



Wairarapa

**NZDA**

**New Zealand Deerstalkers Association**

**New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association  
Wairarapa Branch Incorporated**

Newsletter for **February 2026**



Photo credit **Liz Warren** Stewart Island rainbow

## Contacts

|  |                       |  |
|--|-----------------------|--|
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| Vice President   | Gary Warren           | 027 282 1112   |
| Secretary  | Liz Nicholson         | 027 224 2556 or 06-379 5108  |
| Treasurer  | Sean Roberts          | 021 822 802  |
| Committee  | Aidan Bichan          | 027 432 3410   |
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|  | Dave Bashford         | 027 459 5477   |
|  | Derek Williams        | 027 656 8897   |
|  | Derrick Foley         | 027 231 4846   |
|  | Lloyd Rayner          | 027 608 0325   |
|  | Luke Johnson          | 027 630 7640   |
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|  | Richard O'Driscoll    | 021 141 1472   |
|  | Shane Dougan          | 027 247 4484   |
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|  | Parkvale Hall Booking | Andrew Dennes  |
| LandSAR  | Luke Johnson          | 027 630 7640   |
| Website  |                       | <a href="http://www.wairarapanzda.org.nz/">http://www.wairarapanzda.org.nz/</a>  |
| Facebook  |                       | <a href="https://www.facebook.com/WairarapaNZDA">https://www.facebook.com/WairarapaNZDA</a>  |
| Closed Facebook page   |                       | Open only to members. You can apply to join here:<br><a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/79860064354866">https://www.facebook.com/groups/79860064354866</a>         |
| Newsletter Story<br>Competition  |                       | October 2025 to September 2026 – prize of \$50<br>Stories and photos to the newsletter editor at<br><a href="mailto:wairarapanzda@gmail.com">wairarapanzda@gmail.com</a> |

Previous newsletters (back to July 2018) are available on our website:  
[www.wairarapanzda.org.nz/newsletters](http://www.wairarapanzda.org.nz/newsletters)

## Calendar

|   |      |  |
|---|------|--|
| Sun 15 February   | 2026 | Firewood working bee. South Featherston starting 8 am. See details later in newsletter.  |
| Wed 18 February   | 2026 | First general meeting of 2026. Parkvale Hall 7:30 pm. Guest speaker <b>Derrick Field</b> on the work of the Greater Wellington Backcountry Network (GWBN) <a href="http://gwbn.org.nz">gwbn.org.nz</a> |
| 26 Feb –2 March   | 2026 | NZDA Ruahine management hunt   |
| Wed 4 March   | 2026 | Committee meeting. Parkvale Hall 7:30 pm.  |
| 6-11 March  | 2026 | West coast tahr hunt. More details later in newsletter. Contact Lloyd Rayner on 027 608 0325   |
| Wed 25 March  | 2026 | Annual General meeting. Parkvale Hall 7:30 pm.   |
| No committee or general meetings in April = gone hunting! |      |  |
| Wed 6 May   | 2026 | Committee meeting. Parkvale Hall 7:30 pm.  |
| 15-17 May   | 2026 | Wanganui meat hunt. Full.  |
| Wed 20 May  | 2026 | Annual General meeting. Parkvale Hall 7:30 pm.   |

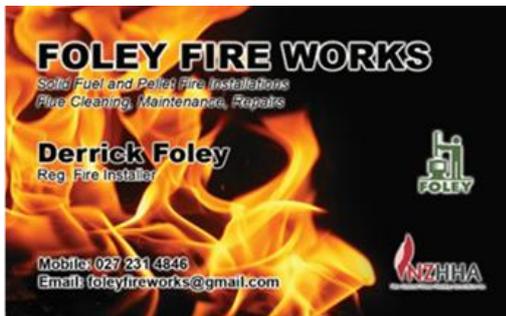


**Rebecca O'Neale**  
 Travel Expert/Passionate Traveller

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## Wanganui hunts

Two summer meat hunts took place in December and January. Eleven members shot 38 deer in December and 11 members got 22 in January. Thanks as always to **Andrew Wilkinson** for arranging these popular and productive hunt weekends.

The next Wanganui hunt is scheduled for May and is already full. Spring hunt dates will be announced later in the year so watch out for these. Recently, we have announced dates at a general meeting to allow those present to get their names in first, before an email notice is sent.



