



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

Newsletter for July 2026



Photo credit **Peter O'Driscoll** Just sniffing around – Rangitata tahr

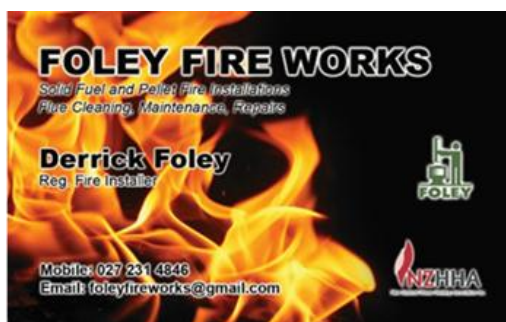
Contacts

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Secretary	Liz Nicholson	027 224 2556
Treasurer	Sean Roberts	021 822 802
Deer Park	Aidan Bichan	027 432 3410
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Parkvale Hall Booking	Andrew Dennes	andrewdennes71@gmail.com 022 323 6993 please use this number for bookings and enquiries
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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

Thu 23 Jul	2026	Indoor small-bore shooting night. Masterton Miniature Rifle Club, Cole Street, Masterton. Starting 7 pm.
24–26 July	2026	78 th National Conference, Lower Hutt Events Centre & Town Hall
Wed 5 Aug	2026	Committee meeting. Parkvale Hall 7:30 pm.
Wed 19 Aug	2026	Open night. Hunting & Fishing Masterton. Starting 6:30 pm.
Wed 2 Sep	2026	Entries close for Branch AHT & Photo competitions (entry form back of newsletter) 7:30 pm
Wed 2 Sep	2026	Committee meeting. Parkvale Hall 7:30 pm.
Wed 16 Sep	2026	General meeting. Parkvale Hall 7:30 pm. Speaker to be confirmed.
25–27 Sep	2026	Hunting competition (see flyer in newsletter)
Wed 7 Oct	2026	Committee meeting. Parkvale Hall 7:30 pm.
Sat 17 Oct	2026	Annual dinner & prize-giving
Wed 4 Nov	2026	Committee meeting. Parkvale Hall 7:30 pm.
Wed 18 Nov	2026	Open night. King & Henry Masterton.





General Meeting Wednesday 17 June 2026

A good turnout for a winter night came to hear **Cam Speedy**. Cam is a Wildlife Biologist, hunter and has over 40 years working with native and introduced wildlife. He gave us an interesting and informative presentation on principles of game management, using examples from his work with the Wapiti and Sika foundations. Quotes like "you can't build a nuclear submarine out of rusty nails" and "it is like when the Kiwi Experience bus full of German girls arrives at the pub in Turangi" helped to explain the science in terms we could all understand! The meeting was in conjunction with **Aorangi Restoration Trust** and great to get our groups together.



If you missed it, check out Cam talking on https://youtu.be/rI_3xK3_J9k

Next general meeting

Thursday 23 July 7:00 pm Masterton Miniature Rifle Club, Cole Street

This is a **Thursday night** and replaces our July general meeting. \$15 for two cards. Children of members (12-17 years old) shoot free. This is always a fun night and there are senior and junior trophies up for grabs so bring the kids along.



Committee News and Updates

FINANCIALS

Current balance \$17,663 with \$24,726 in term deposits.

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.)

The committee has applied to Trust Lands Trust for a grant for Deer Park pen extensions and is investigating grant options to fund installation of fencing, and water filtration and septic systems at Parkvale Hall.

HUTS & TRACKS

The Greater Wellington Backcountry Network (GWBN) www.gwbn.org.nz completed the Te Kopi end of the Aorangi crossing just before the recent flooding. This adds to the 500 km of tracks already cut over summer!

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

SEARCH & RESCUE

Please contact Luke on 027 630 7640 if you are interested in joining LandSAR

HALL

Bookings are steady. Committee has set up a fortnightly cleaning roster.

For hall bookings call 022 323 6993 or email wairarapanzda@gmail.com.

