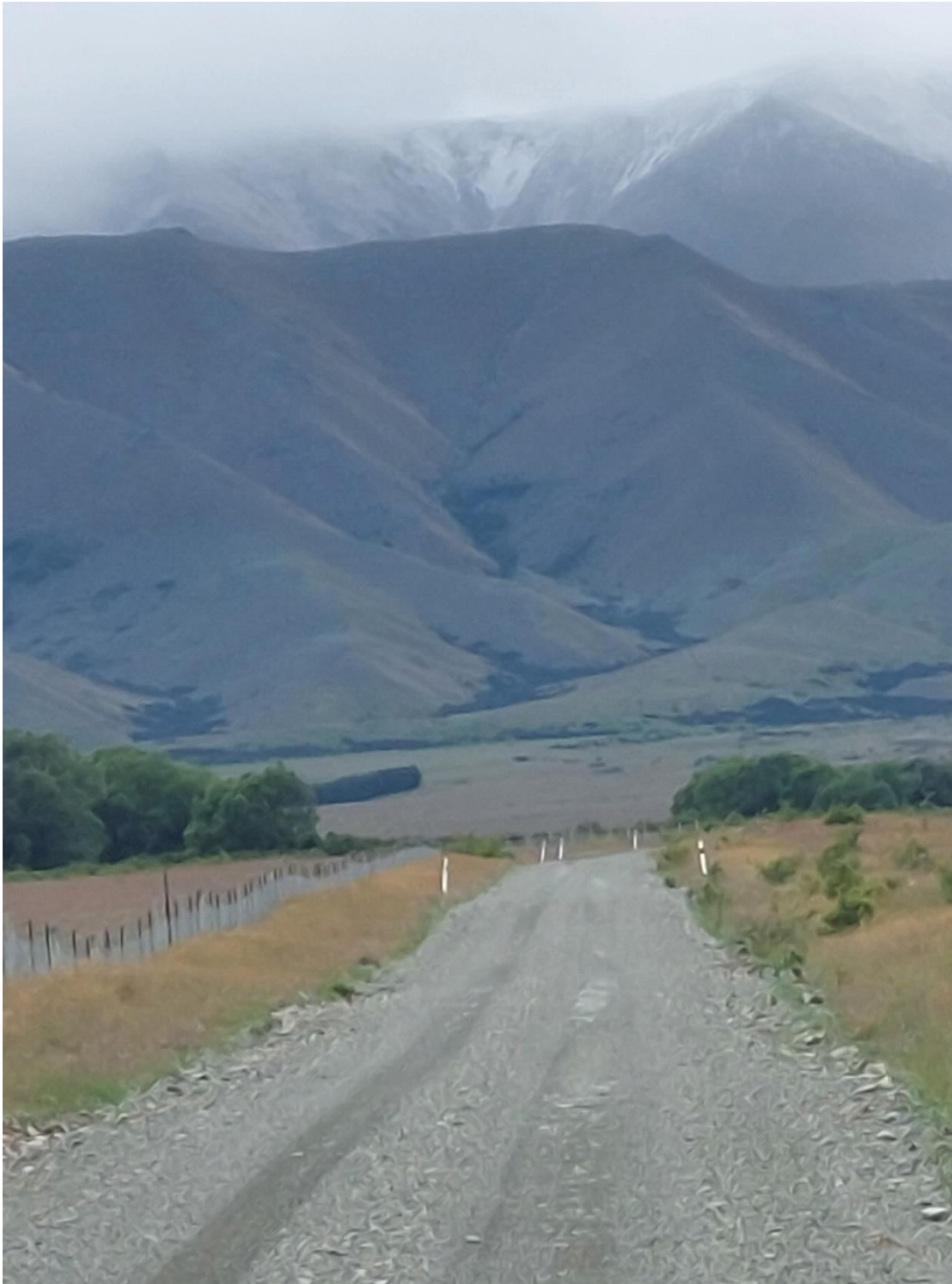




MOUNTAIN ECHO

Newsletter of Nelson Branch NZDA February 2022



White Christmas! Lovely late snow on Dalgety Range in December and a reminder to be prepared for changes in the weather...anytime, anyplace!

www.nzdanelson.co.nz

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Club Night

Great to be able to invite all members to Hunting & Fishing's Gear and Hunting Tech Talk!

