

Newsletter of Nelson Branch NZDA | February 2024



Oh-oh! Warren's been in the Park again! More below.....



What happened here...? More deer for Community Food!

THIS MONTH

EDITORIAL

Obituary

One Man in the
Molesworth

Range Matters –
Summer Series
Results & Working
Bee

Community Kai –
NZDA Have Done the
Tonne

Southern Venture

Blue Mountains
Induction for
Ballot Block
Weekday Access

Fish & Game News

Lighten Up

Next CLUB NIGHT

Tuesday 27th Feb 2024

To be advised soon

MEMBER BENEFITS

IMPORTANT LINKS

Editorial

So that's the most of the holiday season gone and autumn will soon start to beckon through the current heat.

Firstly, some sad news - the loss of two Nelson Branch stalwarts and Life Members, both of whom passed away last December. Lester Bowden was a member for over 60 years and Nelson Branch's Patron for nearly 20, the archetypical quiet and unassuming, but rock-solid achiever and supporter. I once had the chance to sit and talk to Lester at his home, what a lovely man.

Likewise, Don Harris, a member for over 50 years and a strong supporter of our range and benchrest shooting (in partnership with Graeme Smith), he was there in spades (literally, probably) to get international benchrest events occurring at Packers Creek Range in Nelson (more below). Our condolences to friends and family, they will be greatly missed by all, and their contributions to our organisation are, and will be well remembered and appreciated.



Stories this month include hunting and fishing by a couple of our regular contributors (thanks guys!), update on successful range working bee and results of summer series shooting events. A big milestone was reaching 1000 kg of meat to local community food groups, especially thanks to Greg and Carina who provided the bulk of the animals and David Haynes for procuring external funding for the processing costs. This work even made headlines in Australia! Click here to read what the neighbours think! [Kai Rescue Story OZ](#)

If you hunt or want to hunt (you should!) in the Blue Mountains, there is an opportunity to be inducted to get access on weekdays to the ballot blocks (more below).

With the autumn premium hunting time looming it's a great time to take stock of gear and more especially physical fitness so that your planned hunts are trouble free from injury and tiredness! I've put my running shoes back on and it hurts...but with a Molesworth block looming that's going to be an 18 km round trip walking just to the block, hopefully worth it. For those needing to brush up on hunting skills look no further than the GAC Better Hunting training video [Click Here GAC Better Hunting](#)

Some better news is DOC approving use of deer repellent in the 1080 Control Programme planned for February in the Kahurangi region. Just over 10,000 hectares of the Cobb area will have repellent. This an important local hunting area (once RHA) especially for fallow and those hunters who live "over the hill" in Golden Bay where other hunting areas are a long drive to get to.

Many thanks to Golden Bay and Nelson Branches for engaging well with local DOC in this process (with support from National Office). Watch your email for any updates on the program currently scheduled for February but always good to check here on DOC website for more information regarding the Cobb and other areas in the region [DOC Pesticide Programme Nelson Marlborough 2023 24](#)

Good Hunting & Safe Shooting - **Richard Wells**

Obituary

Donald Raymond Harris - NZDA Nelson Branch Life Member and 50-year member

It is with sadness that we note the passing of our friend and colleague Don Harris in December 2023 aged 77 years. Don has been a great friend to the Branch dedicating much of his recreation time to the services of our Rifle Range, passed away peacefully at home. We extend to Don's family the sympathy of the Branch, also we should celebrate a life well lived.

I first met Don in 1977 when the branch was opening the Packers Creek range and a friendship and working bee partner was established over the years. It happened that we needed some folk to look after our property and develop activity to utilise this asset. Much was done over the years, including holding competitions. This included several iterations of the NZDA Nationals and Shooting Week. Don was in the middle of all this.

