

March 2026



First Written Warning! Yes folks its time to think about our great **AHT and Photo-competitions**. Get your camera cranking and the grapevine says some good heads have been measured locally already.....but the best months of hunting are still before us. Don't forget **you must be a paid-up member** at time of taking (pic or trophy) and on the night of entry....so when your sub invoice arrives (soon) don't dilly-dally with getting it paid (before you forget....).



THIS MONTH

EDITORIAL

In Memoriam
Stuart Mirfin

Roar Safety

Range
Matters -
Summer
Series

May Tahr
Hunt

Stewart
Island – The
World is Flat

CLUB NIGHT

Gear Talk:
Off Road
Accessories
& More

BMG

20 Vanguard
St, Nelson

7.00 pm
Weds 25th
March

MEMBER
BENEFITS

IMPORTANT
LINKS

Editorial

Hullo Hunters and Shooters,

Autumn is definitely in the air, just back from a trip into Lake Sumner RHA and a bit of swirly snow and a good frost a portent of things to come. Saw some big animals way up high so there are some stags about for those with the legs!

Firstly, a tall totara fell in January with the loss of Stuart Mirfin, a loss to his family and friends, our club, New Zealand and anybody with a regard for the outdoors and recreation. Condolences and thanks, Warren, for your tribute below.



As usual at this time of the year there are some reminders below regarding being prepared for the roar and the stresses, strains, (manageable) risks and joys from the next few months of more intensive hunting. Try not to be “ho hum” about this and give yourself time to check off that you are as prepared as you can be, to help ensure a safe and enjoyable time for yourself and everybody else.

Eric Hall and Eric Simmons have provided more epic hunting stories which is why this Echo is a bigger than usual edition! Thank you and hopefully some more stories forthcoming from other members – 4 pics and captions is all we need!

Please all note that our Packers Creek Range is not available for sighting in over Easter weekend as the Benchrest Championships are on – so if you want to get fully set before the roar get up there over the next few weekends! Alternatively drop in to the Murchison Community Range.

A promotional poster for the NZDA Benchrest Shooting Championship. The top part shows a group of people sitting at a table, focused on their rifles. The bottom part is a black box with white and yellow text. The text includes the event name, dates, venue, and contact details. The NZDA logo is at the bottom right.

NZDA
New Zealand

Benchrest
Shooting
Championship

EASTER WEEKEND 2026
Fri 3/4 - Mon 6/4

Venue: Packers Creek Range
Maitai Valley, Nelson

Benchrest shooting is the 'Formula One'
of shooting disciplines worldwide

CONTACT DETAILS:
Graeme Smith 03 544 7138
lvhvbr@gmail.com

Nelson
NZDA
New Zealand Deerstalkers Association

Happy and Safe Hunting – **Richard Wells**

In Memoriam – Stuart Mirfin

Our club lost one of its greatest supporters with the recent passing of Stuart Mirfin. Stuart had been a NZDA Nelson member for in excess of 50 years and was both a committee member and club treasurer at various times.

I had the very good fortune of meeting Stuart when as a 17year old I joined the Canterbury Savings Bank as a new employee. Stuart was the Richmond branch manager, a role he filled for many years. He took an interest in me, and I found a mentor and lifetime friend. Stuart appeared to know pretty well everyone in the district and was a wealth of information on both banking and hunting for a young chap just starting out. Many of my favorite places, the Cobb, Nelson Lakes and Molesworth were all found as direct result of Stuart's guidance. In later years shared hunts after Whitetail in the Dart, Geese in Molesworth, and attempting to get his son Zane's first deer in the Cobb are treasured memories. I might add that our regular flights to Christchurch with work had us peering out the window, checking out the hunting country below and discussing where we had been, or would like to explore.

