Later that evening we sat around camp eating Tahr back steak and feeling pretty pleased with ourselves. In this moment Sam our son in law said 'There are two Tahr coming down that face towards us". Action stations and my daughter was next up in the shooting order. Off her and Sam went to do the stalk and shoot while Debbie and I kept back to observe and take some photos. These two Tahr

continued tracking down off the scree and onto the tussock for a feed . Their heads were down and while they fed they were lined up and both shot, distance was 260 and 230m. Three Tahr down and it was only day one. Morale was high.



Tatjana's first Tahr, 12.25 inches and a 250m shot. Sam & Tatjana.



Tatjana's second Tahr and our third for the first day. 11.5 inches and 230m.

Day 2 Today we decided to drop some altitude and scope out a new area. It was called Boundary Creek. Again lots of sign and one black billy goat sighted. Lots of ground covered . That evening Debbie and I went high back to the spot where I shot the first Tahr. Waiting in our high spot we were really surprised to spot another bull Tahr 85m away. He stood and we could see he was sensing our presence when we saw 9 nannies come into view.... They were thirsty and hungry making for the water and feed that was on offer in the tussock. We watched these guys in their natural habitat for some time. No shots fired as this was a trophy hunt and we both considered this bull Tahr a bit small (more on this thinking later). We carefully moved off the ridge but the nannies spotted us and screamed past. They gave Sam and Tatjana a moment too when they went past camp. Day 2 included Tahr but no shooting.

Day 3 It was decided to relocate, leaving base camp and heading out on a three day trek around one of the large features to our north east. This opened up a large valley and the first night was spent on the side of a very steep hill with us having to scrape by hand using rock tools to make our tent site. That night the weather turned, it snowed and all next day it did the same with visibility turning to zero. We became good at cards.

Day 4 Tent all day.

Day 5 This day dawned perfectly fine. The morning revealed the snow on the tops and the valley looked amazing. We drunk in the stunning views, did some glassing but saw absolutely nothing. As we had lost a couple of days we returned to base camp. Later that afternoon while having a wash in the stream, Debbie and I being butt naked, we first sighted a low flying little Air NZ plane – that was ok as we don't think they could have seen our white bodies but 60 seconds later a black helicopter hove into view. It had doors off indicating it was on the hunt for deer and Tahr. He veered away but not before he had been mooned by yours truly – not happy and I hope they saw that! On returning to camp to talk this over we spotted a stag moving slowly up the valley, he looked both exhausted and wounded. This was the evidence to confirm our thoughts about a DOC contracted helicopter doing some culling.



The Family – relocating back to base camp after the storm.

That evening we split up with Sam going one way and Debbie, Tatjana and I going back to the day 1 kill site. Well we had the luck and spotted two bull Tahr, again we had to relocate into a good shooting spot. Again the shot was good at 185m. The second Tahr was let go as he was a juvenile. Four bull Tahr down in five days. Team happy with another full day/night of hunting to go.



Steve's second Tahr, our fourth and final one. 10.5 inches and 187m shot. Lovely Father Daughter moment.

Day 6 We were looking forward to the day however around mid morning our heli turned up to say we were being extracted in a couple of hours – weather forecast making this necessary. Game over.

Postscript Scotty confirmed that DOC had done this to him last year but with the benefit of a courtesy phone call. This year we and other hunters out there at the same time were made to suffer. Possibly the reason for no animals in the Kings range we had dropped into – we will never know. Scotty is trying to run a business more reliant on recreational hunters than ever before – this does not help him in the slightest. Both he and the local hunters have suggested management solutions to DOC, but DOC continues to ignore what I believe are useful suggestions. I hope they get listened to eventually as all hunters will benefit as well as the local economy.

Positive news – we thought we were shooting small bull Tahr hence why no shot on Day 2. Well it turned out my daughter shot a 12.5inch and an 11inch. I shot an 11 inch and a 10.5 inch. Both of us are first time Tahr hunters and both of us were very happy with that. Given that DOC appears to be culling without notification it doesn't make sense to leave anything as DOC will cull it regardless of age.

Final Thoughts

Be safe be sure.
Assume it is a person not a deer.
No meat is better than no mate.
Identify your target.

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