Sometime around 1997 we realized we had the opportunity to bid for the 2001 World Benchrest Shooting Championships. We put together a formal presentation and took this to the next championship, succeeded in our bid and then set about a complete rebuild of our range. This included turning a large swamp into what you have today together with constructing a 20-bench shooting station. That we fulfilled our obligations, conducting a Championship considered by many as the standard for the future goes with great credit to the efforts of Don and many volunteers. Several years later we considered whether we should have another attempt to secure the Championship, the long and short is we secured the 2017 event for Nelson. Again, we conducted an event up to our high standard, on this occasion Don was our Chief Range Officer, ran the event without protest or concern and left a legacy to be followed by others.

But there was much more to Don than the range. He was an avid fisherman regularly bothering the snapper in the bay or the cod down the sounds. In his younger years a keen hunter with many adventures into the head of the Karamea, getting supply drops by the Nelson Aero Club.

We all leave behind a legacy by what we have achieved and how we treated society and others. Dons Legacy is one of a typical quiet and thoughtful, family loving New Zealander who all who knew him can be well pleased to call him a friend.

Graeme Smith



Don Harris (right) with Ian Owen at Packers Creek Range

One (old-ish) Man in the Molesworth

Had another solo 4-night trip in Molesworth. Mates all unavailable for various reasons but being a great block to good an opportunity to pass up. Weather was fantastic but very hot.

Being an old bloke, I find it easier and very enjoyable hunting by myself. No need to follow a prescribed timetable, just go where I like, when I like and no puffing trying to keep up with fitter mates. I can stop any time I like at an opportune patch of shade, or to film some wildlife, and follow up a hunch to look into some tiny little gully head, that when in a group situation you would race past on your way to some agreed objective.

As for me I am mindful of taking possibly more care, and probably more gear as a solo hunter in these more alpine environments. So, day pack is a full-sized pack to handle the gear. Makes a great rifle rest when shooting of one's knees and sitting in tussock. Enclosed bottle water, food, raincoat, leggings, warm jacket, epirb, camera, binoculars and rifle attached. Even on the finest days it goes with me.

Photo attached along with unfortunate hare I encountered on way out. Had knocked my rifle over on rocks so just checking scope was unaffected.



“Scope unaffected by fall” says hare.....

Of interest to hunters about 25% of stags I saw were stripped or stripping, 50% in hard velvet, and remainder still some growing to do. The strippers seem to be a few weeks earlier than normal this year.

Saw a lot of deer in early morning back on the high stuff close to skyline each day. On the very highest green bits. And on the calm days all later climbed up through gravel and rock on to skyline. I guess that would be the best spot with a bit of a breeze despite no shade. Would be almost impossible to approach.



Took a few photos of a group of 6 yearlings and spikers. Two had about 20-inch spikes so a bit of promise. One was fully stripped, so quite a bit of variability amongst the stags. Was planning to sneak closer when I spied a reasonable blue pig down in the valley. As it looked like a boar from my brief glimpse of it trotting half buried in the long swamp grass. Any way half an hour later I was down there, spied it in a lot of thick briar. Looking down on top of it from about 120 metres away. Could not tell which end was which until it moved, and I could see its shoulder. I think it had winded me so no time and rushed the shot. About a minute later a small blue boar shot through a gap, and then a small sow and about 6 or 7 young ones.

Well down the bank I went and oh crap. Same problem as Lake McCrae when I shot and lost a big boar a year or two back. I could not locate in a briar patch. Was not quite sure where it was so methodically searched it. Thinking I must have had buck fever and missed. Took over an hour, until I finally found it. Just saw a bit of foreleg 2 metres away, as I crawled through a particularly thick patch I had walked around already. It had sort of buried itself in a hole about 30metres from where I had hit it. Many prickles later I managed to drag it out enough to discover it was a big sow. Gutted. So, my search for the elusive blue boar continues.



Back at camp at 1.00pm, shooting a hare on route. Yes, definitely no problem with the sights. Decided I had done enough so spent afternoon soaking in creek and lying in the shade under some handy willows. Thinking life is great.