There would be few sportsmen to rival Stuart when it came to consistent success, be it deer, ducks, geese, whitebait, snapper, flounders, pigs, wallaby's, thar and chamois to name a few he did it all. Throughout North Westland, Nelson and Marlborough's high country there must be numerous ageing spent cartridge cases, a memento of Stuarts passing. The wonderful thing is that he did this with friends and family. Stuart and Sherry's two sons Zane and Scott were very fortunate lads and have carried this love of the outdoors forward with their own children. It was with great pride Stuart would relate his six grandchildren's prowess and how he had guided them all to their first deer. Still carrying a pack at age 79 and shooting deer on public land gives us older hunters hope for sure.



What many younger members are likely unaware of are his efforts to save and improve opportunities for hunters and fishers. He could clearly see the detrimental effects of ongoing wholesale poisoning, treatment of deer as pests to be eradicated, rampant commercialism and a general anti-hunting bias of government departments along with a reduction in access.

Stuart was not one to just sit back and accept this. He was heavily involved with the formation and running of the Recreational Hunting Area in the Cobb-Mt Arthur tablelands, until its unfortunate loss with the formation of the Kahurangi National Park. Not deterred he went on to form the Outdoors Party, which he correctly determined would one way or the other influence future political decisions for the better. As he saw it win or lose, when Politicians came to recognize just how many people actually cared and were prepared to take action, they would be forced to at least appear to be more sympathetic around their approach to outdoor users and access to hunting and fishing. Things like the formation of the Game Animal Council and Walking Access may never have occurred without other like-minded people around the country being encouraged and taking up the challenge after witnessing the amount of attention politicians were now taking in relation to those topics.

So, well done Stuart, we and our grandchildren will be forever grateful for your efforts.

Warren Plum.



Things to Be this Roar

Be Legal

Make sure you are up to date with your public or ballot land permits (or private landowners' permissions) [GAC Licenses and Permits Information](#) and read the permit conditions.....



Hunting Permit

Permit Number: 00750163
Permit Validity Period: 2024-01-27 08:32:55 -
2024-05-26 08:32:55

Permit Conditions:

1. No firearm other than a high-powered centre fire rifle may be taken into the area, unless the permit is issued for shooting rabbits on which case LOW-POWERED SMALL CALIBRES CAN BE USED. Where this permit is issued only for game birds (as noted on the permit), only 12-20 gauge shotguns are permitted.
2. Hunting wild animals during the hours of darkness is prohibited.
3. This permit is not transferable and must be carried while hunting and produced on demand to any warranted officer or any other authorised person, and may at any time be cancelled by public notice issued by radio or published in a newspaper of the district.
4. Carcasses, offal and rubbish must not be left in stream beds or within loom of huts, campsites and tracks.
5. Care must be taken that streams, rivers and lakes are not polluted. All animals are to be killed as humanely as possible.
6. No fires to be lit in the open air without a fire permit.
7. No aircraft landings in wilderness areas.
8. Accessing and hunting on farmland requires the farmer's permission. Note: Other persons (trampers, fishermen, DOC rangers, guided groups etc) may be in the hunting area.
9. Hunters using a firearm must abide by the NZ Police Arms Code and hold a valid firearms licence.

.....as well as your firearms license, ensure team mates are too. Remember the rules re carriage and storage of firearms while out hunting.

Tips for travelling with firearms and ammunition this summer

Before you go on holiday, consider how your firearms and ammunition will be transported, stored and used safely while you're away.

Top safety and security tips:

- Firearms can never be left in a vehicle overnight. If you pack your vehicle the night before, make sure you leave time and space to pack your firearms just before you travel.
- Ammunition must be transported separately to your firearms, and in a locked container if practical.
- If you're not taking your firearms with you, make sure they're stored securely – take the keys with you and cover up your gun safe and ammunition storage.

[Learn more about safe storage and transportation](#)



Read more on the Firearms Rules here: [FSA Rules](#)

Be Firearms Safe

Always obey the 7 Rules

The 7 rules of firearm safety

Rule 1 Treat every firearm as loaded

Rule 2 Always point firearms in a safe direction

Rule 3 Chamber a cartridge only when ready to fire

Rule 4 Identify your target beyond all doubt

Rule 5 Check your firing zone

Rule 6 Store and transport firearms and ammunition safely

Rule 7 Avoid alcohol or drugs when handling firearms



Te Tari Pūreke
Firearms Safety Authority

Be Seen (by Other People)



Deer are colour blind..... people are not.