Wanganui success Photo Lloyd Rayner

## Notice of Annual General Meeting Wednesday 25 March 2026

Note this is 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday of March not our usual 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday. The AGM will include the annual President's Report, 2025/26 Financial Report, and election of committee and officers. As per our constitution, nominations for new committee members and office holders must be received in advance.

15.6 (Re-election) All standing members of the Committee are eligible for re-election from year to year at the end of each year of office. Every standing Committee Member, unless they have signified to the Secretary the desire not to stand for re-election, is deemed to be duly nominated for re-election.

15.7 (Nominations to Committee) Each candidate for office on the Committee must be a Financial Member, satisfy all qualifying criteria under the Act and Arms Act, and, unless eligible for re-election under Rule 15.6, be proposed and seconded by Financial Members. Excluding those members covered by Rule 15.6 Nominations of members to fill positions of President, Vice-President, and a member on the Committee, which shall be signed by the proposer and seconder, together

with written acceptances thereof, shall be submitted to the Secretary not later than 14 days prior to the date of the AGM. In the event of insufficient nominations being received for positions on the committee further nominations shall be called for at the AGM.]

Please send any nominations to [yrapanzdasec@gmail.com](mailto:yrapanzdasec@gmail.com) using the form on last page of this newsletter by **11 March 2026**. You can nominate yourself, but nominations must be seconded by a current financial member. Most of the existing committee members (see second page of newsletter) have agreed to stay on.

Please come along to the AGM, find out how our club is doing, and have your say. A good club is one where the members get involved! Please remember that you need to be a current paid up financial member to vote at the AGM.

## Committee News and Updates

### UPCOMING HUNTS

See report above on **Wanganui fallow trips**. The next Wanganui trip in **May is full**.

Some branch members are taking part in a **NZDA management hunt in the central and western Ruahines**. Dates are in Thursday 26 Feb and out Monday 2 March 2026, with backup dates of 5–9 March in the event of bad weather for the first period. The hunt will be utilising helicopter landing sites not normally available, primarily focussed on areas not readily accessible to recreational hunters with the majority requiring camping on the tops. The focus is on targeting hinds (no antlers to be flown out). The inaugural 2025 management hunt saw 29 hunters from 7 branches plus 2 hunters from a local Iwi participate and 81 deer (90%+ hinds) were taken despite adverse weather.

We also arranging a **tahr trip to the west coast for 6–11 March 2026**. Going across on the ferry on 6<sup>th</sup> and back on 11<sup>th</sup>. Fly-in with helicopter cost \$1700 for 400 kg load. For further details and to sign up, contact Lloyd Rayner on 027 608 0325.