Out the next morning with the weather starting to turn. Spent an hour trout fishing in the Acheron but no luck, beautiful water but saw no fish. Water too warm, I think. They will have moved or are lying lethargically in the shade in the deepest pools. Any way great trip.

Warren Plum

Range Matters

If interested in using the Range Always check the calendar on our website: [Nelson NZDA Range Info](#)

Always be aware of and comply with our Ranges' Standing Orders – they are posted at the Ranges, but you should refresh yourself from our website:

Packers Creek – [Standing Orders Click Here](#) Range Use Etiquette [Etiquette and Golden Rules Click Here](#)

Murchison Community Range - [Standing Orders Click Here](#)



Results from Summer Series 2023-24

Rimfire Benchrest Competition – Packers Creek 17 December 2023

		T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	Aggregate
1	Graeme Smith	0.542	0.288	0.246	0.529	0.390	0.399
2	Anne Marie Kidson	0.549	0.282	0.623	0.907	0.653	0.602
3	Chris Turner	0.577	0.440	0.770	0.820	0.982	0.717
4	Michael Kidson	0.638	0.479	0.703	0.961	0.889	0.734
5	Simon Cotton	0.966	0.446	0.842	0.932	0.758	0.788
6	John Ronaldson	0.903	0.850	0.721	0.811	0.943	0.846
7	Aiden Brown	1.050	0.800	1.301	1.145	0.952	1.049

Hunter Target 100yds

January 14 2024

		T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	Total
1	Greg Couper	48	50	47	50	50.01	245.01
2	Carina Jackson	50.02	47.01	48	50.01	49	244.05
3	Terry Farnham	48.01	49.03	45.00	48	47	237.05
4	Graeme Vallance	45	47	47	49.01	49	237.01
5	Graeme Smith	43	45	49	49.01	45	231.01
6	John Ronaldson	48.01	47	45	45	45	230.01
7	Anne Marie Kidson	41	46	47	48	48	230.00
8	Simon Cotton	43	44	50	44	49	230.00
9	Michael Kidson	42	45	43	47	48	225.00
10	Chris Turner	46	45	41	45	46	223.00
11	Tony Carter	39	38	46	45	48	216.00

2023-24 Summer Outdoor Series – Points awarded

	17-Sep	16-Oct	12-Nov	18-Dec	15-Jan	Total
Graeme Smith	8	6	8	7	7	36
Greg Couper	10		10		11	31
Carina Jackson	9		9		10	28
Anne Marie Kidson	3	5	6	6	5	25
Graeme Vallance	7	1	7		8	23
Terry Farnham	6		2		9	17
Michael Kidson	4	4	1	4	3	16
John Ronaldson	2	2	3	2	6	15
Chris Turner			4	5	2	11
Simon Cotton	4			3	4	11
Aiden Brown		3	5	1		9
Craig de Winnaar	5					5
Tony Carter					1	1

As always – if interested in having a try at benchrest shooting contact Graeme Smith by email lvhvbr@gmail.com We will support you!





See the difference!



New frames for the Murchison Community Range targets – thanks Carina and Greg



Packers Creek Working Bee Dec 2023



Hi team, just wanted to give a HUGE thank you all again for the work you did yesterday at the Range working bee. The result is just amazing, and the range is looking a lot sharper and ticking off our range compliance work that needed to be done.

Thank you for all your time and effort, this was the best working bee we have had in a long time and without your help or the help from our other members we wouldn't get so much done in such a short time, hope to see you all again at the next working bee. Promise more scones and cream 😊😊. By the way, a great team photo and the dog looking on point, and a shout out to Evie and Finn for coming to help dad you both put in the hard yards as well.

Carina Jackson



Range Inspection Report – Brian Hore, Chair Range Sub-Committee

Hi Greg,

I was up on Sunday the 17th (week after the working bee) to act as range officer and complete the Health and Safety “walk around” for the summer.