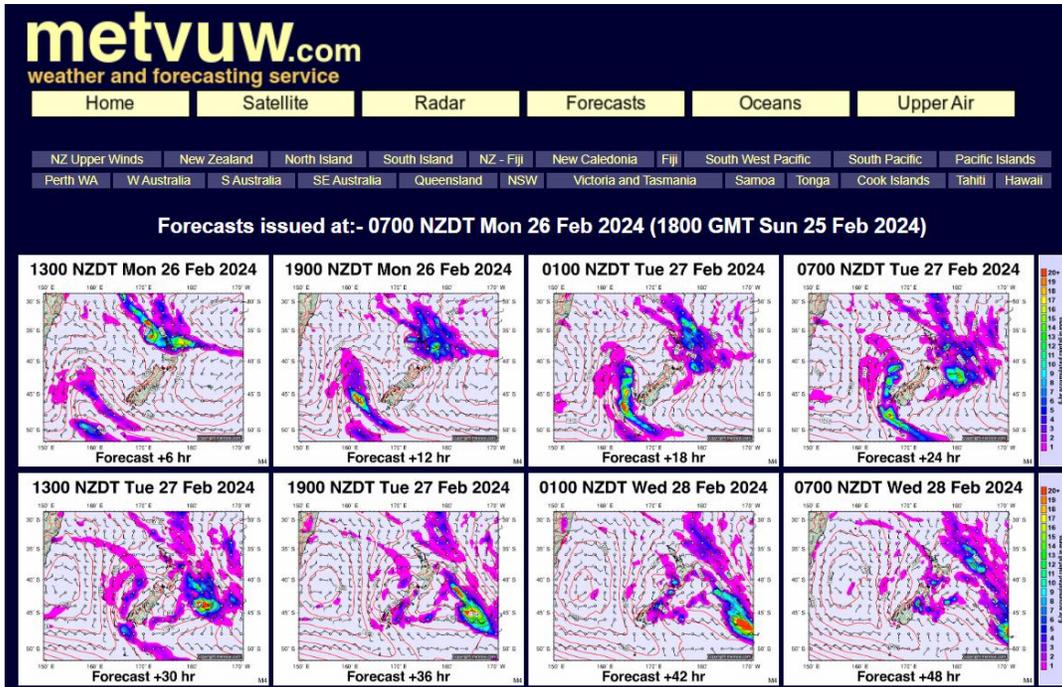
Be River Safe



Don't cross when you know or feel you should not, no river HAS to be crossed despite what you might tell yourself!

Watch this MSC video for a refresher [MSC River Safety](#)

Be Weatherwise



 **Fiordland National Park** ☆
Mountain peak, Southland District, Southland (New Zealand), elevation 1063 m

[Forecast](#) [Other conditions](#) [Map](#) [Details](#)

🕒 Current conditions

 **8°** Feels like 5°  **0.2 mm**  **4 m/s**

[Table](#) [Graph](#)

	Night	Morning	Afternoon	Evening	Temperature high/low	Precip.
Today 26 Feb.					8° / 6°	1.5 mm
Tuesday 27 Feb.					12° / 6°	11 mm

Use all the great Apps and websites, there really is NO excuse these days to not have a good grip on the next 5 days weather at least. I use YR and MetVUW all the time but there are other popular sites.

Weather YR [Link YR](#)

MetVUW [Link MetVUW](#)

Metservice [Link Metservice](#)

Windy [Link Windy](#)

Weather Watch [Link WeatherWatch](#) (great maps of Pacific area and so a long view of what's coming our way)

Be Heli-Safe



Flying is fun but be sure you know how to keep yourself, your pilot and the aircraft safe while loading, boarding and disembarking. Check out this free online DOC Course especially if you are new to choppers. [DOC Helisafety](#)