Important to note please:

- H&F's Covid rules require registration for the event and limited to 100 attendees
- We will seek registrations by separate email to all members
- The time is earlier than our usual Club Nights (**6pm**) so plan dinner early!
- The event is instore at the Nelson Store 50 Achilles Ave (Wakatu Carpark)
- More information below

Editorial

Happy New Year!! We hope all have come through the festive season in good shape. And if not.... see Willis' tips on restoration for the autumn hunting action below!

This month's edition sees more action from our ranges, hunting and animal control programmes and more. Nick Sowry's epic story has all the angles of hunting, family, trophies, and not sacrificing it all on one risky decision.....

While Omicron continues to provide some uncertainty there is perhaps a glimmer of plans actually finally sticking (and I am certainly not letting it stop me have several autumn hunt plans "on the books"!). We are really hoping this is the "last hurrah" of the damn bug as we are very keen to up the ante on Club activities both "at home" and further afield as soon as possible. The bulk of the hard work of the last few years by the Committee and supporters on our Branch systems, administration and assets (Lodge and ranges) means we can get more focussed on doing "more cool things out there"!



A part of this process will be to form subcommittees linked to the Committee that can bring in more member expertise and energy for such activities without anyone feeling pressured to get into the full Committee space. Watch for more on this – but clearly based on our surveys (thanks all respondents!) and Club nights we are seeing that "the more good things that happen then the more good things can happen"just what we want.

New Arms Laws have been publicised and they are in effect so while NZDA HQ has emailed all members, here again is the link to them as all need to be aware of key changes especially re storage and carriage of firearms (but check it all for relevance to your activities. [NZDA Arms Regs Update 2022](#))

And yes...The Ed managed to shoot an Xmas porker...been a long time coming....

Hunt, shoot, stay safe, be happy....The Editor *Richard Wells*

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Range Matters

All The Action from our Ranges

Benchrest – Summer Outdoor Programme

Rimfire Benchrest Challenge Series
at
Packers Creek Range 22nd January

Dead Heat on a Hot Day!

Graeme Smith Reports:

Warm and windy was the order of the day for the first event of the new year at Packers Creek Range.

The event was probably the most challenging of the year with a score match at 100 yards (with a .22 rimfire).

That a new local record was shot is testament to the level of skill these shooters have in these tough conditions.

As always, we would welcome new shooters to come and give this sport a try.

Results:

Nelson Outdoor Benchrest Series

Nelson 16.1.22 100m Hunter Class

1	Carina Jackson	50	50	50.01	49.01	49.01	248.03
1	Graeme Smith	50.01	50.01	50.01	48	50	248.03
3	Greg Couper	49	49.01	50	48.01	50.2	246.22
4	Anne Marie Kidson	46	45	46	47	46	230.00
5	Graeme Vallance	34	49	47	48	49	227.00
6	Terry Farnham	45	43	44.01	46	47	225.01
7	Michael Kidson	43	44	44	44	44	219.00

That's a dead heat for Carina and Graeme! What an extraordinary result and high score!



Top Guns - Graeme, Carina and Greg – “cuppa tea then?”

Interested??!! Phone **Graeme Smith 03 544 7138** or Email: lvhvbr@gmail.com

Ken Horner Memorial Shoot

at the
Murchison Community Range 22nd January

The annual Ken Horner Shoot at the Murchison Range took place this month (first Sunday of December). It was a pity the weather turned a few people away, however there was still a good turnout of 14 competitors with some new faces which is always great to see.

We shot both deer silhouettes and targets at 200m and then finished with a 100m standing target. Always a challenging but enjoyable shoot, exercising alternative ways of shooting if you are out hunting and do not have a rest available.



Lying down on the job! Gumboot manufacturers should be happy to see this shot!



And now the sitting shot.....meanwhile that ute has changed colour!?