I just wanted to say the place looked outstanding! The fill that had gone into the 200yd and 100m backstops, the freshening/painting of the 100m top marker rail and the general lawn/weed cut back made the place look absolutely top notch.

I'll add some photos to the range folder to complement the documentation submitted around the maintenance schedule for compliance.

On behalf of the Range Committee can you please pass on our thanks to all those who were involved for the day. It's work like this that keeps the range going and safe for all users. It looks ready to go for all of the summer shoots.

Regards,

Brian Hore



Community Kai – Doing the Tonne!

More than a tonne of venison has been distributed to local families after being donated by members of Nelson’s New Zealand Deerstalkers Association (NZDA) branch.

Committee member David Haynes says the target to give families in need a shot of wild game at their table was loaded in October 2021, and the branch successfully applied to the Community Organisations Grants Scheme (COGS) for funds to further support the initiative in August 2022.

He says the COGS grant was \$5,221, including GST. David says between August 2022 and December 2023, 1.079 tonnes of wild venison was processed into sausages, patties, and mince by Richmond’s Meat Solutions and distributed to Nelson Community Food Bank and Kai Rescue, who in turn distributed the venison products to more than 60 community groups.

“We’re pretty stoked and a bit surprised by how successful it’s been, it’s taken on a life of its own. Hunters are more than happy to donate, and the food banks are equally stoked,” he says.

“Every time we rock up at the food banks they’re very grateful, and they make it very clear how thankful they are to us, which is wonderful”. A special mention should go out to Greg Couper [president] and Carina Jackson [committee member] who’ve been the stars and easily the two biggest providers of meat throughout the 14Louise.”

The Food Safety Authority of Ministry of Primary Industries provided support and assistance in ensuring all hygiene and safety protocols were applied.

David says the branch is keen to continue the venison donations. “We’ll see if we can apply for a grant again, but at this stage we’re keen to carry it through in 2024, there’s certainly a need for it in Nelson,” he says.

Report from *David Haynes*.



Nelson Community Food Bank manager Neville Hadfield, left, volunteer Lyndsay O'Halon, volunteer David Mitchell, Nelson NZDA president Greg Couper, committee member Carina Jackson, and Food Bank volunteer Evelyn Davis.

Southern Venture

I had only been Queenstown for 18 hrs and I was packing for an evening pig hunt. Simon, my oldest son had only arrived 3hrs ago earlier. Anto parked the ute an hour later after picking up Alex who had access to this pig area. The walk up the zig zag track through the briar and matagouri was very hot with temperatures around 28-30 degrees. We flushed four pigs not far from the track. Three were dispatched in quick succession. Sidling around the hillside to a wet gully we spotted a heap of Pigs. Alex nailed a nice boar with a 340m shot downhill and Simon shot a good eater at 130m. His first pig for many years. By dark we had 4 pigs on the deck.

Since arriving in QT we had been watching the forecast for a calm spell on the Fiordland coast. The 8th of January it was all go it was two boats heading to Fiordland with a heap fishing gear onboard. We were delayed for 4 hrs due to a serious road accident (not us). No time was wasted at the boat ramp as we headed out for an evening fish. The cray pots were set while Simon, Lee and Kit filled their dive bags with crays. Next stop was Kingfish rock as the sun slowly dropped on the western horizon. 15mins of solid action saw Simon land a Kingie around 30kgs.

Next morning a very early start had us out on the water at 5.30am. By the time we got back to ramp that evening we had landed 7 Bluefin around 30-40kgs and a few Bluenose and our quota of crays between the two boats.



Two days later Anto, Alex and I were back in pig country. As we sidled back to our pig honey spot as Anto called it I dropped a boar of about 90lbs in the heavy briar. On hearing some pigs squealing we sidled around the hillside spotting 8-10 pigs slowing working their way up the face opposite us about 125m away. One big boar got our attention. He looked huge and mean. On the count of three all hell let loose as we all fired. Alex took the big boar on the first shot with his 270 then we managed take another 5 pigs of various sizes.