Be Sure of Your Whereabouts



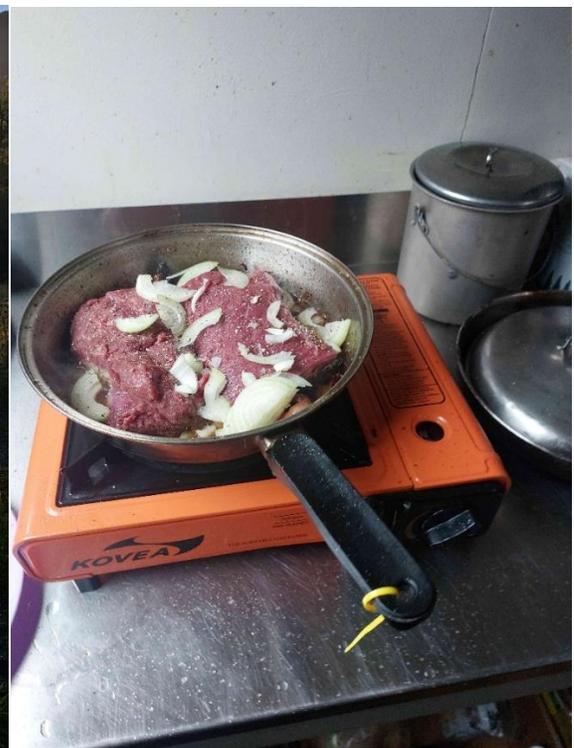
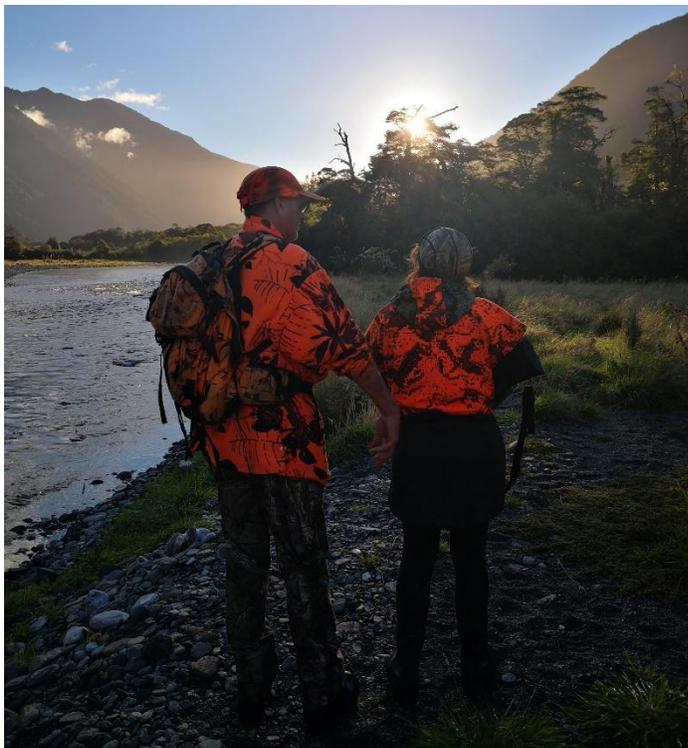
Make sure your navigation gear is working, you have backups (at least a compass), check batteries and powerpacks. Ensure all your team know how to use it.

Be ready for the moment....

For the worst....**always have a PLB**, first aid gear and ensure your intentions are known by your people back home - you can use online tools such as [AdventureSmart Intentions Form](#) and use Hut Books when available.



And of course....**be ready** to enjoy yourself! **Double check everything** and then you can relax and enjoy your autumn hunting experiences!



Range Matters – Summer Series Results

Results of the Summer Series Rimfire Benchrest shoot in February.

