



Wairarapa

NZDA

New Zealand Deerstalkers Association

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

Newsletter for **March 2026**

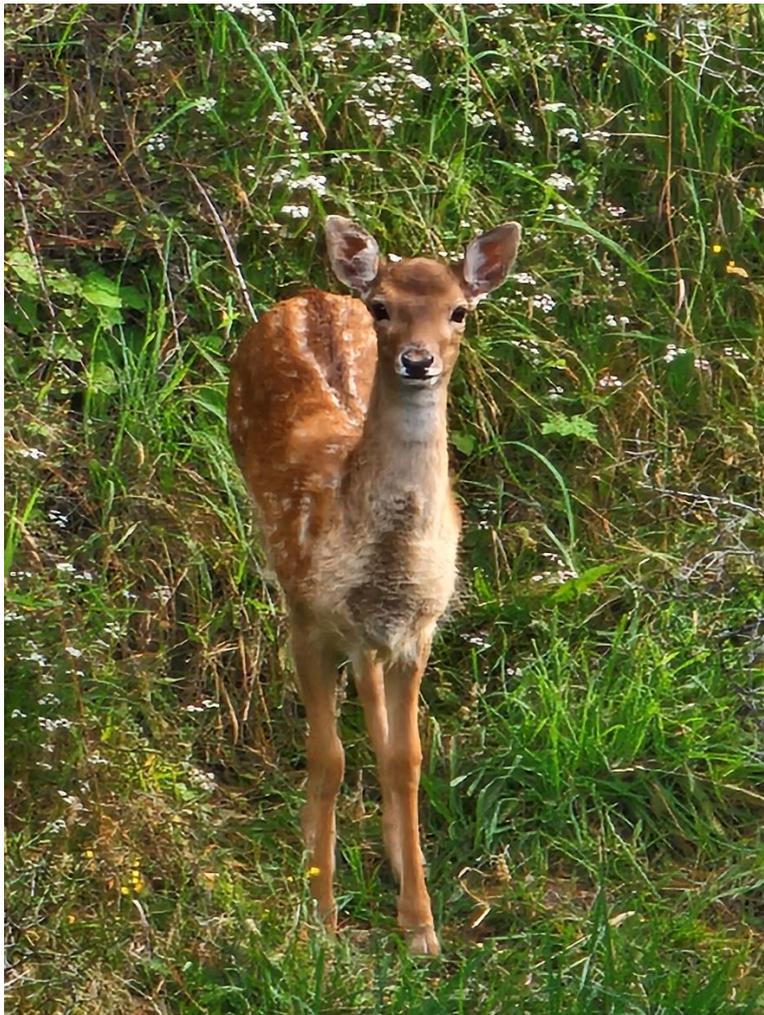


Photo credit **Geoff Lindsay** Inquisitive fallow

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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 2025 to September 2026 – prize of \$50 Stories and photos to the newsletter editor at wairarapanzda@gmail.com

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

Calendar

5-9 March	2026	NZDA Ruahine management hunt (alternate dates)
6-11 March	2026	West coast tahr hunt.
Wed 11 March	2026	Nominations close for committee
Sun 22 March	2026	Firewood working bee. South Featherston starting 8 am. See details later in newsletter.
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	General meeting. Parkvale Hall 7:30 pm. Lloyd's wild adventures in Africa.

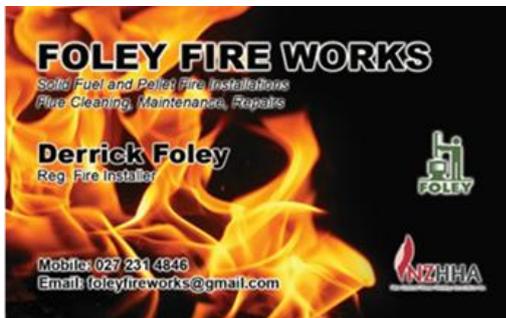


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Notice of Annual General Meeting Wednesday 25 March 2026

Note this is 4th Wednesday of March not our usual 3rd 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 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.

General Meeting 18 February

Guest speaker **Derrick Field** talked to about 25 members on the work of the Greater Wellington Backcountry Network (GWBN).