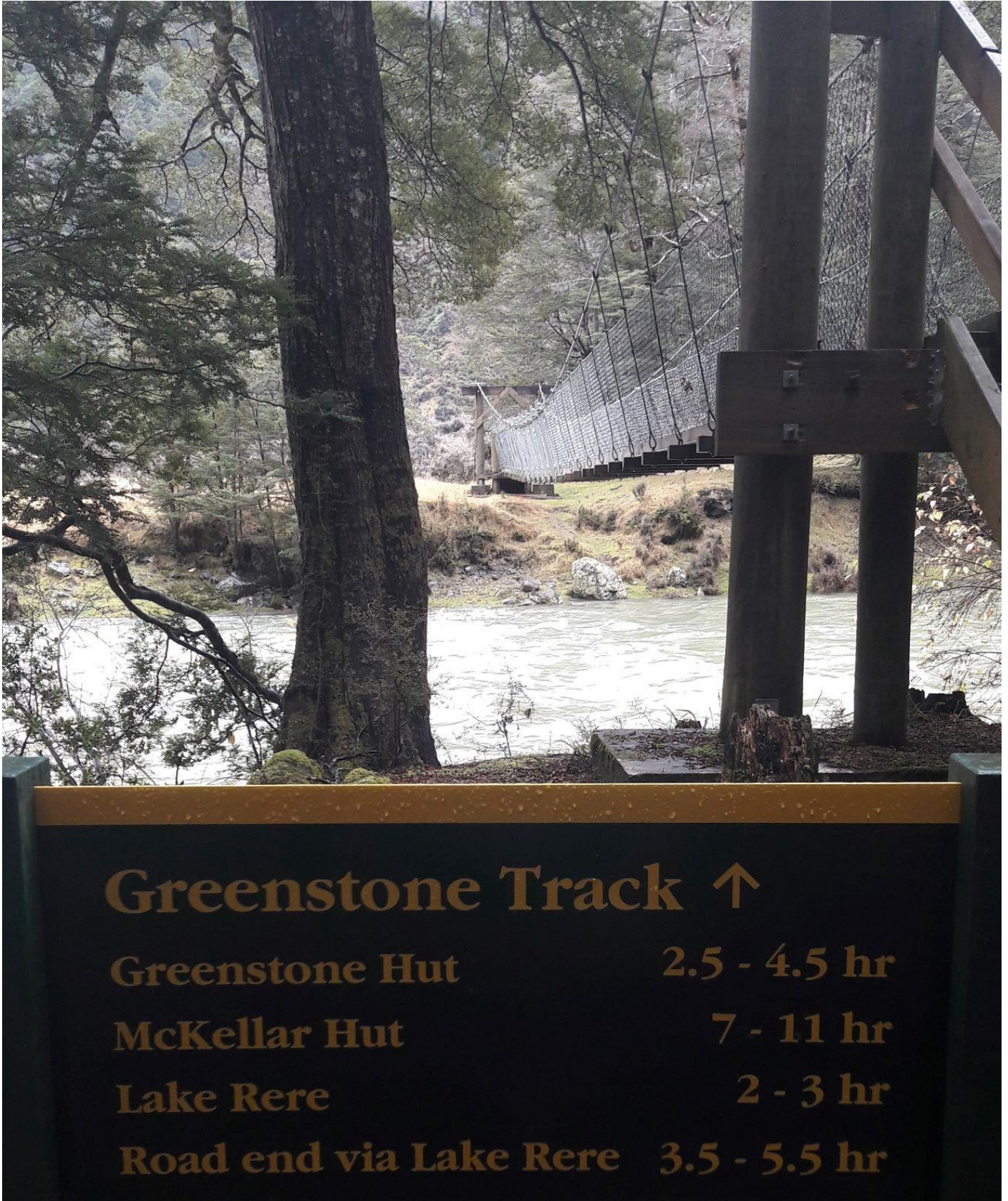
It was a good day spent catching up with our friends over the hill, lots of banter and a great way to finish the year. Hope to see more people join in next year and to establish a similar shoot in Nelson.



Big congrats to Matt Gilmer who not only took out both trophies for overall highest score (126.1) and best standing (43), he also had the best standing score noted to date since 1981! Trophies presented by Maurice & Ian Horner.

Story by Malanie Bartlett, photos from Malanie and Greg Couper
www.nzdanelson.co.nz

Treasure in the Greenstone



While in fact the Editor took this photo it was by chance on the SAME DAY as this month's feature author (at that stage looking fairly downcast) walked out, the state of the river then plain enough!

Deer or die.

Myself and my father sat back in the fading evening light.

Binoculars locked to our eyes, we scanned the faces over the river.

Textbook fallow country. Little pockets of grass mixed with scree and an assortment of native scrub.

Plenty of grazing opportunities, with the bonus of cover only a deer's bound away. All this with a north facing vista, and the fact that we saw a couple of does there the evening prior, made the hillside scream 'deer!'.

"If there's a deer anywhere..." I trailed off, without lowering the binoculars.

In a true hunter's fashion, I altered between a systematic grid like up-and-down, right-to-left working of the country, and an inattentive: 'oh, that looks nice', sporadic zig-zag. Sure, it'd be nice to be uniform and thorough with my work, but it's easy to get distracted.