		2 x International		Event
8-Feb-26		Target		Aggregate
		T1	T2	
1	Graeme Smith	235	237	472
2	Graeme Vallance	231	233	464
3	Warren Hitchcock	218	222	440
4	Anne Marie Kidson	202	227	429
5	Michael Kidson	207	218	425
6	John Mitchell	199	219	418
7	John Ronaldson	196	219	415

Series Points

							Comp Aggregate
Graeme Smith	6	10	9	8	9	7	49
Graeme Vallance		7	8	7	7	6	35
John Ronaldson	5	5	7	6	3	1	27
Simon Cotton		8	5	5	5		23
Michael Kidson	3	6	3	2	6	3	23
Ian Harper	4	3	2	4	2		15
Anne Marie Kidson	2	2	4	3	1	4	16
Greg Couper		11					11
David Hill		4	6				10
Chris Shelton					10		10
Carina Jackson		9					9
Jim Love					8		8
Warren Smith	7						7
Warren Hitchcock					4	5	9
Chris Turner	1						1
David Quick		1					1
John Mitchell			1			2	1
Donald Jaffray				1			1

Any competition and event queries please:

call **Graeme Smith - 03 5447138** 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](#)

May Tahr Hunt – *by Eric Hall*

My first trip into Tahr country was in November 1981 with Frank Saxton. We hunted the head waters of the Rangitata River. Tahr were very scarce and the helicopter operators had lost interest in Tahr recovery since 1976 as returns become unviable. Tahr numbers were so low recreational hunters were not hunting them either. Very few hunters during that period were hunting tahr in the Clyde River catchment which was evident in the McCoy Hut book as there was long periods of time when there were no hunters in the area. How times have changed.

Since 1981 there has been very few years that I haven't hunted tahr in the rut. In those early days of the ballot block system on the West Coast, we hunted the Landsborough River valley which became our "go to" tahr hunting location.

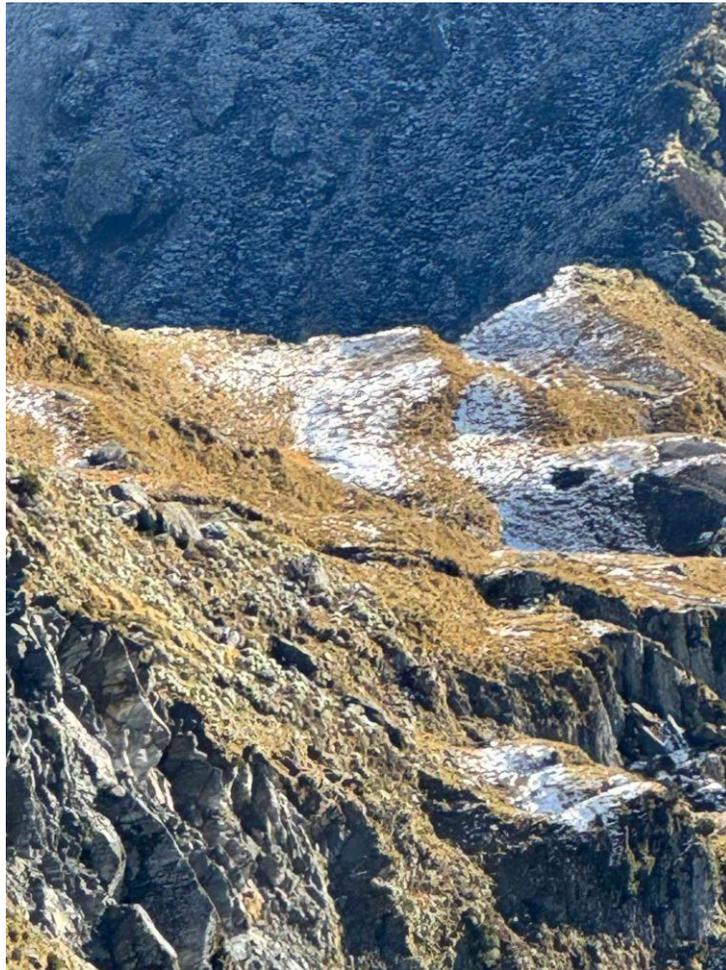
In 2014 again, after missing out on a tahr ballot block, I arranged for Heliservices to drop us off in the Whataroa River valley to a spot I had my eye on for a number of years. The first year I shot a very old bull literally on top of the range as he sat under a big rock ledge. It had a huge body with heavy horns that were groomed right back probably losing 4 cm in length. We have been back to that location on number occasions since then when we were unsuccessful in drawing a tahr ballot block.