MEMBERSHIPS

We have just gone through and removed non-financial members for 2026/27 from our distribution lists.

RANGE & SHOOTING

We are looking to schedule our **Branch clay target shoot in August**, and our **annual shooting competition in September**. Details will be in August newsletter.

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 Deerstarkers 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.

DEER PARK

Red and fallow numbers have been reduced before winter with excess animals relocated or sold. A new red spiker has been introduced for fresh blood.



As noted under financials, we have applied to Trust Lands Trust for a grant for Deer Park pen extensions.

FUNDRAISING

Next firewood working bee will be in spring.

The Branch is arranging a hunting competition in September. See the flyer below and put it on your calendars. Sponsored by ColdAir Helicopters.



The flyer is set against a scenic background of a mountain range under a blue sky. It features several images of game animals: a deer in the top left, a pig in the bottom left, and a rabbit in the bottom right. A large key is positioned on the left side, with the text 'KING & HENRY' and 'HUNTING, SHOOTING, FISHING' on its head. The NZDA logo is at the top left, and the 'Hunting & Fishing NEW ZEALAND' logo is on the right. A QR code is located on the left, and a yellow button is in the center. Text is arranged in various sizes and colors (yellow, white, black) to provide details about the competition.

Wairarapa NZDA
New Zealand Deerstalkers Association

GAME ANIMAL MANAGEMENT HUNTING COMPETITION

 **September 25th – 27th**

Open to all Hunters \$20

Scan QR code to enter and T&C's

1 Animal = 1 Entry

Deer
Red hind - Fallow doe

Pig
Sow

Goat
Nannies

Junior Category: Free entry per adult paid entry

1 Animal = 1 Entry

Possum 1st : 2nd
Hare 1st : 2nd
Rabbit 1st : 2nd

Lots of prizes
Up for grabs
Cold Air Helicopters voucher
Fallow deer hunt
Fire wood
And much more

Any unwanted Deer/Pigs and Goats supplied will be processed and donated to local food banks

Proudly sponsored by ColdAir Helicopters

COLD AIR HELICOPTERS

WAIRARAPA BRANCH AHT & PHOTO COMPETITIONS

Closing date for entries for annual Branch competitions is 7:30 pm on Wednesday 2 September 2026. Entries can be dropped off at the General Meeting at Wairarapa Hunting & Fishing on 19 August 2026 or before the committee meeting at Parkvale Hall from 7 pm on 2 September 2026.

Categories are as follows:

- Red deer, public land (Avon Tatton Shield)
- Red deer, private land (Steve Ticehurst cup)
- Classic Red deer (J.M. Jury shield)
- Best goat head (Crawford Cameron shield)
- Best head where a trophy fee is paid (Playle trophy)
- Best pig jaw –undrawn tusks (Harvie Morrow shield)
- Best pig jaw – Drawn Tusks (N. Tilsey Shield)
- Aggregate, two or more species (V.V. Donald shield)
- Best head other species
- Best trophy head 'under 20'
- Tahr / Chamois (Max Cole Barometer)

Photographic categories are:

- Game animals in their wild, outdoor state (W.F. McIntyre Cup)
- Other Wildlife in its wild, outdoor state and not in any form of captivity (V.V. Donald Shield)
- Scenic relative to the sport of hunting (B.W. Newport Cup)
- Other – not covered in other categories (K Gear Cup)
- Junior photograph (Amos Cup)

All competitions will be run closely to the Branch Competition rules which have been laminated and displayed in our Parkvale meeting room for the whole competition year. These notes are simply an abbreviation of them.

Key dates this year are:

- Heads, jaws and photos must be taken in the year from 1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026.
- Entry forms and AH&T Trophies (heads) to be dropped off at Parkvale Hall by 7:30 pm Wednesday 2 September 2026.
- Photographs to be emailed to Richard O'Driscoll at wairarapanzda@gmail.com by 7:30 pm Wednesday 2 September 2026.
- Branch Prize-Giving – presentation of Awards & Certificates – Saturday 17 October 2026 (to be confirmed).