This volunteer group has cut over 550 km of tracks in the Tararuas, Remutakas, and Aorangis over the past 4 years, including repeat maintenance. Last year they had over 5000 hours of volunteer effort from 46 volunteers – an average of 110 hours per person in the hills. With limited funding from DOC and the Te Araroa Trail, the cost to the taxpayer works out at just of \$100 per kilometre of track. But each kilometre takes an average of 27 person-hours!

To find out more about this group and how you can volunteer, check out the website gwbn.org.nz or call Liz Nicholson on 027 224 2556.



Committee News and Updates

UPCOMING HUNTS

The next Wanganui trip in **May is full**.

The **NZDA management hunt in the central and western Rughines** originally scheduled for 26 Feb to 2 Mar was **postponed** due to poor weather forecast for fly-in and tops. The trip will (hopefully) go ahead on backup dates of 5–9 March with Branch member Peter Setz participating (unfortunately our two other branch members who had signed up couldn't make the alternate dates). 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.

Two members have gone on the **tahr trip to the west coast for 6–11 March 2026**.

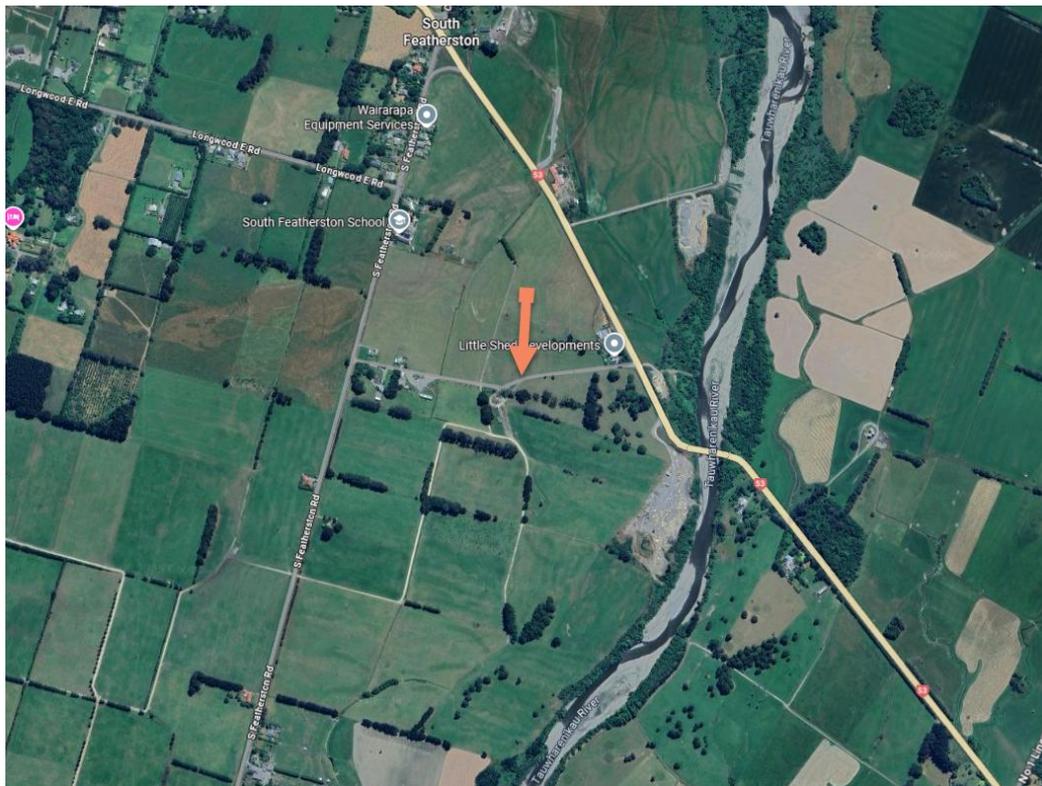
FINANCIALS

Accounts have been submitted for review ahead of AGM.

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 firewood working bee on 15 February was postponed due to bad weather. This has been rescheduled for **Sunday 22 March**, starting **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 m³ for members who actively participate in working bee on the day
- \$75 per m³ for members who don't show up (or collect their wood then disappear!)
- \$100 per m³ for non-members

HUTS & TRACKS

See the update above about our General Meeting on 18 February where we heard from **Derrick Field** about the work of the **Greater Wellington Backcountry Network (GWBN)** www.gwbn.org.nz. Recent track cutting activity around Mitre Flats to Mitre Peak and towards Cow Creek.

Mike Thrupp represents the branch at GWBN meetings. Hamish Graham represents us with the Aorangi Restoration Trust.