Spring tahr. Photo Richard O'Driscoll

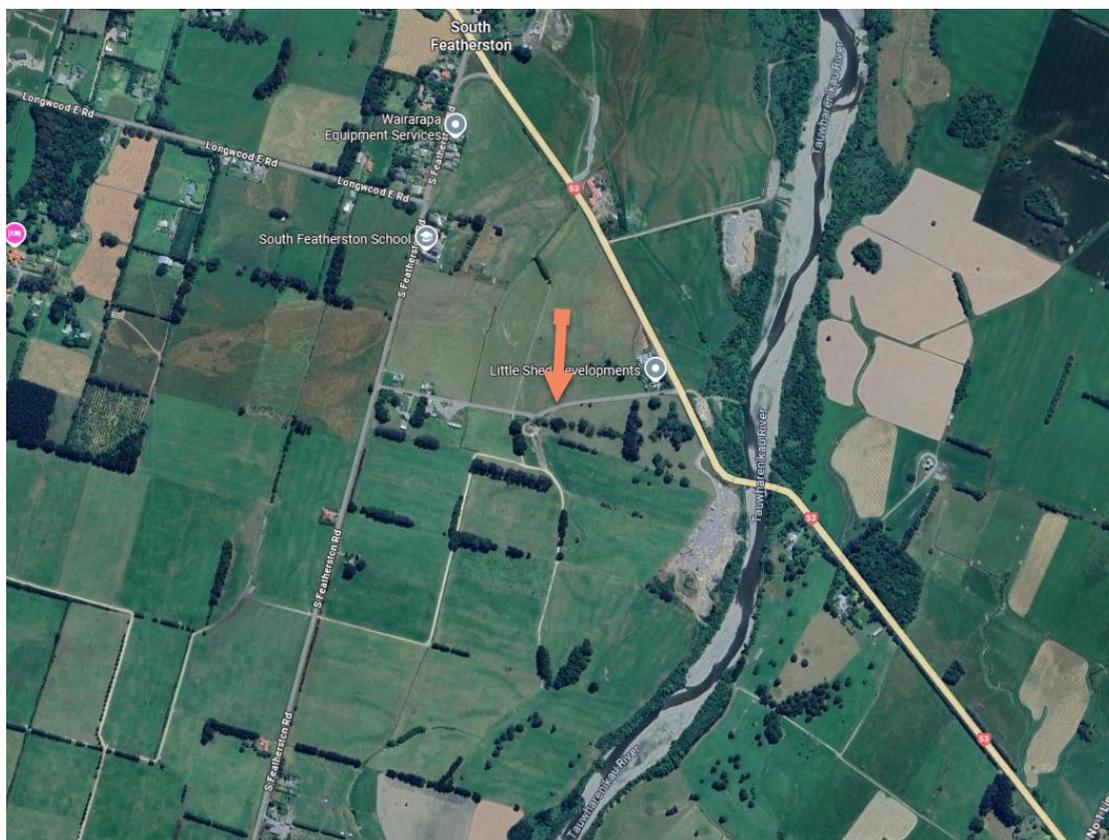
### FINANCIALS

Current account balance \$14,173 with \$24,215 in term deposits. Accounts will go in for review ahead of AGM on 28 February 2026.

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.)

## FUNDRAISING

The first firewood working bee of 2026 will be on **15 February**. This will **start 8 am**, South Featherston access off SH53 before the bridge, 'Farriers' tanker turn-around area (see map below). Ringing and splitting. Please bring appropriate protective gear, and a trailer if you want wood. Gum and macrocarpa.



## Firewood prices

- \$50 per m<sup>3</sup> for members who actively participate in working bee on the day
- \$75 per m<sup>3</sup> for members who don't show up (or collect their wood then disappear!)
- \$100 per m<sup>3</sup> for non-members

## HUTS & TRACKS

Come along to our General Meeting on 18 February to hear our guest speaker **Derrick Field** on the work of the **Greater Wellington Backcountry Network (GWBN)** [www.gwbn.org.nz](http://www.gwbn.org.nz). The GWBN recently did 5 days of track maintenance work in the Tauherinikau valley from Smith Creek to Cone, including Bull Mound and Cone Saddle tracks. Thanks to Amalgamated Helicopters for their support on this project.

Mike Thrupp represents the branch at Greater Wellington Backcountry Network Inc meetings. Hamish Graham represents us with the Aorangi Restoration Trust.



## SEARCH & RESCUE

Quiet, but some recent training exercises. Please contact Luke on 027 630 7640 if you are interested in joining LandSAR

## HALL

Plenty of enquiries regarding hire. For hall bookings call 022 323 6993 or email [wairarapanzda@gmail.com](mailto:wairarapanzda@gmail.com).

## DEER PARK

The red stag will soon be replaced. A sub-group is arranging a working bee for fencing.

## MEMBERSHIPS

We have 187 current financial members.

National Office have advised us they aim to have **invoices for 2026/27 out by 1 March 2026. Please pay your subscription as soon as invoice received** to keep up your membership benefits (insurance, eligibility for entry to competitions etc). Membership fees for 2026/27 will be the same as those for 2025/26.

It is now a legal requirement to keep the membership register updated. If you move house, change your email address, or contact phone number, you must let us know. We will then let NZDA National Office know on your behalf

## 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 and Wednesday afternoon from 2 pm** 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.

## Major changes to firearms law

The Government has announced the repeal and replacement of the Arms Act, the legislation at the heart of New Zealand's firearms laws. This is a significant development for everyone in the hunting community.

**The Arms Bill is now open for submissions, and you have until Monday 16 February 11.59 pm** to have your say on the firearm laws that determine the future of every licensed firearm owner.