Extracts from the Rules.

1. Entrants must have been financial members of this branch at the time of shooting the trophy or taking the photograph. Junior members (18 years & under) to be noted on Entry forms please.
2. All entries in the Antler-horn-tusk competitions (including the Paid hunting section) must have been taken in unimpeded fair chase. No spotlighting. Paid hunting entries are to be clearly designated on Entry forms.
3. Antler-horn-tusk entries must be on a clean, full skull (or jaw). Foul entries will not be accepted. No mounted heads accepted.
4. A Disputes panel will be appointed by the Committee.
5. A competitor may enter more than one head in each competition.
6. Entry forms (both AH&T and photographs) should contain adequate information to illustrate the philosophies within these Competition rules are met.
7. Photos taken in N.Z. Not from a Conveyance. No dead animals or birds. All entries will be submitted digitally rather than as prints. Please email high resolution .jpg images to wairarapanzda@gmail.com Make sure you put "Photo entry" in subject. Images can also be provided on USB to Richard O'Driscoll (021 1411472). You will still need to complete an entry form for each photo entered.

8. Judging will be of four categories. The categories must be designated by the entrant and clearly marked on the Entry form. One fully completed entry form (see note 6 above) for each photo. Members may enter up to three photos in each category.
9. The categories are:
 - a) Game animals in their wild, outdoor state. Not in any form of captivity.
 - b) Other Wildlife in its wild, outdoor state and not in any form of captivity. The subject matter is to be relevant to hunting, hunting country, and the associated activities of hunters.
 - c) Scenic relative to the sport of hunting. Human activity should be of minor importance.
 - d) Other – not covered in other categories. Subject matter is to be relevant to hunting or hunting country. Or the associated activity of hunters.

NOTE: The winning photo of each category will be printed and retained for the Parkvale Hall display board.

Entry form at the end of the newsletter. There must be a separate entry form for each trophy or photo submitted!

GAC welcomes Herds of Special Interest Bill

The New Zealand Game Animal Council welcomes the Game Animal Council (Herds of Special Interest) Amendment Bill being passed into law, describing it as an important milestone for modern game animal management in New Zealand.

The Bill enables Herds of Special Interest to be designated and managed in national parks, while ensuring conservation values continue to be protected.



"This is a significant step forward in recognising game animals that are highly valued by hunters and enabling them to be managed for hunting values," says Game Animal Council Chief Executive Corina Jordan. "The amendment is important because it allows carefully managed game animal herds to be recognised within national parks, rather than treated only through the lens of extermination," Corina says. "This provides opportunities for a less ideological, more practical and more collaborative approach to managing our game animals. It recognises that hunting and its values are not separate from conservation; they are an important part of the solution and can achieve great results."

Ms Jordan says the hunting community has long shown its willingness to contribute to practical management solutions. "Hunters already invest enormous time, knowledge, effort and money into managing game animals and supporting conservation work across the country. Herds of Special Interest gives us a way to better recognise, organise and strengthen that contribution.

"In the right places and for our most valued game animal herds, this approach can deliver better herd management, quality hunting experiences and better conservation outcomes at a low cost to the taxpayer," she says.

"The Fiordland Wapiti Foundation has shown exactly what hunter-led management can achieve when it is well organised, locally supported and focused on both game animal management and conservation outcomes. This Bill provides a much clearer foundation for that work to continue."

The Game Animal Council now looks forward to the Minister's decisions regarding the proposed designation of the first Herds of Special Interest for Fiordland wapiti and Central North Island sika. "These two groups have demonstrated on-the-ground practical game animal management solutions delivering for both hunting and conservation."

Ms Jordan also acknowledged the efforts of the hunting sector in supporting the Bill. "This milestone has only been reached because of years of hard work by people and organisations across the hunting community. We want to thank everyone who submitted, advocated, and helped make the case for a more modern approach to game animal management."