SEARCH & RESCUE

SarEx was recently held, combined with Wellington. 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.

DEER PARK

An impromptu working bee was held on evening of 25 February to tidy up the park after the recent high winds. Great turnout of 18 members. Thanks to Mark Wellington for photos below. Two truckloads of rubbish were removed.



The red stag and one spiker have been removed. A sub-group is arranging a working bee for fencing.

MEMBERSHIPS

National Office have emailed **invoices for 2026/27**. 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.

Renew your NZDA membership this March and you'll go in the draw to win an unforgettable wilderness tahr hunt on the West Coast, along with a prize pack valued at over \$10,000.

You'll be joining the NZDA advocacy team, with the hunt scheduled for May 2026. Full details are available on our website. Terms and conditions apply. [See details here.](#)

On top of the hunt, the winner will take home:

- A Hunttech gear pack (valued at \$1,400)
- A \$1,000 Mix & Match flight voucher
- Bushnell R5 6-18x50 scope
- Crispi Futura CX boots

Renew between 1 March and 31 March 2026 and you'll automatically be in the draw.

ALWAYS treat firearms as if they are loaded

7

ALWAYS point firearms in a safe direction



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.

What's Next for the Arms Bill

The public consultation period for the Arms Bill has now ended. Thank you to all those who took action and told the government your views on what New Zealand's firearm laws should be. COLFO would

also like to acknowledge the many community heroes who tirelessly volunteered their time to run events and help others to make submissions. There has never been a more important time for us to come together as a community, and your efforts did not go unnoticed.

A total of 2,453 people downloaded the COLFO guide. However, the major success was that the new generator tool was used 6,143 times in the final week it was available. [You can read the COLFO Submission here.](#)

The Select Committee will now hear from those who chose to make a verbal submission. COLFO and our membership organisations will be speaking to our submission and answering questions from the committee. These will be broadcast by the Government, and COLFO will share the highlights on our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages. You can watch the first speaker, [Minister Nicole McKee's appearance here.](#)

Stewart Island (Rakiura) Updates

Last year an aerial 1080 poison operation was undertaken around the Pukenui (dotterel) breeding area on Rakiura. The aim was to kill rats and subsequently cats by secondary poisoning. The cat kill has been excellent but Norway and Kiore, not so great. A result is DOC/ZIP have abandoned any further aerial 1080 poisoning in 2026.

The operations trialled the use of deer repellent and monitoring was undertaken by the Bioeconomy Science Institute (formally Manaaki Whenua – Landcare Research). Results showed a 97% decrease in white-tailed deer activity where deer repellent was not applied and a 75% decrease in activity where the repellent was applied.

NZ Game Animal Council (GAC) CEO Corina Jordan says the Rakiura white-tailed herd is highly valued, being one of only two herds in the South Pacific. "An estimated 3,500 hunters travel to Rakiura annually to not only hunt, but to experience the unique and exciting Rakiura environment. Visiting hunters also provide an important contribution to the local economy," she says. "Hunters are committed to protecting conservation values but there remains concern around the use of toxic control agents and their impact on game animals and hunting. "The result of these operations across a quarter of the island is incredibly heartbreaking for the white-tailed deer and the communities that value them."

