

July 2026



Look Out! Incoming Jumbo Edition!



NZDA Marlborough Branch Management Hunt in Nelson Lakes National Park a real success – full story below.

THIS MONTH

EDITORIAL

**Nelson Lakes
Management
Hunt – DOC**

**AGM, AHT &
Photo-
Competition
Results**

**Range
Matters -
Matariki
Shoot**

**Molesworth
License
Update**

**Club Night
Pack Light
& Travel Light**

**TSN Range
Meeting
Rooms Weds
29th July @
7pm**

**MEMBER
BENEFITS**

CONTACTS

&

**IMPORTANT
LINKS**

Editorial

Hullo Hunters and Shooters,

The recent cold (snow) and wet (downpours!) snaps a good reminder to keep a good weather eye open when planning your hunts.

The Branch AGM was held and the following is notable:

- Neil Cliffe stepped down from Committee after many years of solid service (but remains our Patron despite what our Facebook page seemed to announce recently! Malanie Bartlett also retired. Thanks to you both for serving the club.
- Anthony Cliffe has stepped up to Committee so welcome! And thanks for offering to help
- No other matters of great import arose, and when it comes to AGM's "no news is good news"!



DOC have provided a nice report on the most recent Nelson Lakes National Park animal control effort. This year it was led by Marlborough Branch (David Haynes on point) and the outcomes speak for themselves. Good job.

Much of the Echo is dedicated to celebrating the trophies and photos entered into our annual competition – the Editor has taken the liberty to extend to Echo to provide more pictures of these. If you have a trophy that's mentioned but no picture, then send it in and it can be published next edition. It appears that Aaron Shields needs some competition next year.....

There is a short update quoted directly from the Farmers Weekly about the Molesworth licensing process. Any delay to support a more considered decision is welcome. We understand that the next process will be the announcement of DOC's preferred applicant and an opportunity for public feedback. Any news will be provided when it comes to hand and is certain. NZDA and the Molesworth Game and Conservation Trust are staying close to this process for all hunters.

And talking of delays, the recent extension of deadline to submit on the Conservation Amendment Bill is welcome but it is unfortunate that a fairly complex set of proposals was so poorly laid out and explained such that some seemingly useful and needed changes were swamped by the understandable fears generated by the generic and sweeping language around sales and "businessification" of the Conservation Estate. It was bound to raise fear and loathing and certainly succeeded. NZDA National Office wisely collaborated with Federated Mountain Clubs and other likeminded organisations to produce a substantive sector submission (as was done for the review of recreational health and safety laws). Collective wisdom and strength. The NZDA National Access Committee supported head office with a review, summary and recommendations put together by our very own member Demelza Drake – good job well received at HQ thanks!

Check out Club Night for July, you will not find a wiser man than Greg Caigou to get some good tips on lightening your load!

Happy and Safe Hunting – **Richard Wells**

The Mountain Echo Editor Contact richardw@nelsonnzda.co.nz

Managed Hunt a Win for Conservation, Hunters, and Community



Hunters, conservation and the community have all come out on top after a managed hunt resulted in 192kg of venison donated to a Blenheim foodbank.

The New Zealand Deerstalkers Association (NZDA) organised the managed hunt on the tops of Nelson Lakes National Park's Matakītaki Valley. Thirty-nine keen hunters flew in by helicopter to 13 blocks across the remote tops for a week, removing 202 deer and six chamois.

NZDA's Dave Haynes says the hunt was a win for the National Park as it keeps deer numbers managed, a win for recreational hunters who got to fly into a zone that is otherwise difficult to access, and a win for the community because all of the meat went to a foodbank.



"We were able to donate 192kg of mince, sausages and patties to a local Blenheim foodbank, thanks to grants from the Blenheim Lions Club and Lotteries for the processing costs. The meat will make a difference for the community."

Dave says the hunting in the area is hard yakka but it was an absolute privilege to be there.

“We were blessed with amazing weather, it was very cold at night with frozen tarns and frost on the tent, but when the sun came up you were down to a t-shirt.

“Most hunters are conservationists by nature as well. We want to see native environments thriving as being out in pristine wilderness adds immeasurably to the hunting experience.”



DOC Nelson Lakes Operations Manager John Wotherspoon says the collaboration with NZDA has been a strong one.