There, in my view, appeared an anomaly in the shapes of rock, leaf and stick. A black saddled back, grey flanks, and sweeping back over the shoulders was the closer: a rich, rosewood brown paddler, arched above the shoulders.

The words passed my lips spontaneously and without thought or realisation.

"Buck... GOOD buck"

I swung to my feet, followed by an: "I'm takin' 'im", and in a smooth motion scooped up the rifle from the ground in a way that would shame a full back.

The light was fading rapidly, and I needed to close the distance.

Bipod extended, rifle down. I lay on the wet earth, as my dad caught up.

Bolt locked and scope wound to 14.

Couple hundred meter shot at best, easy done.

The unmistakable crack of the two seventy breaking the sound barrier rolled up and down the mountains, followed by an echo back of a hundred-thirty grain slapping leather...

The buck didn't step, jump or run.

Just folded.

Just folded.

Venison origami.

Rolling down to the next bush.

I leap to my feet. "He f**kin' DOWN!" and I swing around to give an awkward half handshake, half hi five to my dad.

A classic, textbook, mature, Greenstone fallow buck.

But time is ticking. I get me old man to guide me in to the carcass across the river.

Crossing in the evening light wasn't easy, and I went well over the waist...

Over the next five minutes I scrambled up the gravel scree and scrub, straining my eyes between the encroaching darkness and the fogged lenses of my glasses.

It's simply too hard to see.

'Be prudent: I gotta get back' I tell myself, and wade the river again. I reach my dad right on full darkness.

"We'll get him in the morning, he goin' nowhere".

We hit the hut, and boil up the billy for another night's feed of dehy food, with all the culinary joys of scraped custom wood and crumbled tux biscuits.

Lying in bed that night, my mind was too excited for rest.

Playing the video in my brain over and over.

'Crack', down, roll, repeat.

In the night air, over the sizzle of damp wood in the open fire, I hear a noise: 'tap'...

'tap, tap, pat, tap'...

'tap, tap, pat, tap, tap, tatatatataptap tap...'

Rain.

Rain on a cold, tin roof.

Oh, how the anxiety spiked.

I pleaded, willing with my deepest of faiths, for the rain to stop.

To whatever or whoever of the Gods who would listen; any of them.

All of them.

One of them.

Just please, please, let it stop.

But the rain, and its causation of my insomnia, reached deep into the night.

I was awake before the sun. Not all too difficult in the middle of June.

The 'ta-tap-tap' continued, now with the roaring background vocals of the river.

No breakfast. Just check the river.

Soon from the hut we could see the brown, snaking ribbon that replaced the azure waters from yester.

Famed by anglers for its clarity, I stood on her bank days beforehand, watching a rainbow trout feeding, and saying that she held water clear enough to breath.

Instead, sweeping down the valley was a torrent.

Washing away soil, rock, log and dream in a paru, viscous mass.

Dad said "You know the rules, if ya can't see the bottom..."

F**k rules: those are great recommendations, the pull to cross was near intolerable. I had to get over.

This wasn't a hunk of venison. Or a chunk of antler, or any of that.

This was my buck.

I need it.

I walked upstream, to a wider section. "That might be crossable" I tried to convince my dad and myself simultaneously.

There're swing bridges up and downstream, but with impassable cliffs between each bridge and my buck.

Don't die for a deer. But surely it won't be that bad? I told myself that I'm a competent swimmer, after all.

If only dad wasn't here, this frustrating anchor of logic, lacking in the emotional attachment to fallen beast.

My fallen beast.

The rain continued to belt down.

We'll check the river later.

I read in hunting magazines, and the like, of tahr hunters dropping bulls into inaccessible guts, and having to walk away.

Nature of the game.

I never had experienced it myself. Didn't have to, as a deer stalker.

An alien heartbreak.

We checked later that day, and the river had only risen further. A nearby waterway went from forty cubic meters a second, to six hundred over that day, and I feel the Greenstone must have paralleled the flows.

I'm not getting my buck. Not today. Not tomorrow. Not this week.

Another sleepless night held me in my mental loops. Tortured by my mind: Problem solving the insolvable problem.

We packed up the final day. Swung past the spot. There's still no getting there. It'll take a week to come right. Back down the valley we went.

Story: Nicky Sowry.



The handsome reward of skill, steady thinking and patience. Obviously, a week went by, the river dropped and Nicky was able to safely retrieve this wonderful (in more ways than one) trophy.