The Minister's statement and an explanation of the proposals are available here: [Fairer, fit-for-purpose Arms Act to improve public safety | Beehive.govt.nz](https://www.beehive.govt.nz/arms-act)

A COLFO guide on how to make a submission is available here: <https://www.colfo.org/arms-bill-signup>

A Facebook video discussing the changes: <https://www.facebook.com/share/v/17MS39fKyv/>

The goal is 100,000 submissions from licensed firearm owners to stand a chance to protect the future of shooting sports. We cannot throw away our shot.



Severe hunting injuries double during the Roar, usually due to slips, trips, falls and carrying heavy loads, with physical and mental fatigue a major factor.

Start training now to reduce your risk of getting injured and be better prepared to handle the terrain and carry your gear – and hopefully that hard-earned rack of antlers – out safely.

NZ Mountain Safety Council's free 12-week #ROARfit guide will help you get in peak condition, with training ideas and fitness tips.

[Download the guide and get Roar-ready for 2026](#)



Little Ruahine roar stag. Photo Richard O'Driscoll

## Licensing demand creating delays

Licence applications have risen sharply, and processing times are longer than usual. This surge stems from the introduction of the 10-year licence. Many were issued around the same time, meaning large numbers are now expiring together.

We are exploring ways to smooth out these high-demand peaks in the system. In the meantime, applying early helps both you and us. If you apply for your renewal prior to the expiry date, you can continue to possess and use firearms and ammunition legally, irrespective of how long the renewal process takes. Additionally, applications submitted before a licence expires cost \$126.50 and remain valid for 10 years, while expired-licence applications cost \$241.50 and are valid for five.

If you have already applied, please remain patient - we'll contact you as your application progresses. For queries, email your local regional firearms office (details are on our website under [regional firearms office](#))



## 2025 National Wild Goat Hunting Competition Results



**Thank you to everyone who took part — together, you've helped remove over 33,000 wild goats since the competition began in 2023!**

National prize winners have been drawn — **click below to find out if you've won.** Local prize winners will be contacted directly by their local NZDA branch.

A huge shout-out to our incredible sponsors for bringing top-tier gear and unforgettable experiences: Hunting & Fishing NZ, Nocpix, Bushnell, Real Meals, NZ Hunter, Hunters Element, and Missing in Aotearoa.

The competition was brought to you by DOC and the NZDA, and proudly supported by Hunting & Fishing NZ Ltd, Federated Farmers, and Te Tari Pūreke – The Firearms Safety Authority.

Hunters are part of the solution, helping reduce pressure on nature. See you next year!

[Find out if you won national prizes](#)

## Landowners reducing wild deer impacts on QEII covenants



Motivated by both the financial impacts on their farming business and environmental damage, Doug and Jo McKenzie from the Tararua region spend a considerable amount of time and energy controlling the local wild deer population across their large farming station. In the last four years Doug has removed roughly a thousand deer from their QEII-covenanted bush and surrounding property. From a quick conservative estimate, Doug reckons they've lost \$75k to 100k in unrealised revenue due to pasture competition caused by the wild deer in that same period.

Large-scale exclusion requires planning, investment, and using a range of tools to be effective and sustainable. A method that has worked for Doug is using a trap to catch deer, which currently spans over thirty hectares and cost about \$100k to build. The trap passively groups up deer allowing for more effective management.

Doug warns that deer exclusion is not a "set and forget" exercise, and that "you've always got to be vigilant" but adds that the results are "so satisfying" once a block is finally excluded of deer.

[Read more about QEII and landowner efforts](#)

### You may use:



### You must not use:



### Reminder: Are you using thermal or night vision gear on public conservation land?

You may use:

- Handheld thermal devices to search for and locate animals (during daylight hours)

You must not use:

- Rifle mounted thermal or night-vision devices (even during the day)
- Thermal devices to identify targets

**Know the rules of your DOC hunting permit**

## **Predator Control Operation: Northern Ruahine**

Epro Limited has been contracted by the Department of Conservation to undertake an aerial predator control operation in the Northern Ruahine area. This notice advises of a pending aerial pellet prefeed (non-toxic) application due to be undertaken in the next suitable weather window from **9 February 2026**. 1080 Application will follow no sooner than five days after the pre-feed depending on weather and operational requirements.

Warning signs will be placed at all normal points of entry to the operation prior to the application of bait containing 0.15 percent 1080. The carcasses of poisoned animals pose a significant risk to dogs for several months after the operation. Warning signs will remain in place until this risk has passed.