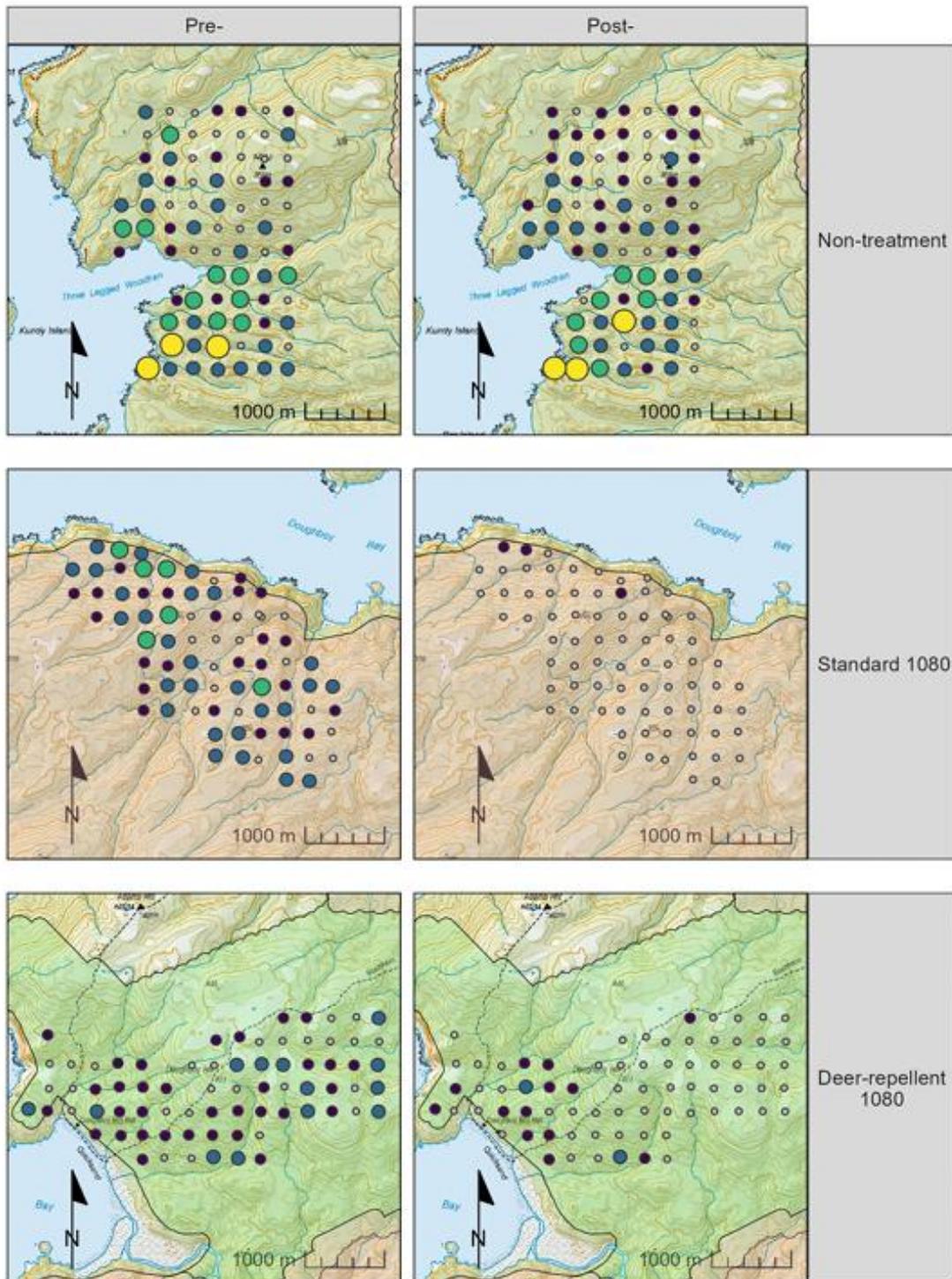
"We have been liaising with Predator Free Rakiura project leaders since mid-2024, raising concerns in relation to the impact of toxin use for predator control on the white-tailed deer, hunter and community values." New Zealand Deerstalkers Association, the Rakiura Whitetail Trust, and Rakiura Hunter Camps Trust have also been part of these discussions.

While the application of deer repellent appears to have slightly lowered the operation's impact on deer where it was used, it still indicates that deer repellent is not effective for Rakiura white-tailed deer.

It would appear a significant number of whitetail deer were killed but no effort has been made to identify individual deer seen on cameras. Animals were recorded only as a "visit", each camera image (visit) could easily have been the same deer. The reporting shows only the number of "visits" to each camera but not the number of individual deer which as hunters we would find interesting. Nowhere were there more than two "visits" per day or only three cameras at Three Legged Woodhen show more than five in a week.

Deer numbers at Doughboy were not high. 9 parties entered Hunter Reports in 2025. They hunted for a total of 146 days. Deer sighting per hunter averaged 1.09, well below the Island average. 4.56 days hunting for each deer seen.

Maps showing the trail camera monitoring results for white-tailed deer before and after the operation



Visits per week ● <math>< 0.5</math> ● 0.5–2.0 ● 2.0–5.0 ● >5

Banned Boats

Rakiura Maori Land Trust have banned boats bigger than 4 metres from their blocks. We hear the reason is to protect the fish resources around the campsites. Perhaps they should have banned boats under 4 metres as bigger boats can travel a lot further from campsites!