“It’s a great relationship, and everyone gets something they value out of it. We all want to see a healthy environment, and we can get more done by working together.

“DOC contributed to the helicopter costs and granted permission for the helicopter landings in an area where they are generally restricted, given the benefits these hunts have to conservation.

“As well as the animal control, the hunters give us lots of valuable data that really helps our understanding of the area.”

John says while recreational hunter efforts alone aren’t enough to keep on top of rising deer numbers, they make a significant contribution and have an important role to play alongside other management tools.

Dave said this was the third managed hunt NZDA had run in this area and they were hoping to do more in the future.

“It’s been great to see the community get behind us. We worked closely with Murchison Helicopters, were given grants for processing the meat, and even got supplied handheld thermal devices from Advanced Optics, which made a big difference spotting deer we might not have otherwise seen.”

AGM, AHT and Photo-Competition Results



AGM and AHT – A word from our Patron, Neil Cliffe.



Our two DS scorers Warren and Eric - measuring and admiring – thanks guys!

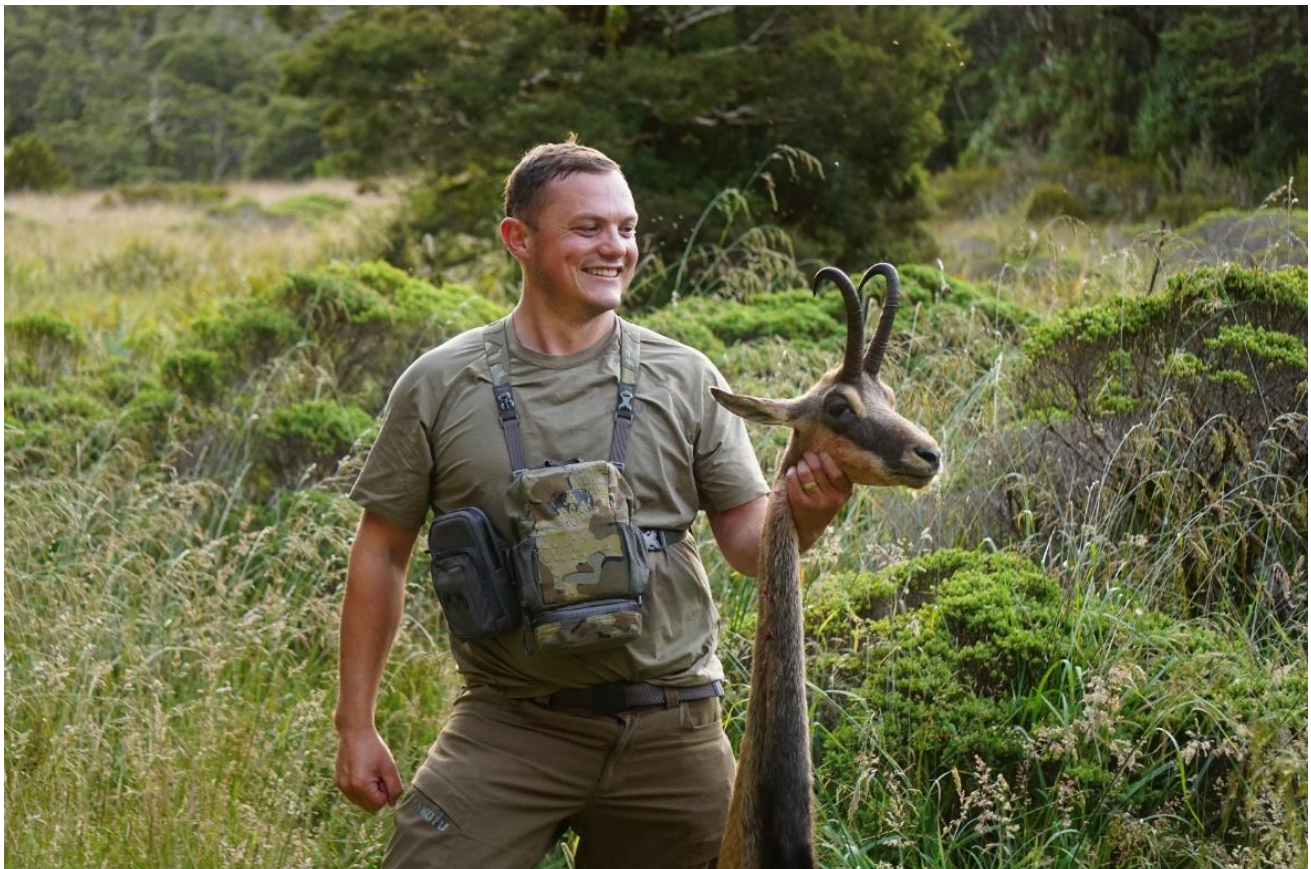


Shuttleworth Trophy. Best Red Deer



1st Aaron Shields 279 6/8 DS after heavy penalty for overspread. 17 points 44 inch wide, a dream head.

Sports Depot Cup. Best Chamois



1st Aaron Shields 26 2/8 DS

Bob Baigent Cup. Best head taken by a Junior.



1st Finn Dallas. Fallow 177 4/8 DS

Bob Baigent Trophy (Horned game other than Chamois)



1st Bevan Walker Tahr 43 4/8 DS

Whitcombe Challenge Trophy. Best NZ Deer Head. On DS

1st **Lee Dodunski** Fallow 205 4/8 DS (no pic)

Williams Cup. Pig Tusks.



1st Aaron Shields 23 DS drawn

Eddy Trophy. Best Trophy on Douglas Score Conversion.

1st **Bevan Walker** Tahr 43 4/8 converts to DS compared to a Red (no pic)

Peoples Store Trophy - Best Nelson Deer Head, Rakiura Trophy Best Whitetail and Women's Trophy?

No entries this year! C'mon guys and gals!

All Entries

Tahr

Bevan Walker 43 4/8

Eric Hall 41 6/8 (10 years old)

Graeme Ching 41 6/8