After dealing to the pigs and removing the jaw from the boar we head back to the ute with heavy packs. One more cheeky pig was shot as we clambered down the through the heavy briar. It was midnight by the time we got home.



Yeah good pig alright!

Wanting another go at the Bluefin we off on the 20th January to Jacksons Bay with Anto's mate Dave in Hawea who owned a big 2500 Stabicraft .We got out on the water that evening. Knowing the weather was marginal its was rough as expected. By the time we had landed some Bluenose I was definitely feeling pretty seasick.

Next morning the sea was considerably calmer. Fishing was quite for most of the morning until we were a long way out on the bluewater line. Trolling we landed three Bluefins and a couple of Albacore Tuna in quick succession. After doing some deep drops for Bluenose up 500m we start trolling back towards Jacksons. Bang Antos and my rods simultaneously were hit. With reels screaming we grabbed the rods.

I was just starting to gain some line when Antos cut across my line cutting me off. Antos was still performing. 15mins later I was able gaff Antos bluefin at the boat, Dave managed tail wrapped it after a hell of a struggle. We finally managed to drag it into the back of the Stabi. Weighed back in QT on the kids swing the scales hit 110kgs. Not a bad way to celebrate Antos 40th birthday.

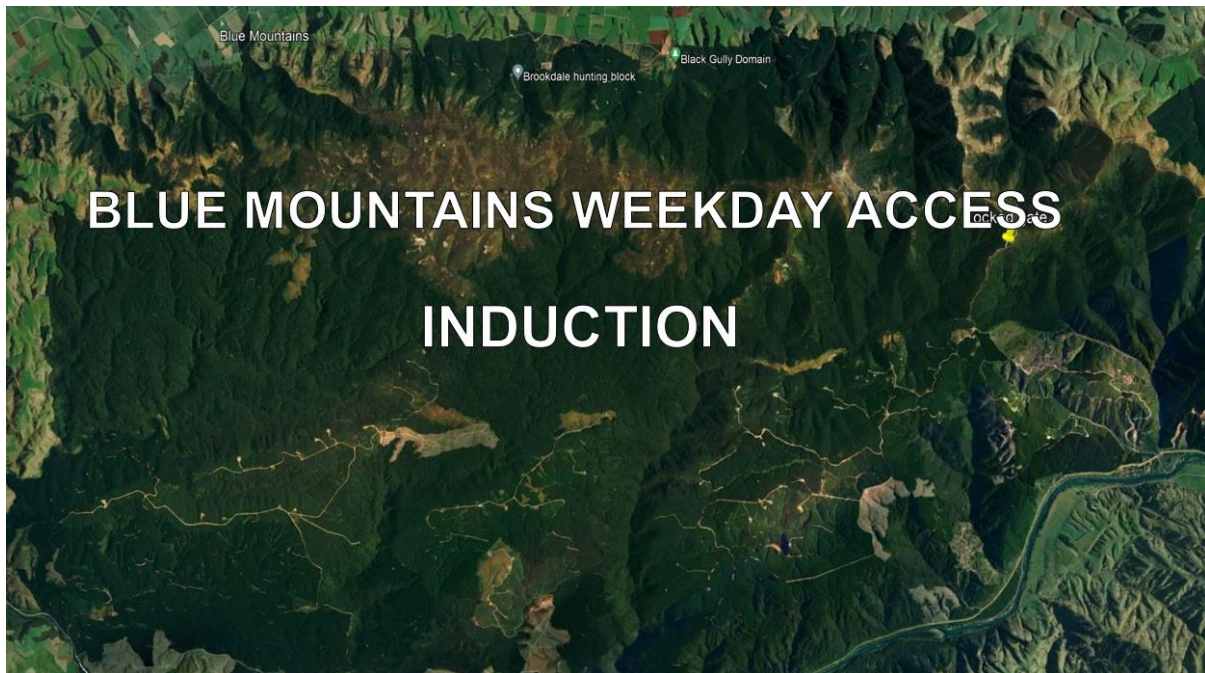
With fish, pork and crays we will be eating well for a while, and some awesome memories to start 2024 off. Bring on the Roar 2024.