Sika stag – photo by Richard O'Driscoll

Ruahine Adaptive Wild Deer Management Plan

Ruahine Forest Park is a special place. Its forests, streams, and tracks are valued by hunters, iwi, hapū, whānau, and local communities.

Recreational hunters already remove large numbers of deer from the park each year. Despite this effort, [monitoring shows](#) wild deer numbers are still too high in some areas. This makes it harder for young native plants to grow and forests to recover.

To help protect the forest, DOC is working with Treaty Partners, and alongside hunters, community groups and industry in a more coordinated way. This work is guided by the new *Ruahine Adaptive Wild Deer Management Plan (2025–2030)*.

Last year, this shared effort led to extra action. Through recreational management hunts in some of the central and northern parts of the park, a commercial harvest trial under normal Wild Animal

Recovery Operation permit conditions, and targeted DOC-led management in the northwest of the park, 951 additional deer were removed from the park.

This work is about reducing pressure, supporting healthy forests, and giving nature time to grow back. Hunters can continue to help just by doing what they love. Get your [permit](#), check [access](#), and get out there - hunt and help protect nature.

[Read more about the plan](#)



Toka Biv Ruahines – photo by Richard O'Driscoll

Changes at the top – NZDA National President

The NZDA Board advises members that National President Callum Sheridan has stepped aside from his role, effective today, after confirming he will stand as an ACT Party candidate in the 2026 General Election.

As New Zealand's leading organisation representing recreational hunters and shooters, NZDA is proudly apolitical. We support good public policy, not political parties. To achieve the best outcomes for our members, NZDA works constructively with Governments, Ministers and Members of Parliament from across the political spectrum.

In keeping with this long-standing principle, Callum has appropriately stepped aside while seeking elected office in the General Election on 7 November.

The NZDA Board extends its sincere thanks to Callum for his outstanding leadership, dedication and service to the Association during his six years on the National Board, including the past two years as National President.

The National Board has appointed Trevor Dibben, Marlborough Branch and South Island Rep, as Interim National President until the Association's Annual General Meeting and Conference on 24–26 July 2026. Trevor has served NZDA with distinction through the Marlborough Branch and as a South

Island Rep on the NZDA Board, and his experience will ensure the Association continues its work without interruption.

Delegates will elect the Association's next National President at the Annual General Meeting in July. In the meantime, members can be assured that NZDA's advocacy, member services, branch support, competitions, training programmes and national initiatives will continue unchanged.

On behalf of the NZDA Board, we thank both Callum and Trevor for their leadership and service, and we thank our members for their continued support of NZDA's mission to be the voice of recreational hunters.



Left: Callum Sheridan. Right: Trevor Dibben (Photos NZDA)

Project Kaka & Waiohine Phase Post Operation Notification - Bait Non-Toxic

The aerial pest control operation for Project Kaka & the Waiohine Phase was successfully undertaken on 19 & 20 May 2026.

Pesticide used: Sodium Fluoroacetate Cereal Pellets (1080).

Bait Toxicity: We can confirm that bait is now non-toxic in the application areas.

Caution Period: Bait is non-toxic; however, **the caution period is still in place**. Please take a precautionary approach. While signage is in place, risks can be eliminated by following these simple rules:

- **DO NOT** touch bait or carcasses.
- **WATCH CHILDREN** at all times.
- **DO NOT EAT** animals from this area.
- Carcasses are **DEADLY TO DOGS**.

See map in June newsletter.

Two-thirds of licence holders now in the Firearms Registry

It was the third anniversary of the commencement of the Firearms Registry on 24 June, and for the first time New Zealand is starting to get a picture of how many and the types of lawfully held firearms are in our communities.

Nearly two thirds of all licence holders (63%) are now in the Registry. Latest data shows 138,115 licence holders are registered from a total population of 219,955 licence holders.

They have collectively registered 683,435 firearms, and further 18,675 parts. On average each licence holder has registered five firearms.