Alistair Ching 40 2/8

Eric Hall 40

Craig Wallace 40

Aaron Shields 38 6/8

Eric Hall 38 2/8

Aaron Shields 37 6/8

Alistair Ching 37 4/8

Chamois

Aaron Shields 26 2/8

Eric Hall 23

Fallow

Lee Dodunski (16points) 205 4/8

Finn Dallas 177 4/8

Reds

Aaron Shields 13 points 41 inches long 289 2/8

Aaron Shields 17 points 44 wide 279 6/8 (Heavy penalty for overspread) Great trophy.

Aaron Shields 11 point 247 1/8

Finn Dallas 11 point 239 6/8

Alistair Ching 11 point 231 1/8

Not sure why, heads seem to come in cycles. May be more hunting pressure or activity, or just seasonal growth with a good feed year. There were more Reds last year, offset by a lot more Tahr this year and some very good ones as well. Remember you have to be in to win, a spiker would have won the best Nelson deer competition this year! Cheers Warren Plum

Photo-Competition

Tantrum Cup - Wildlife Game Animals



1st Aaron Shields - Chamois



2nd Aaron Shields - Stag Looking



3rd Paul Peychers - Stag Roaring

Livingston Cup - Native Birds



1st Aaron Shields - Bush Robin



2nd Paul Peychers - Lone white heron on beach in sunlight



3rd Paul Peychers - Weka Feeding

Hunting memories



1st Richard Wells - Crossing the Clarence and riding into the sunrise



2nd Aaron Shields - Sunrise at camp



3rd Aaron Shields - Milky Way and silhouette

Flora



1st Carina Jackson - Pink Monster



2nd Aaron Shields - Blue mushroom in mossy on log & 3rd Aaron Shields - Blue mushroom close up

Other Wildlife Insects and Reptiles



1st Richard Wells - Butterflies on Ragwort



2nd Paul Peychers spider



3rd Carina Jackson beetle

Worsley Stalking Country



1st Aaron Shields - Above the clouds on a bluff



2nd Richard Wells - Bluebird day in the Big Bush



3rd Paul Peychers big bush valley to river flats

Other Wildlife - Mammals



1st Paul's Peychers Seal - Pup



2nd Paul Peychers sea lion on sand



3rd Paul Peychers Rabbit

Range Matters - Be a Star!!!!



**Open Invitation to All Benchrest Club Members, NZDA Members,
Guests or Anyone Interested**

“The Rimfire Challenge”

Holiday Weekend (Matariki) 10th, 11th, 12th July

We will again be holding a Rimfire Benchrest Weekend over the Matariki Holiday.