The spirit of Christmas – Kai Rescue

This story reproduced with the kind permission of our friends at the **Waimea Weekly** (Nelson's Biggest Little Newspaper!).

Hunters make donation of venison to those in need



Kai Rescue's Karen Brewer receives a large donation of venison from David Haynes and Greg Couper, Nelson members of the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association. **Photo: Max Frethey**

Kai Rescue received a large donation of venison on Friday which will help many in the area. The almost 40-kg donation was provided by the Nelson branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association.

"It's huge for us," Kai Rescue coordinator Karen Brewer said. "Meat's not something we get a lot of... so when we get something like this in, it's really appreciated."

The venison, the second such donation given by the Nelson branch, was distributed to about 30 different recipient groups.

"Our members are showing quite an interest in what we're doing," said David Haynes, a committee member of the Deerstalker's Nelson branch. "We're going to try and see if we can make this a regular thing."

"[Deer] are a valuable resource," said David. "We can feed people who would otherwise go hungry."

Because the Nelson Deerstalkers are "a small organisation," David said that they were seeking a grant to help fund the processing of future venison donations. So far, the costs have been covered by their own members.

David added that the Deerstalkers have been in talks with Nelson City Council about potentially hunting a few deer on public land before their annual culling to prevent the wastage of good meat. "This would give us the chance to go in before [the Council] does the culling operations... some good can come out of it."

Jackie Galland with Giving Aroha in Anzac Park was one of Kai Rescue's recipients and left with some of the venison. "We provide a meal in Anzac Park for... people struggling, we usually get between 40 and 60 people."

Every Sunday "we put on a big picnic in the park for them," Jackie said, so the impact of this donation is already being felt for locals in need.

Kai Rescue, run by the Nelson Environment Centre, aims to reduce food waste in the community. The volunteer-run group is partnered with over 60 food recipient organisations in the region who then distribute food amongst those who need it most.

Nelson Lakes Ungulate Control

This report from Melissa at the DOC Office at St Arnaud – we appreciate the information and update.



Nelson Lakes Ungulate Control

As a trial to manage ungulate population in the Southern part of Nelson Lakes National Park (NLNP) the DOC Rotoiti/Nelson Lakes District office allowed helicopter access for two weeks in October/November 2021. Helicopters are only allowed to land in NLNP for management purposes, so we wanted to trial the effectiveness of facilitating volunteer hunter access further into the park as a method of controlling ungulate numbers.

Thank you to all those hunters involved in the project. It was a first for Nelson Lakes and I think it went really well.

Hunters were asked to fill out diaries from their trip. I have most of the data back from everyone now so below is a summary of the information that I have received.

Thank you for taking the time to write to me and provide us with results, information, and observations from your hunting trip - this is really important and valuable information for us.

	Deer	Chamois	Total animals
Seen	330	83	413
Shot	78	14	92

Pests reported shot: 1 cat and 3 Canada geese

Sex ratio:

51% of deer shot were female (49% males)

21% of Chamois shot were female (79% male)

Top group: Block 1 (North Ella), 27-30 Oct - Shot 9 deer and 4 Chamois = 13 animals (no other group went into this block)

Followed closely by 2 groups that got 12 animals each:

Block 7 (Burn Creek), 27-30 Oct – shot 9 deer and 3 Chamois (+ 1 cat).

Block 6 (Upper Glenroy), 4-7 Nov – shot 12 deer.

Most deer seen:

Block 7, 4-7 Nov – 69 deer!

2nd was also Block 7, 27-30 Oct – 40 deer

Fauna sightings:

Thanks to those who filled out the fauna sightings. We received reports of 10 kea, 5 rock wren and 1 whio.

This is helpful information to guide us with managing these threatened species in Nelson Lakes.

Feedback was largely positive, and I have had some really lovely stories multiple generations of hunters from families heading out into Nelson Lakes. Even groups that may not have been successful as they had hoped still relished the opportunity to explore some hard-to-reach places and chase animals around the hills.

For future operations we can look at the length of time that hunters are in their blocks and work more around back loading flights. Now we have more information of the blocks and familiarity with landing sites we can look at incorporating more landing/camping sites.

As part of this trial, we have also opened access for two weeks in April – see the DOC Nelson Lakes hunting page for details on how to secure one of the few blocks left.

Fit for Purpose?