Firearms registered to date by type:

- Rifles 66%
- Shotguns 27%
- Pistols 5%
- Other 1%

At this current rate, New Zealand will have 1.1 million lawful firearms in its Registry by 2028, which was the deadline set by Parliament for having all licence holders registered.

[Firearms Registry](#) | [Firearms Safety Authority New Zealand](#)

Check your firearms licence expiry date

Got a minute? Grab your firearms licence and check the expiry date. With licences lasting up to 10 years, it's easy to forget - 11% of people in a recent survey didn't realise theirs had expired.

If we can't reach you by email, we'll send a letter. We follow up again 2 months out, and send a final text reminder 5 weeks before expiry.

If you apply before expiry, you can keep using your firearms until a decision is made, and your new licence will be valid for 10 years.

If you apply after expiry, you must transfer your firearms to a current licence holder and your new licence will be valid for 5 years.

Make sure your contact details are up to date via MyFirearms or 0800 844 431.



Find my phone!

Story and photos by Richard O'Driscoll

The Branch Wanganui meat hunts are something I look forward to every year. Always a great weekend with plenty of animals. But the May 2026 trip threw up a couple of curveballs for me.

The first was **the fog**. The forecast for the weekend was great, but when we woke up on Saturday morning and looked out of the shearers' quarters it was a wall of white. We all headed out to our allotted blocks regardless, speculating whether the deer would feel safe and be out, or would all stay hidden because they couldn't see either?

Turns out the latter was the case. I headed up my usual gully with Joe. First false start when I left my bag behind and had to go back to the quarters to collect it. Perhaps the first indication of the foggy brain that was to haunt me again later. Gave Logan and his son Jacob my other radio and they walked down the hill and up the adjacent gully.

We started along the ridge, but visibility was only 30 m and even with the thermal I could only see 100 metres. Nothing was spotted on the front faces and as we climbed visibility got worse and worse. It must have been a bit better down in valley as we heard a shot and Logan reported on the radio he had shot a spiker.



Joe contemplating the fog

We continued up to a knob where got a good Brocken spectre as we sat and waited for the sun to come up and burn off the fog.

Finally, about 10:30 am, the fog lifted enough to see a bit, and I immediately spotted 3 deer lying down just over the ridge. Joe didn't want to take the shot as the biggest doe was facing away so I set up to take a head shot. As I extended the bipod she stood up – along with 7 other deer including a buck. I leaned on a fence post and shot the doe and Joe shot a yearling. He then had a crack at one running and missed.



Brocken spectre



Fat fallow doe

We gutted the deer and hung them in a tree and continued up ridge. Saw a nice buck then three does on south side. No shooting bucks on this property so he was safe to just have his photo taken. The does didn't stick around. But there was very little out. Wind was not ideal, but Saturday morning was the fewest animals I'd seen on this particular circuit.



Nice buck

The others were having a bit more luck. Logan shot 3 does off the face below us. At the shots, 2 good bucks and a spiker disappeared down the ridge we were on, but the spiker didn't stop.

When we got back to quarters for late lunch, most of the others had limited success and were grizzling about the fog that didn't lift until 11 am. With the short winter daylight, more than half the crew didn't come back for lunch at all!

The second curveball was **the phone**. I left about 3 pm on the quad to pick up Logan, Jacob, & their deer. Joe had already left when I got back to go for a solo walk. So I turned round and headed straight back out the north gully. Put the stalk on a spiker and got to 200 metres but it and its mate disappeared into the manuka. There were a few deer up high on other side of the gully so I settled in for a long (350 metre) shot on a big black doe. Had to put the bipod on the backpack to get enough angle, but relatively steady. Dialed up 10 clicks, but possibly not enough as I clean missed! She didn't even react to the shot and wandered off uninjured.

I carried on and stalked another couple of groups. Found the two bucks and spiker we saw in the morning, along with another buck at the top and sneaked into 110 metres. Could have shot any of the bucks but spiker stayed hidden then they all moved off.