This will be an **open event – all comers welcome**.

The programme will be as follows:

Friday afternoon - Evening 10 July commencing 2pm Indoor Benchrest Match

1 x single 1 x double

Saturday morning commencing 10am 5 Target Hunter Class match at 50m

Saturday afternoon commencing 1pm 5 Target Group Match at 50m

Sunday morning commencing 10am 2 International 25 Bull Targets at 50m

We would expect the weather to be cool with Packers Creek short of sunlight during the day

If our indoor shooters wish to be part of the event, we will accept entries for Friday only if desired.

We will have to pay for the use of the ranges as normal so the set entry fee is:

Friday only \$15.00

Friday, Saturday, Sunday \$40.00

We plan to hold a light supper on Friday evening, some finger food Saturday lunch time and a scone and cuppa on Sunday while final scores are being tallied. The Matariki Challenge Trophy will be awarded to the overall winner.

Don't know the sport – but would like to?

This is a great opportunity to learn about our sport, In Benchrest we shoot from pedestals and sandbags (great for us old blokes) .22lr Rifles and subsonic ammo (very quiet and no recoil). Don't have the gear? – come anyway – we are happy to share our equipment. Just let us know so we can be prepared. We have a couple of club rifles available.

Contact and advise entry to:

Graeme Smith PH. 03 5447138 TXT 027 5447139 or Email lvhvbr@gmail.com

When is the last time you refreshed yourself with our Ranges' Standing Orders?

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

Friendly reminder regarding the bringing of guests to use the [Packers Creek Range](#).

You are welcome to bring along a friend/family member to be introduced to and use the Range. **But this should be on a “one-off” basis.** If your friend enjoyed it then they need to be encouraged to join our Branch and thereby properly support our Range. They should as it's a very good range! Constantly using Packers Creek Range as a non-member by “slipstreaming” is not allowed.

If intending to using the Range always check the calendar on our website (or follow our Facebook page):

[Nelson NZDA Range Info](#)

Range Use Etiquette - [Etiquette and Golden Rules Click Here](#)

Packers Creek Range Access Reminder:

1. Check website for opening days and hours
2. Be at gate **before** 0900 hrs not after
3. All vehicles **must have** headlights on and conform to convoy (i.e. **follow** the duty officer in and out on Sharlands Road – these rules are set by landowner/operator and are compulsory
4. Ensure you have your membership card (fill in the logbook) and hviz & hearing protection
5. When it's wet up there, avoid driving on the grass as it makes the mower's job that much harder.

Make Sure You Comply with Carriage of Firearms Law When Coming to the Range (and at all other times, of course)

Link to All Rules Here:

[NZDA - Te Pureke Firearms Rules - Transport and Storage](#)

Molesworth License Process Update

Molesworth lease pushed out to next year [Richard Rennie](#) of *Farmers Weekly* - June 18, 2026

Pāmu has agreed to stay on until April 2027 as DOC considers future of historic station.

DOC and Pāmu have agreed to extend the station's takeover date until April next year, choosing a date that aligns with the seasonal farming calendar.

Wikimedia Commons

As Molesworth Station's lease date at the end of June draws near, Pāmu has confirmed the state-owned farmer will be extending it until April next year.



The Department of Conservation (DOC), the station's owner, sought expressions of interest for the station's lease earlier this year, and [five parties](#) applied. They include Ngāi Tahu and a charitable trust initiative headed up by former Molesworth manager Jim Ward. The remaining three parties have not been identified at this point.

The DOC's South Marlborough operations manager, Stacey Wrenn, told *Farmers Weekly* the selection of a new leaseholder is progressing well, but DoC wanted to take the time to make a robust decision and get it right, given the station's complexity and significance.

In a statement to *Farmers Weekly*, a Pāmu spokesperson said the extension provides time to complete DOC's tender process. It aligns with the seasonal farming calendar at Molesworth, enabling an autumn transition and certainty for permanent and seasonal staff. "This expansion represents a minimum timeframe and Pāmu will continue to work with the department to agree on the details of the extension arrangements," the spokesperson said.

Pāmu has agreed to continue to work with DOC on extension arrangements over coming weeks.