Willis Macbeth is a great hunter and advocate for public land hunting.....he is also strong on good gear, good shooting skills AND being fit. He notes a few "limitations in his general physique" below (due to years of hill work) which many of us can associate with.....but he is still doing something to prepare for the autumn....see him on Facebook [West Coast Hunter FB](#)



With some of my favourite times of year for hunting coming up, I've started a bit of an exercise routine to help build a bit of fitness so I'm not completely useless climbing some hills over the coming months. I'm nursing a few ailments (bung ankle and average back) so I can no longer run which is one less option in the toolkit. I'm also time poor so have limited my workouts to five half hour sessions a week. I'm also completely relying on exercises from home without too much fancy equipment. I have a skipping rope, very basic dumbbell set, made a box step (400*500*600mm for different difficulty) and have a bike trainer set up in the garage (Chch is too flat...). So, here's my current training plan (each is about 30 mins):

Monday: leg day. Body weight exercises (lunges, squats, etc), box steps/jumps, skipping, etc.

Tuesday: bike, including plenty of off-seat hill climbs.

Wednesday: Arms, core, back.

Thursday: Pilates. Good for core and stretching.

Friday: bike, as per Tuesday.

Hopefully this combination of exercises means that it's not such a shock to shoulder a pack and climb some hills. But nothing quite beats getting fit by just getting out more. Unfortunately, I don't currently have that luxury so we have to do what we can.

What are everyone's favourite ways to get hill fit from home?

I would like a pull-up bar but don't have somewhere appropriate for one currently...

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Trapped!

This story is reproduced in full, from the RadioNZ news website. Good to see traps being used and great to see a good result for our kea.

“The kea population in the Nelson Lakes has been boosted with the addition of six chicks after a successful breeding season.



Two kea chicks outside their nest in the Rainbow Conservation Area. Photo: Supplied / Department of Conservation

Department of Conservation Nelson Lakes senior biodiversity ranger Melissa Griffin said as part of efforts to rebuild kea numbers in the region, work was done to find and monitor kea nests and protect them with trapping.

Two nests were identified on the St Arnaud Range this season, each with three chicks, all who have successfully fledged.

Griffin said the success was thanks to the hard work of the Kea Conservation Trust, DOC rangers, the Friends of Rotoiti and other volunteers and additional trapping for feral cats helped to ensure the birds survival.

The Kea Conservation Trust raised funds for 20 live capture cage traps, which caught five feral cats and nearly 20 possums in the Rainbow Conservation Area over a three-month period last year.

Live capture traps are used to avoid killing weka and kea. They have a remote sensor that sends a signal via satellite if an animal is caught in the trap which avoids the need for daily checks.

A motion sensor camera identified a cat within 500 metres of one nest and a possum making regular visits.

DOC ranger Ricki Mitchell, whose does some of the monitoring work, put a trap close to the nest which caught two possums in quick succession, after that no further possum visits were recorded.

The other monitored nest was in the Rotoiti Nature Recovery Project area in Nelson Lakes National Park and is also protected by a number of traps.



Motion sensor cameras outside monitored nests capture images of kea and any predator activity at the nest. Photo: Supplied / Department of Conservation

Last year's breeding season also started out with six chicks in two nests, but only one survived.

A stoat is thought to have predated three chicks in a monitored nest on the Raglan Range. Two chicks died in the other nest, possibly also from predation, with the third surviving chick continuing to be monitored and thought to have successfully fledged.

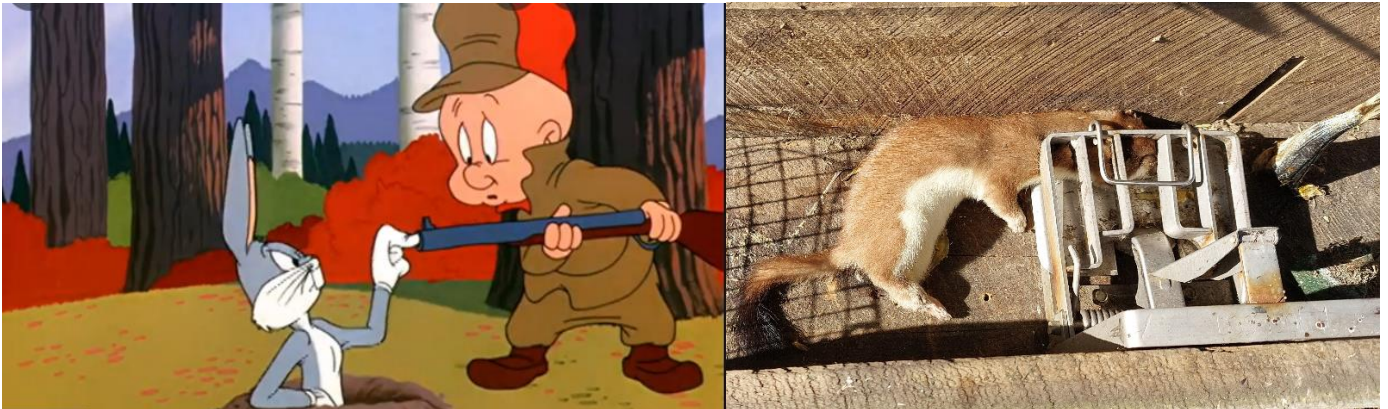
This was from the same nest in the Rainbow Conservation Area in which three chicks were produced this breeding season.