Further Information from Epro: [control@epro.co.nz](mailto:control@epro.co.nz)

## **Aerial 1080 Operation – Southern Tararua & Project Kākā Area**

Rentokil Initial (trading as Rentokil Rural) wishes to advise the public of its intention to aerially apply the toxin Sodium Fluoroacetate (1080) for the purpose of controlling pests in the Southern Tararua ranges.

The Southern Tararua operation is being undertaken as part of OSPRI New Zealand's TBfree programme to protect local farms from tuberculosis infection. The Project Kaka operation is being undertaken as part of the Department of Conservation (DOC) National Predator Control Programme, it is at the Northern end of OSPRI's TB Management Area in Southern Tararua, OSPRI NZ is managing the Project Kaka operation on behalf of DOC.

The operations are now scheduled to be delivered from **early February 2026**, however the timing may vary as the operation is weather-dependent. There are two phases to the proposed programme; prefeed & toxic, each phase should be completed in one day.

Southern Tararua Bait Description:

- Pre-feed (non-toxic): Cereal based pellet, approximately 16 mm in diameter, brown in colour. Bait will be sown at a rate of 1 kg per hectare.
- Toxic bait (Sodium Fluoroacetate (1080): Cereal based pellet, approximately 20 mm in diameter & dyed green. Bait will be sown at a rate of 2 kg per hectare.

Project Kaka Bait Description:

- Pre-feed (non-toxic): Cereal based pellet, approximately 16 mm in diameter, brown in colour. Bait will be sown at a rate of 1.5 kg per hectare.
- Toxic bait (Sodium Fluoroacetate (1080): Cereal based pellet, approximately 16 mm in diameter & dyed green. Bait will be sown at a rate of 1.5 kg per hectare.

Both phases are weather dependant requiring 2-3 fine nights with minimal rainfall after application. Rentokil Rural is obtaining the required consents from the relevant agencies to carry out the work.

As part of public notification, Rentokil Rural will be placing advertisements in local and regional papers circulating in the wider area to inform the public of the operation and the associated risks. In addition, Rentokil Rural will be erecting signage at all key public access points such as walking and cycle tracks, roadways and public amenity areas. A reminder to please check for signage if you are in the area.

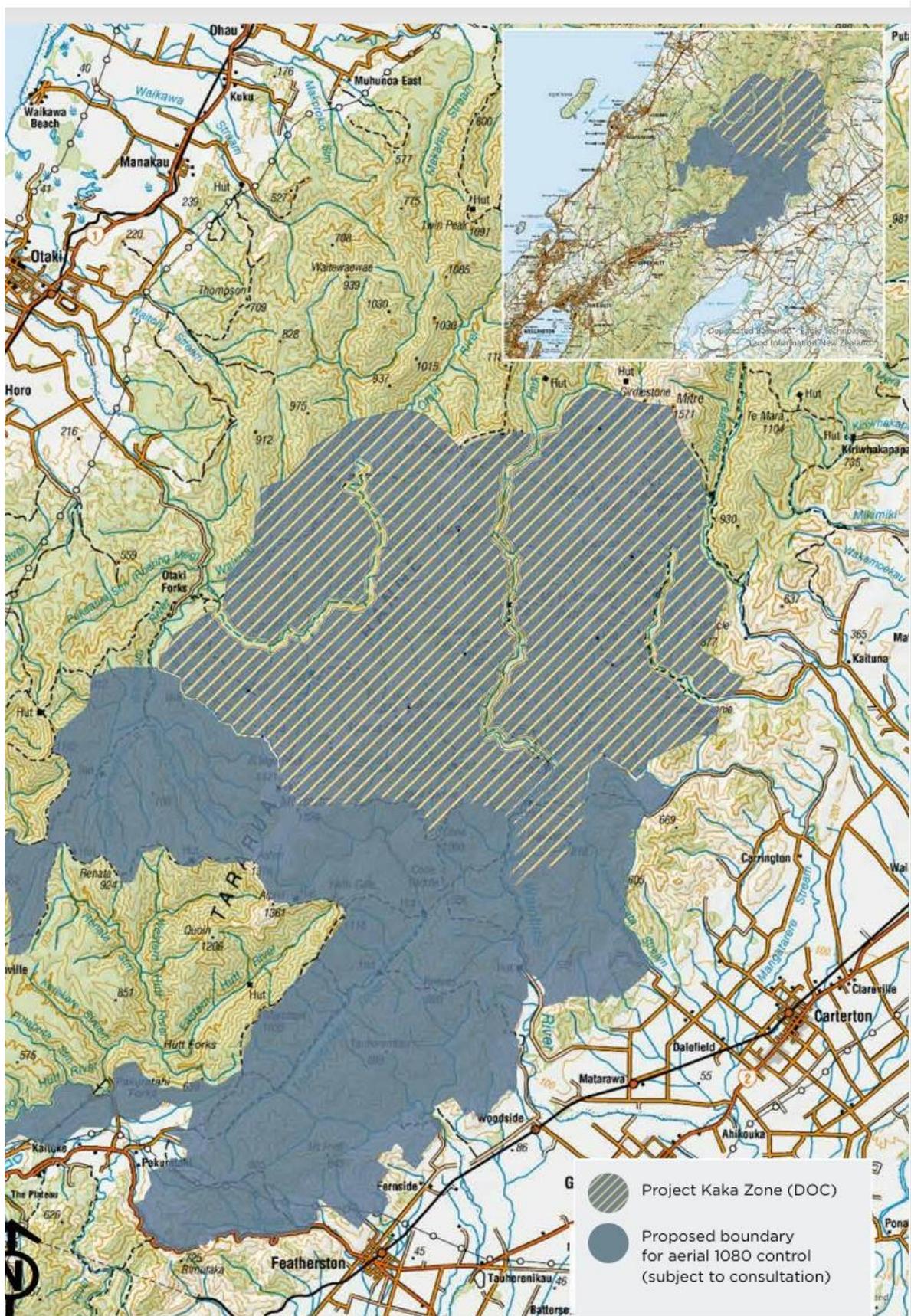
As always:

- DO NOT TOUCH poison bait
- WATCH CHILDREN at all times
- DO NOT EAT animals from the area (this also applies to buffer zones around the treatment area)
- Poison bait or carcasses are DEADLY to DOGS

For information you can check the OSPRI websites:

<https://www.ospri.co.nz/tb-and-pest-control/aerial-operations/>

<https://www.ospri.co.nz/assets/AerialOpsFactsheets/TBfree-Southern-Tararua-Aerial-Factsheet.pdf>



## 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](mailto:wairarapanzda@gmail.com)

### ➤ 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/>

### ➤ DOC200 TRAP BOXES with stainless steel mechanisms.

Made from H4-treated timber. These traps are for rats, hedgehogs and stoats. \$85.00 including GST. Contact [predatorfreemasterton@waip2k.org.nz](mailto:predatorfreemasterton@waip2k.org.nz) to place your order.

### ➤ RIDGELINE BOOT DEAL

The Ridgeline Tasman boot is a top-quality Italian made boot, specs below. I can supply these boots to NZDA members @ \$235 delivered inclusive of GST, normal RRP is \$350. Members to send orders to [catchphrase@xtra.co.nz](mailto:catchphrase@xtra.co.nz) I will send an invoice to each member payable before delivery, please send size required from size chart below and delivery details.