Hunter Reports

ALWAYS treat firearms as if they are loaded

ALWAYS point firearms in a safe direction

Many thanks to all who submitted a Hunter report after a trip last year. 205 parties did so which is 35.4%, a record number but we need to do better. DOC have reported that 579 party permits were issued for 2025. This is 101 parties less than 2024. I find that hard to believe and I suspect may have something to do with the new permit system. The importance of accurate data is clear when you look at the likes of the poison at Doughboy.

Private Land at North Pegasus block

Be aware there are two areas of private land with no hunting at the head of North Arm. (shown in red) There is no block map which shows this although there are signs on site.



Stewart Island whitetail Photo Peter 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](#))

Staying safe when hunting in hilly terrain

When you're out hunting, it's important to stay aware of your surroundings - especially in steep or hilly terrain. The skyline is a common place to spot game animals, but taking a shot at this point can be extremely dangerous.

That's because the firing zone beyond the animal is unknown. A projectile travelling over a ridge can strike people, animals, or property you can't see. Safety must always come first.

Most calibres commonly used for hunting can send a projectile several kilometres from the firing position. That reach means a single unsafe shot can have life-changing consequences.

Before you take any shot, pause, assess the backdrop, and make sure you can clearly identify not only your target but also what lies well beyond it.

If you'd like to refresh your knowledge of the seven rules of firearms safety, our YouTube channel has helpful videos and demonstrations to support safe decision-making in the field:
www.youtube.com/@FirearmsSafetyAuthorityNZ



Tararua tops Photo Richard O'Driscoll

Looking after ourselves and each other

Did you know that around one in three New Zealanders will experience some form of mental health difficulty each year? Conditions such as anxiety or depression are common and often manageable, but in some situations, symptoms can raise safety concerns - particularly for firearms licence holders.

It's always a good idea to check in with friends or whānau and make sure they're doing okay. If you're worried that someone's mental health may be affecting their ability to possess firearms safely, you can help by encouraging them to seek support from their GP, a health provider, or a mental health service. If you hold a firearms licence, you may temporarily store their firearms for up to 30 days without needing to transfer possession in the Firearms Registry. They can also choose to surrender their licence and reapply when they're ready.

If you're concerned about someone's immediate safety, dial 111. For support, you can free call or text **1737**, or

- Lifeline – 0800 543 354 (0800 LIFELINE) or free text 4357 (HELP)
- Suicide Crisis Helpline – 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)
- Rural Support Trust – 0800 824 757

More information is available at:

firearmssafetyauthority.govt.nz/manage-and-apply/health-and-wellbeing/health-and-wellbeing-firearms-licence-holders
and mentalthunts.co.nz



GAC urges hunters to make good decisions and 'master the roar'

The roar is an exciting time of the year, and people will be looking forward to reconnecting with New Zealand's wild places, excitement and adventure, and a bit of time alone or with friends and family.

"Hunting benefits our physical and mental wellbeing. It gets kids outside, and teaches practical skills, in addition to providing free-range meat to families," says NZ Game Animal Council (GAC) Chief Executive Corina Jordan. "The GAC is urging hunters to 'master the roar' by sharpening their skills and making sound decisions that keep themselves and others safe," she says. "A hunter who masters the roar is skilled, safe, responsible, and a good steward of New Zealand's game animal herds. "Success during the roar isn't only measured by what ends up on the wall or in the freezer, but by coming home safely and ensuring your mates do too."

The GAC is again reminding hunters to understand and observe the 5 Ps:

1. **Plan** for the best – know where you are going, carry the right food and equipment, and check the forecast.
2. **Prepare** for the worst – carry a beacon and first aid kit and be prepared to wait out bad weather or high river levels.
3. **Provide** your intentions – let others know where you are going and when you plan to get out.
4. **Positively** identify your target – be 100% sure of your target, treat every firearm as loaded and chamber a cartridge only when ready to fire.
5. **Pick** the right animal – help improve future roars by leaving younger males and know how to identify mature animals.

"Most experienced hunters will read these and nod. But familiarity can breed complacency, so the roar is the perfect time to revise and remind yourself," Corina says.

A master of the roar also considers how actions on the hill impacts other users. "Hunters, fishers, trampers, mountain bikers and others are getting out and enjoying the backcountry, particularly during the Easter and ANZAC long weekends. "A brief conversation at a hut or on the track, sharing where you intend to hunt and asking where others are heading, can ease people's concerns and help avoid situations where you get in each other's way."