Last year's fledgling was named Mōrehu by DOC staff, which means survivor in Māori. She has been seen in the Nelson Lakes area in recent months.

Sightings of kea can be [reported to the kea database](#) help build a picture of the birds numbers and movements." RNZ

Where's Wabbit??

As the year progresses Greg is looking for really good bait of our stoat and ferret traps at Packers Creek Range...and REALLY good bait means fresh rabbit, skin on! So if you have a place where you can shoot more rabbits than you care to eat please keep a few for Greg! Just remove the gut bag...no more than that and freeze please..then contact Greg Couper gregc@nzdanelson.co.nz



Where were you in the summer of 2023!?

Was your New Year's Resolution to go for a whitetail hunt on Stewart Island??!!



This is all about forward planning and our very own Rakiura expert John Noakes will be organising a trip for February 2023...that's right NEXT year...so no excuses for not being able to sort out your schedule, permissions and bankroll for this once in a lifetime experience (Editor's warning: it seems to me that once anyone does this "once in a lifetime" they keep going back!). Noksee says the blocks confirmed, DOC say you need to be vaxxed.....

This is a "first written warning" to get your heart and brain into gear...more info will come via the Echo as the year progresses!

Member Benefits – Don't Miss Out

Remind yourself of NZDA membership benefits and supplier discounts by clicking here: [Benefits and Discounts](#) and NZDA Benefits APP as per email from NZDA HQ on 17 Sept

NZDA MEMBERSHIP & DISCOUNTS APP

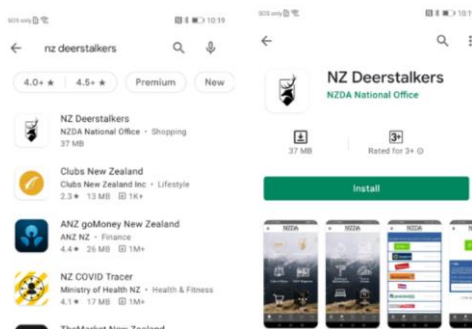
Available Now!



We are excited to announce the NZDA Membership App is now live and can be downloaded today!

How to download the app

1) Go to Google play or the Apple store and search for **NZ Deerstalkers**. Select **Install** or **GET**.



Also, our local Hunting and Fishing stores (Nelson and Richmond) are offering Nelson NZDA members 10% discount on many items as well as to be in the draw for a PLB – see below

**MEMBERS DISCOUNT
10% OFF**

BONUS!!!
Every purchase made by NZDA members goes into an annual draw to win an ACR Resqlink 400 PLB. Prize drawn 28th February 2022.

**NELSON/RICHMOND
Hunting & Fishing
NEW ZEALAND**

Present your NZDA Nelson membership card at either Nelson or Richmond Hunting & Fishing to receive a 10% discount!

NZDA Nelson membership discount is only redeemable at Nelson & Richmond branches. Excludes all sale & clearance items, Garmin, firearms, & ammunition. Electric reels and thermal imagers are limited to a 5% discount. Terms & conditions apply. Offer valid until 31/03/2022.

HOT DEAL

OUT THERE DOING IT

And we luv.....