Stood up and had a doe bark at me. She appeared on the other side of a manuka gut so shot offhand and rolled her down the hill. Hurried after it and found it with the thermal. By then it was very dark so had to dig out my headlight for butchery session.

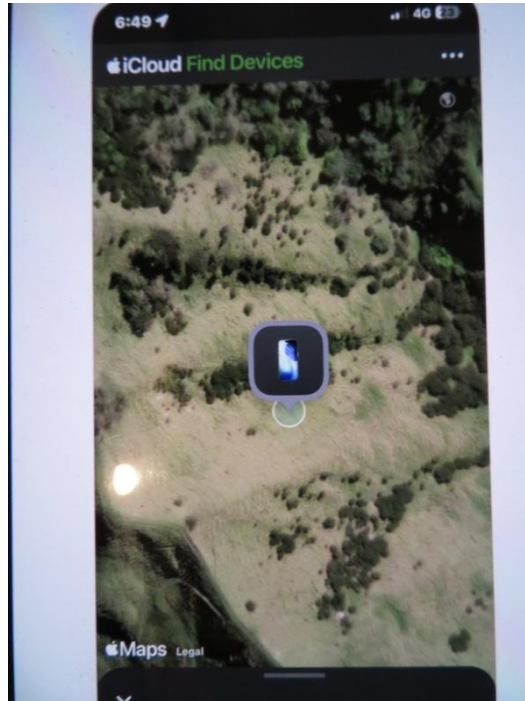
When I got back down to the track, I realized the jersey that I had tied round my waist was missing. And that my cellphone was in the pocket of my jersey! I immediately went back up the hill to where I'd butchered the deer but not there. It was a long walk out kicking myself all the way.

I got back 7 pm and most of the others had deer. Joe had shot 3 so he was happy. Michael the German had shot his first deer after missing a couple.

There is one spot at the quarters where you can get a bar or two of cell reception. I borrowed Jason's phone and tried to Find my Phone but, with no reception up the gully, my phone was showing as offline. But after dinner I had a thought. What about Starlink – the satellite function that OneNZ has recently added to their phone plans? I installed my One NZ app on Jason's phone and paid \$20 to turn on satellite data on my phone. Pretty pleased with this idea, but my phone was still not showing

so I went to bed and had a restless night

Up at 6 am Sunday to a frost, but relieved to see that it wasn't foggy. I tried contacting my phone again at 6:45 am and it gave me a location. Thanks be to Elon Musk!. Had to use Angus's phone to match the position in Google Maps - way up the top of the gully. I then put the position into my GPS. I set off on my morning phone hunt very happy that I had a much smaller search area - so I took the rifle too.



Found my phone using Starlink

There were plenty of deer out and I spotted about 25 with the thermal scattered up the gully. Found a couple of spikers on my side. Got into 220 m and got a good hit and the deer staggered and circled. Gave it another and it dropped, but was a wasted bullet as the first shot was fatal.

Gutted it and dragged it to the track. Left rifle next to it and carried on up gully. Saw plenty more and as I closed in on the location of my phone, two spikers were just about standing on my jersey! It was lying right where I shot the doe from the night before.