Finally, being a master of the roar extends to the animal's hunters choose to harvest. "Picking the right animal – leaving younger stags to reach their potential and targeting hinds for meat and

management – supports healthier herds, a healthier environment and better roar hunting in the future," Corina says.

"So, be a master of the roar this year, make good decisions, look after your mates, respect the activities of other users, and contribute to game animal management that will enhance the hunting experience in the future."

For more on the 5Ps and hunter safety, go to www.nzgac.org.nz/hunter-safety.

To undertake free online modules on all aspects of hunting and firearm safety, as well as brushing up on your skills as a hunter, visit www.betterhunting.nz.



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](#)

Pre-feed notification: Southern Tararua

The non-toxic component of the Southern Tararua aerial operation will be carried out on the afternoon of Wednesday 4th March 2026 and continue on Thursday 5th March 2026 (weather permitting).

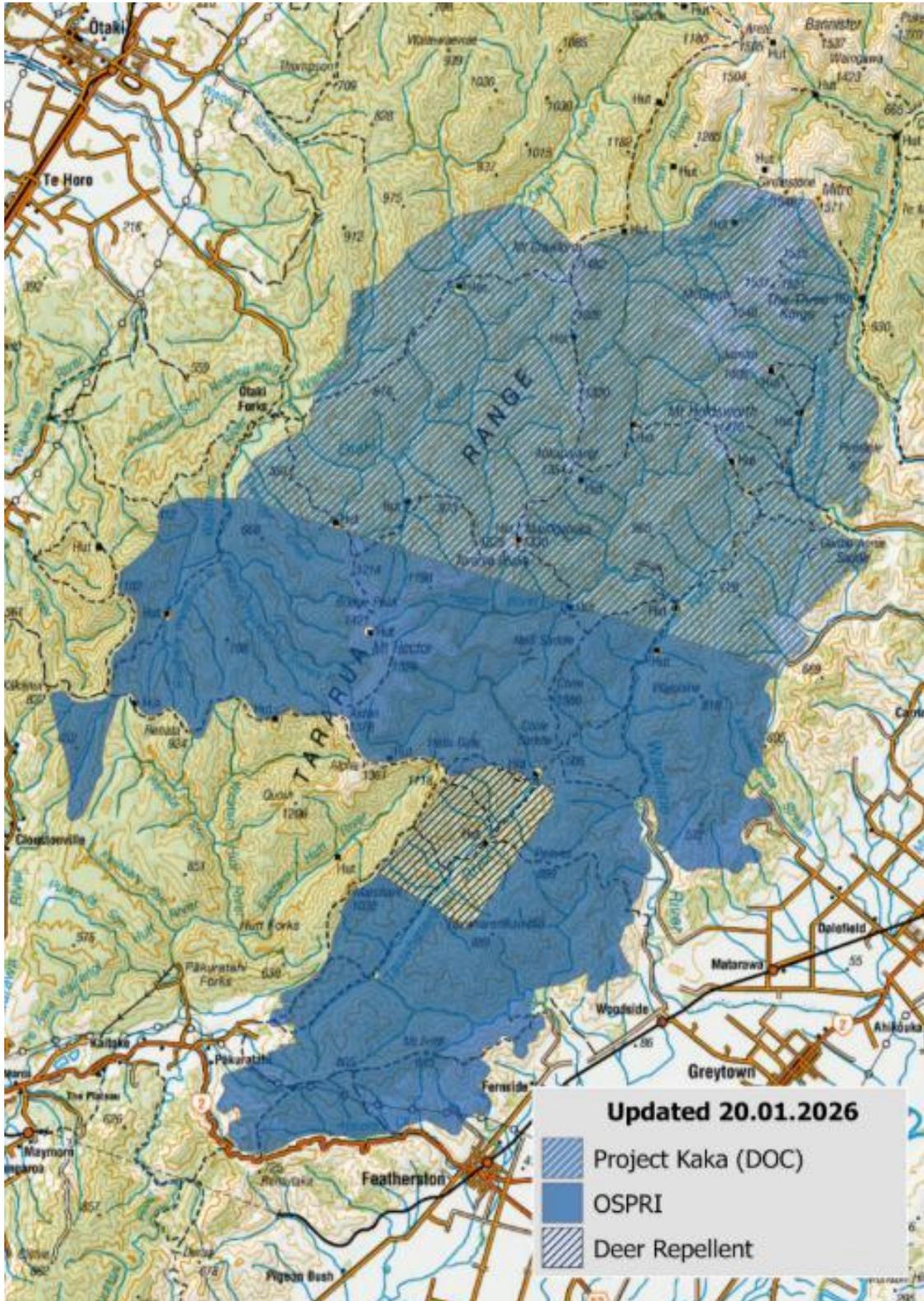
This email is to notify you that Rentokil Initial (trading as Rentokil Rural) is undertaking this work on behalf of Ospri, for the purpose of enhancing biodiversity and eradicating bovine tuberculosis (TB) from New Zealand's farmed cattle, deer and wild animal populations.