Supporters of Nelson NZDA HUNTS Courses and Kai Rescue **More info here:** [Meat Solutions](#)

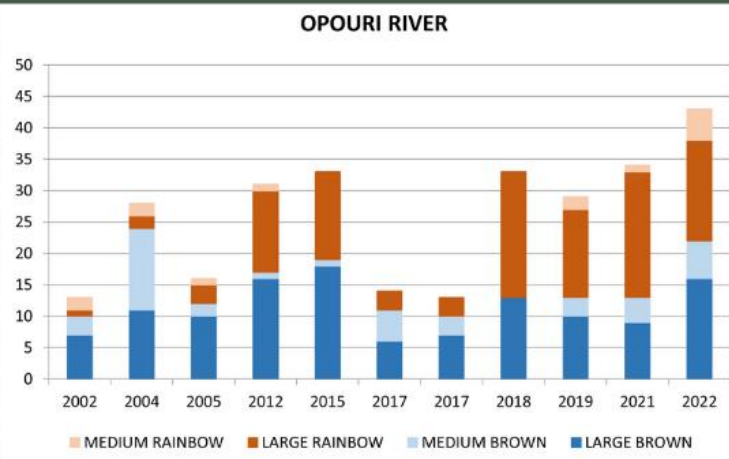
www.nzdanelson.co.nz

Fish and Game News

NELSON MARLBOROUGH FISH & GAME REPORT



- **BRANCH FISH RELEASE:** 300 rainbow trout were given a free ride in a helicopter to their new home in the Upper Branch river. The release was done in partnership with Helicopters Nelson and involved airlifting 100 trout at a time in a monsoon bucket, and distributing them in lots of 50 from Silverstream up to the Lost confluence. We have had reports of some great fishing in the upper half of the Branch since, with anglers catching a mix of wild rainbows and fish from this and previous releases. You can view a video of the release here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WZwjEx-g8RM>
- **FISH & GAME TO ISSUE PERMITS FOR WAIRAU LAGOONS:** As of this coming game bird season, Fish & Game office will be issuing permits to hunt gamebirds at the Wairau Lagoons on behalf of DOC Renwick. Hunters wishing to hunt the lagoons are to apply to the Nelson F&G office in advance of their hunting.
- **DRIFT DIVES IN FULL SWING:** Fish & Game have been actively drift diving regional rivers over the past month, with dives completed on the Wairau, Opouri, Kaituna, Motupiko and Waimea. Staff also assisted West Coast F&G with dives on the Inangahua and Upper Grey Rivers. Over the coming months we will be surveying key rivers such as the Motueka, Branch/Leatham, Rai/Pelorus, Wangapeka and others. The Opouri River dive was positive with good numbers of large brown and rainbow trout in residence.



Website: [Fish and Game Nelson](https://www.fishandgame.govt.nz)

Club Night - 6PM Tuesday 22nd February

Watch your email for advice on registering for this great event. This includes the draw for the PLB!

THE WINNER WILL BE DRAWN FOR OUR ACR RESOLINK 400 PLB GIVEAWAY!

GEAR & PRODUCT TECH TALK

TUESDAY 22ND FEBRUARY 2022

6PM

NELSON HUNTING & FISHING
50 ACHILLES AVENUE, NELSON

WHAT BIT OF KIT YOU SHOULD BE TAKING ON DAY OR OVERNIGHT HUNTING TRIPS?

AN EXCLUSIVE EVENING FOR NELSON NZDA MEMBERS TO JOIN US INSTORE FOR AN INTRODUCTION ON TECHNICAL HUNTING GEAR.

THE STORE WILL BE STAFFED AND TILLS OPEN, TAKE THIS CHANCE TO USE YOUR NZDA MEMBER DISCOUNT AND GET YOUR KIT READY FOR THE ROAR SEASON. SUITED FOR BOTH BEGINNERS AND WEATHERED HUNTERS.

THIS EVENT WILL OPERATE UNDER THE GIVEN COVID-19 GUIDELINES AT THE TIME.

Nelson NZDA
New Zealand Deerstalkers Association

Red Deer Lodge

Information on costs and bookings of the Red Deer Lodge at Lake Rotoiti [Red Deer Lodge](#)

Contact for Accom: info@starnaudholidaycottages.co.nz

Always remember to advise you are a Nelson member.

2022 Branch Committee, Information & Contacts

All details can be found on our refreshed website: [Nelson Branch Committee](#)

Website [Nelson Branch NZDA](#)

Facebook [Facebook Nelson NZDA](#)

Other Key Links - click on the blue

NZDA National Association [NZDA](#)

DOC Hunting Portal [Hunting Conservation Land](#)

Fiordland Wapiti Foundation [Wapiti](#)

www.nzdanelson.co.nz

Game Animal Council [GAC](#)

COLFO [COLFO](#)

Mountain Safety Council [MSC](#)

NZ Police (Firearms Law) [Firearms](#)