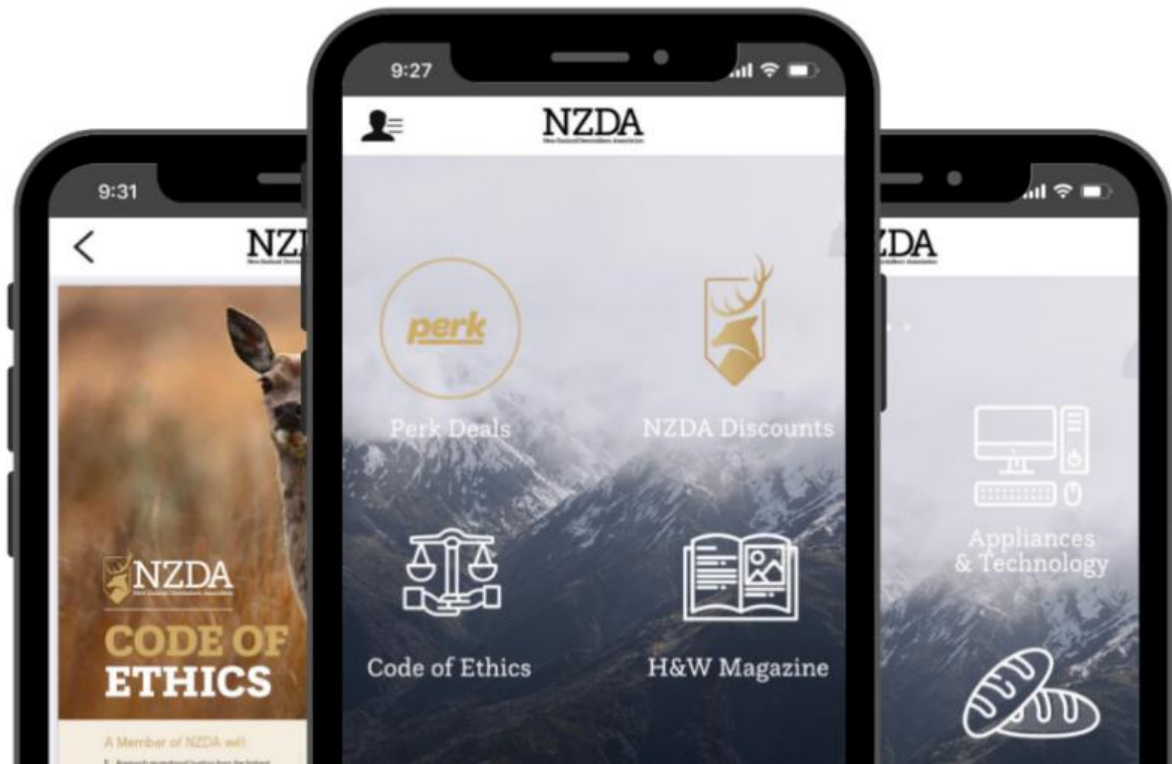
My jersey where it lay with my phone in its pocket

Walked back and carried my spiker 500 metres to the bike. Radioed Joe and picked up his two deer from last night. Dropped those off then went back to pick up him and 3 more deer from up the gully - one from last night and two that were hanging round near it in the morning. That made 6 for him!

Most people got back around 10 am and a successful morning brought the final tally to 39. Everybody got a deer.

Thanks to Andrew Wilkinson for organizing these weekends. Another good trip but I could have done without the phone drama!

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



DOWNLOAD ON IOS

DOWNLOAD ANDROID

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

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/>

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.



WAIRARAPA BRANCH NZDA
ALL ENTRIES FOR ANTLER HORN & TUSK
AND PHOTOGRAPHIC COMPETITIONS
TO BE ON THIS FORM



COMPETITION ENTERED FOR

NAME OF ENTRANT

ADDRESS

.....

DATE SHOT/TAKEN **LOCALITY**

BRIEF ACCOUNT OF SECURING TROPHY (to be completed by entrant)

.....

.....

.....

.....

THE ABOVE INFORMATION IS CORRECT. I AGREE TO BE BOUND BY THE RULES OF THE COMPETITION AND I UNDERSTAND THE JUDGES DECISION IS FINAL.

SIGNATURE **DATE**

ANY PERSON FOUND DELIBERATELY CONTRAVENING RULES MAY HAVE ALL THEIR ENTRIES DISQUALIFIED AND MAY BE BARRED FROM PARTICIPATION THE FOLLOWING YEAR OR AS DETERMINED BY THE BRANCH COMMITTEE.

WITNESS: I CERTIFY THAT THE ENTRANT IS A FINANCIAL MEMBER AND WAS, AT THE TIME OF TROPHY TAKING.