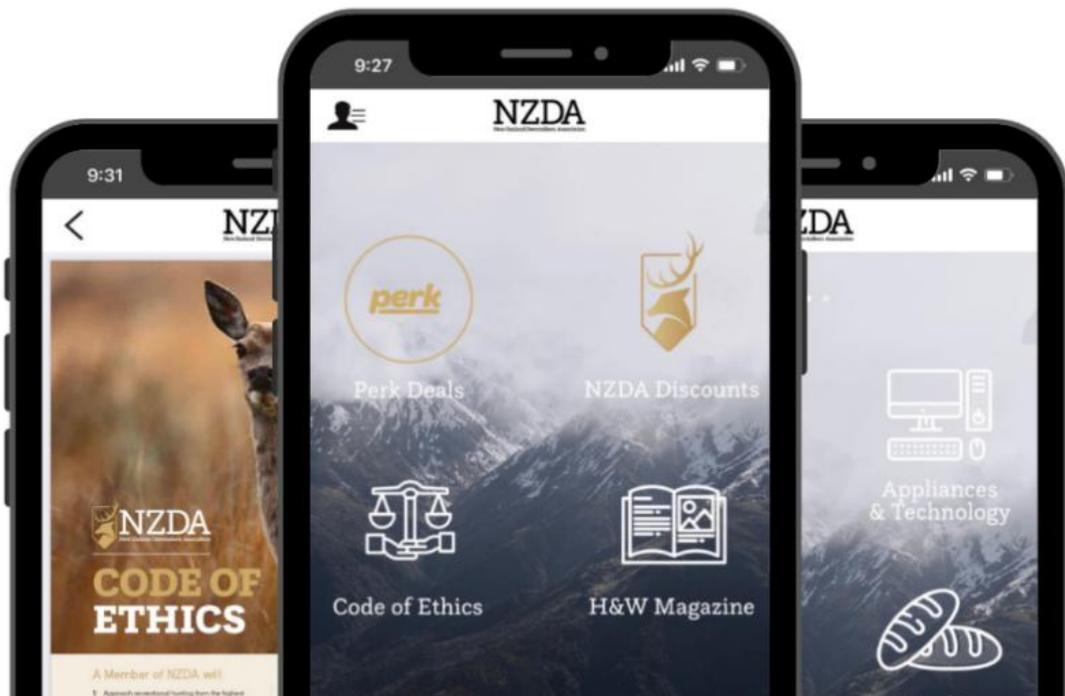
| Description  | Features  | Size Chart |
|--|---|------------|
|  Water resistant membrane designed to resist water penetration. |  Breathable fabric allows sweat to be wicked away from your body, keeping you cool and comfortable. |            |
|  This fabric has been chosen for its wearer warmth              |  Vibram is the first shoe sole created with a rubber lug sole.                                      |            |
|  12 month warranty  |   |            |

Sizing Note: Our boots are in US sizes. Check the size chart if you're unsure what size you need. This is a Unisex product – we recommend dropping down 1-1.5 sizes for women.

- Made in Italy
- Mid-cut design offers medium ankle support
- Sturdy and timeless Super Dakar Leather
- Spotex waterproof membrane
- Insulated lining keeps your feet warm
- Durable Vibram outsoles with superior grip
- Quality stitching makes them last longer
- 12-month warranty

| BOOT SIZING  |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| THIS IS A UNISEX PRODUCT. REFER TO MENS'S SIZING. WOMEN SIZE DOWN 1 TO 1 1/2 SIZES |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |       |
| US (MENS)  | 6     | 6.5   | 7     | 7.5   | 8     | 8.5   | 9     | 9.5   | 10    | 10.5  | 11    | 11.5  | 12    | 12.5  | 13    | 13.5  | 14    | 14.5  | 15    |
| UK   | 5     | 5.5   | 6     | 6.5   | 7     | 7.5   | 8     | 8.5   | 9     | 9.5   | 10    | 10.5  | 11    | 11.5  | 12    | 12.5  | 13    | 13.5  | 14    |
| EURO   | 39    | 39.5  | 40    | 40.5  | 41    | 41.5  | 42    | 43    | 44    | 44.5  | 45    | 45.5  | 46    | 46.5  | 47    | 47.5  | 48    | 48.5  | 49    |
| CM'S   | 24.50 | 24.75 | 25.00 | 25.25 | 25.50 | 25.75 | 26.00 | 26.25 | 26.50 | 27.00 | 27.50 | 27.75 | 28.00 | 28.25 | 28.50 | 28.75 | 29.00 | 29.25 | 29.50 |

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- [HUNTS training program](#) – training courses & certification for HUNTS Instructor

#### Final Thoughts

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

**Disclaimer:** The contents of this Newsletter come from various sources, and the opinions or ideas expressed are not necessarily endorsed by this committee or by National Executive, nor may they reflect Branch policy.

I \_\_\_\_\_ (proposer) nominate \_\_\_\_\_ to be a committee member at the Wairarapa NZDA Annual General Meeting to be held on 25 March 2026.

Signed by

\_\_\_\_\_ (proposer)

\_\_\_\_\_ (seconder)

I \_\_\_\_\_ accept this nomination.

\_\_\_\_\_ (nominated person)

Dated / / 2026

Nominations must be received by the secretary to email [yrarpanzdasec@gmail.com](mailto:yrarpanzdasec@gmail.com) no later than 11 March 2026. The proposer, seconder and nominated person must all be financial members at the time of nomination.