Eric Hall



Happy Birthday Anto!

Blue Mountains Induction for Weekday Ballot Block Access



HOW DO I HUNT DURING THE WEEK.

The Otago branch of NZDA has worked closely with both the Department of Conservation (Doc) and Ernslaw One to find a feasible solution to regain access for hunting during weekdays.

There are two parts to this:

1. Obtain a hunting permit from Doc.
2. Obtain the gate code for access from NZDA coordinator.

Whilst obtaining a hunting permit has not changed, access is very different.

Otago Branch has extended to all branches the option to induct their members to be able to access the Blue Mountains during weekdays.

Richard Wells has agreed to run these for Nelson Branch members with approval from Mark Hastie (Otago Pres) and Greg Couper (our Pres). Richard has hunted the area to a limited degree and knows the area including accom. options and etc. He has already been inducted as an associate member of Otago.

The presentation is about 30 slides and then those who have been inducted will be required to fill out their details and sign an acknowledgement form which is to be returned to Otago Branch who maintain the direct oversight of issuing gate codes for weekday access. There will also be the opportunity to ask questions about the area. Queries: Email Richard richardw@nzdanelson.co.nz

When: Thursday 22nd February at 7pm (allow 1.5 hours for induction and Q&A)

Where: Fish and Game clubrooms Champion Road Richmond



Otago NZDA Lodge at Beaumont – gateway to the Blue Mountains RHA.



Club Night –Next One (Tues Feb 27th)

To Be Advised - Check Your Email Soon

Fish and Game News...Well Next Time, eh?



Lighten Up



Member Benefits – Know & Get Your Share!



A special insurance package has been developed by NZDA for members*.

As a NZDA member you and your family can feel safe knowing you are personally covered in a hunting related accident or while undertaking NZDA activities.

Insurance only covers financial members, and is often a requirement when hunting on forestry blocks, so with our insurance cover you can access more hunting opportunities.

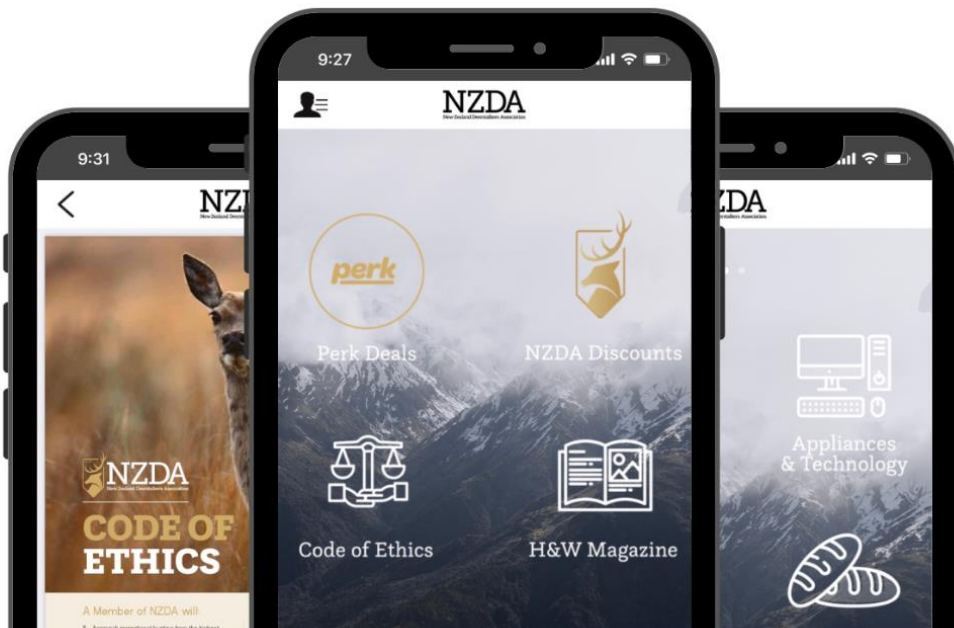
NZDA and all our members are covered by [AIG Insurance New Zealand Limited](#) insurance when hunting and undertaking NZDA activities.