Ward told *Farmers Weekly* that, as the June date loomed with no decision made, extending the lease until autumn weaning made sense. "Weaning time in autumn is an ideal time to take over. You would be nervous about taking over in spring when you need to value all the livestock on hand. You would be fighting high river levels, and it is quite likely you would miss some stock that are on the other side of those rivers." He said the shift in date makes no difference to his group's bid. "As long as a decision is made sooner than later, we have people we have shoulder-tapped for roles in our proposal who will need to know."

Club Night

Pack Light & Travel Light!

The older we get the harder it gets – Get some great tips and wise advice from our very own veteran hunter Greg Caigou, who is still packing into the hills to enjoy our great hunting opportunities! Anything that reduces your carry weight allows more energy for hunting and more space for meat (win:win!) Spot prizes of McCashin's vouchers!

Greig Caigou's post



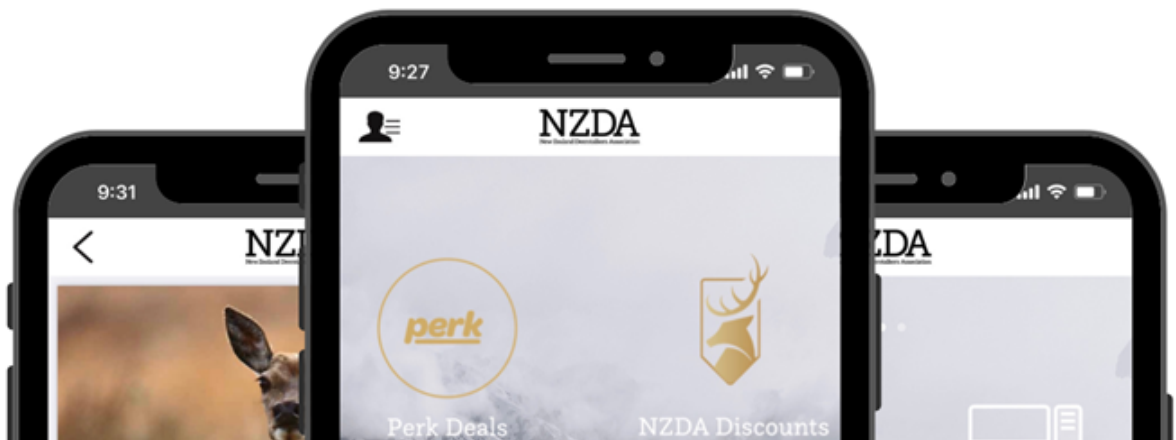
When and Where: Wednesday 29th July starting 7pm @ TSN Saxton Field Smallbore Range

Member Benefits – Know & Get Your Share!



New App Update

Download or Update the NZDA Member App to Access Your Digital Membership Card



Save your membership fee by using the NZDA discounts - click here:

[NZDA APP Discounts and More](#)



SUPPORTERS OF NELSON NZDA HUNTS COURSES AND KAI RESCUE [MORE INFO HERE:](#)
[MEAT SOLUTIONS](#)

Contacts & Important links

Key Branch Contacts

President Greg Couper gregc@nzdanelson.co.nz

Secretary Dave Woods dave@nzdanelson.co.nz

Membership Secretary & Events Carina Jackson carina@nzdanelson.co.nz

Red Deer Lodge

- Information on costs and bookings of the Red Deer Lodge at Lake Rotoiti [Red Deer Lodge](#)
- Contact for Accom: info@rotoitibaches.co.nz
- **Always remember to advise you are a Nelson member.**

2025 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.**

Advocacy and Access

- NZDA National Association [NZDA](#)
- DOC Hunting Portal [Hunting Conservation Land](#)
- Fiordland Wapiti Foundation [Wapiti](#)
- Game Animal Council [GAC](#)
- Outdoor Access Commission [OAC](#)
- Walking Access NZ [WAMS Maps](#)
- LINZ Basemaps [MAPS Link](#)
- 141 Forest Access Information [141 Access and Permit Info](#)

Hunting Permits

- [DOC Hunting and Permits Site](#)
- Fiordland [Wapiti Foundation Ballot](#)

Firearms and Safety

- COLFO [COLFO](#)
- NZ Firearms Safety Authority [Te Pureke](#)
- Mountain Safety Council [MSC](#)
- MSC Videos on everything safety and hunting [Watch Videos](#)
- Avalanche Advisory [Avalanche Advisory Site](#)