This part of the operation is expected to take one and a half days. Helicopters will be sowing a 'pre-feed' of non-toxic cereal pellets. This accustoms the pests to the pellets as food, which greatly increases the effectiveness of the poison operation. The 1080 poison pellets will be sown in 1-6 weeks' time (weather permitting).

Key points are:

- The non-toxic pellets are about 16mm in diameter and brown in colour. The pellets are sown at 1kg/ha.
- The non-toxic pellets will be applied in the same areas as the toxic pellets will be. A helicopter will distribute the pellets according to predetermined flight paths controlled by GPS.

If you would like any further information about the planned operation, please contact Ian Cutler, Aerial Operations Manager on 021 134 2674.



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

➤ 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 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 I will send an invoice to each member payable before delivery, please send size required from size chart below and delivery details.



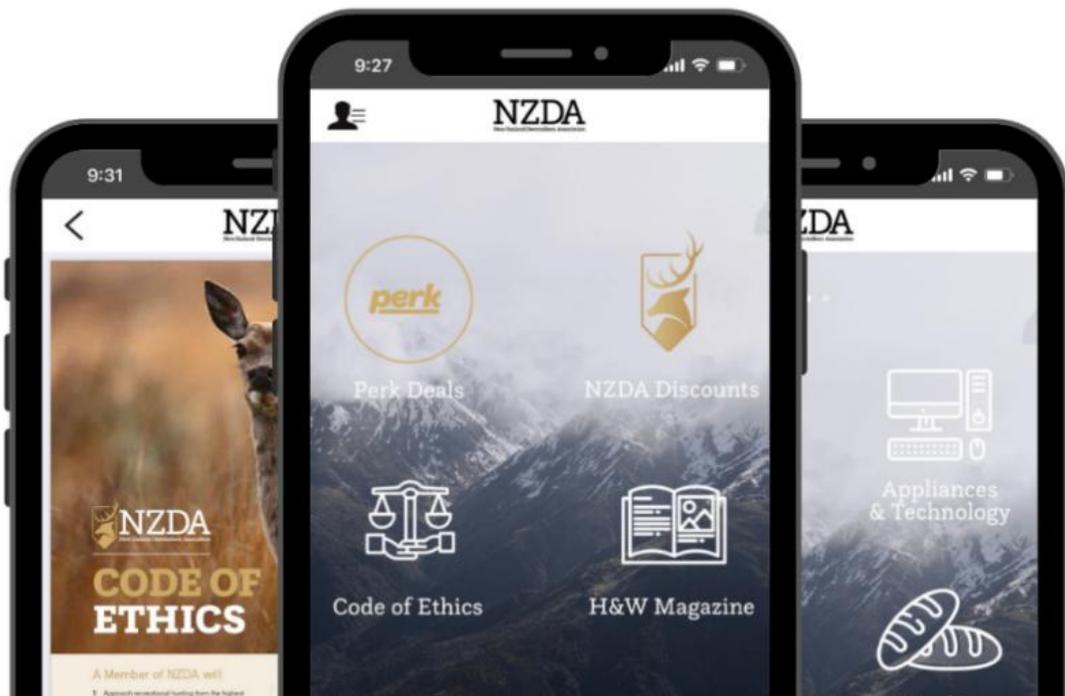
Description	Features	Size Chart
 WATER RESISTANT	Water resistant membrane designed to resist water penetration.	 BREATHABLE
 WARM	This fabric has been chosen for its wearer warmth	 VIBRAM OUTSOLES
 12	12 month warranty	

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

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



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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

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 no later than 11 March 2026. The proposer, seconder and nominated person must all be financial members at the time of nomination.