The insurance indemnity cover includes:

- \$10,000,000 for General Liability
- \$10,000,000 for Products Hazard Liability
- \$500,000 for Statutory Liability

*Excludes Associate Membership

A MAJOR PERK OF YOUR NZDA MEMBERSHIP IS THE OFFICIAL APP.



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NZDA APP Discounts and More



Membership with the NZDA comes with a number of benefits:

- [Membership App](#) with discounts at major retailers.
- Regular [newsletters](#), advice and information directly to your inbox, both at your local Branch level and on nationally significant level. We inform our members about events and changes in the laws affecting hunting and shooting. We will also be the first to tell our members about current lobbying issues.
- Exclusive NZDA discounts:
 - Interisland Ferry group booking discount (contact us for the code)
 - [Go Native](#) outdoor meals and snacks, 25% discount
 - [Ridgeline Clothing](#) - functional, purpose designed hunting gear, 10% discount + exclusive discounts for HUNTS Instructors and graduates
 - [SWAZI Pro Deal](#), sign-up with your valid NZDA membership
 - [AJ Productions](#) - electronic game caller and trail cameras, 10% discount
 - [Kilwell Sports](#) hunting supplies, 15% discounts on website orders
 - Hunting with [Huntahr Guiding](#), 10% discount
 - Heli Sika, 10% discount on helicopter flights to hunting blocks
 - [Murchison Heli Tours](#), 10% off your flights
 - [NZ Taxidermy Ltd](#), 10% discount on mounts
 - 30% discount of Department of Conservation annual [Backcountry Hut Pass](#) or 'Hut Pass'. [See the DoC website for more details](#)
 - [Bush Life NZ](#), 20% discount on web orders
 - 10% discount at all good sporting, shooting and hunter retailers on request
- Public Liability [Insurance](#) when hunting and undertaking NZDA activities
- Quarterly Member Magazine: [NZ Hunting & Wildlife](#) - Spring, Summer, Autumn and Winter
- Branch club nights and guest speakers
- Conference and events
- [Competitions](#)
- Access to rifle ranges
- Networks of facilities, accommodation and huts
- [HUNTS training program](#) – training courses & certification for HUNTS Instructors
- Head measuring – access to [Douglas score](#) measurers
- [Research grants](#)

SUPPORTERS OF NELSON NZDA HUNTS COURSES AND KAI RESCUE **MORE INFO HERE:**

[MEAT SOLUTIONS](#)

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 orange](#)

- NZDA National Association [NZDA](#)
- DOC Hunting Portal [Hunting Conservation Land](#)
- Fiordland Wapiti Foundation [Wapiti](#)
- Game Animal Council [GAC](#)
- Walking Access NZ [WAMS Maps](#)
- LINZ Basemaps [MAPS Link](#)

Ballots

- [Haast Ballot](#)
- [Wanaka Ballot](#)
- Southland [Waikaia](#) [Leithen Bush](#) [Wainakarua](#) [Catlins](#)
- Fiordland [Wapiti Foundation Ballot](#)

- COLFO [COLFO](#)
- Mountain Safety Council [MSC](#)
- MSC Videos on [everything](#) safety and hunting [Watch Videos](#)
- Avalanche Advisory [Avalanche Advisory Site](#)
- NZ Police (Firearms Law) [Firearms](#)
- Police Firearms Safety Videos [FSA Safety Videos](#)

Also see here for firearms storage and carriage: [NZ Police Guide to Lawful Storage and Carriage of Firearms](#)