After three successful trips under our belts already this year we were very confident of another great hunt. This year in May, with a typical Westcoast mixed weather forecast, Heliservices picked Lee and I up mid-week from the Whataroa helipad. The fly in is normally straight forward but today the heavy fog further up the valley prevented the chopper pilot from making a straightforward landing. The campsite was right in front of us 300 m away.

With nil visibility in front of us we flew around for what seem ages but probably only 5 minutes before a gap appeared in the fog spooking 5 bull tahr in the process. Within seconds we were landing right on our old campsite. Awesome, as going back to base was not a good idea in my book and we didn't have back up plan to land anywhere else. While we were unloading our gear the pilot made a casual comment about a weather front coming and to expect some very high westerly winds. That evening we had dinner in white out conditions after spotting a couple of young bulls below camp.

Next morning with the fog looking to lift we were up early and off to glass for big bulls. I climbed up high to our glassing ridge and Lee went to our lower glassing position. With the fog continually coming and going it was hard glassing. Around 10 am a single shot in the distance indicated that Lee was having all the action. While he was glassing a good bull walked out of the fog and came towards him giving him very easy 100 m shot. The rest of the day was a washout as the fog came in real thick. A number of kea were in the area but didn't seem to interested in us yet.



In clearing conditions on day three we climbed high to our glassing location. In the distance I could see a number of tahr including four bulls. I just happen to put my binos onto our campsite way below us. There was a strange looking dark spot on the top of my flash alpine tent. I could not believe my eyes, there was a B great hole with a kea sitting beside it, a very happy chappy. With a forecast of heavy rain and wind that evening we were off back downhill to camp really quick. Thankfully I had brought my Huntech fly with us. We laid the fly over the tent and tied it down as best we could. And blow that night it sure did. The wind and rain was getting in between the fly and the tent causing us a few issues. The noise was like a jet plane on top of us. Twice in the middle of night we had to get up and rearrange the guy ropes and add some very big boulders to the corners of the fly.



As morning approached all was quiet to awaken to heavy snow and a fine day. The keas arrived while two weary hunters were having breakfast. They were very keen to land on top of the fly and continue to try and rip holes in it. Lee climbed up to our glassing spot and I went after the bulls we spooked while trying to land in the chopper. Five minutes from camp gave me a great view of the tahr country we had hunted on our previous trips. Right on cue I could see a number of bulls and nannies some 700 m away on a bench above the bluffs.

This has always been one of our favourite hot spots for bulls on our previous hunts. The bulls were in full rut chasing the nannies around and trying scare the other bulls away. Half an hour later I was close to where the tahr were living. Ever so slowly I made my way around the hillside knowing I was going to be very close to them. I could smell them as the wind blew in my direction. Then as I peered over the ridge, I spotted a big bull laying down in front of me 30 m way. It jumped up and ran to the edge of the bluffs and just stood there looking away from me. Not wanting to lose the bull over the bluffs I waited and then the bull turned around and walked back towards me. It knew something was not right but couldn't figure it out that the camouflage object behind a very small tussock bush was a hunter. A very close shot dropped the bull dead in its tracks. It measured a little over 12 inches so I was pretty happy. After removing the head and getting my composure I quietly made my way down the ridge towards more tahr.



I was definitely in hunting mode as 30 metres further on a nanny leap out from the rocks and stood looking at me from 10m. As it took off out of the corner of my eye I spotted a head of a good bull looking at me from around a big rock. The bull's reaction was quick but I was quicker. The bull took off at an amazing speed and headed for the bluffs 15 m away. The Sako was up and when the bull filled the scope, I fired seeing the bull flinch as it disappeared over a small bluff. I moved forward ready for a follow up shot to find the bull lying dead 10 m below me. I gave it a quick measure and the tape read 12 ½ inches. I was just standing there getting my wits about me and feeling pretty happy with myself when Lee radioed. Yes mate, two good bulls down within 40 m of each other. We arranged to catch up later in the afternoon after I had dropped the heads off at camp.



Yes, the keas were at camp causing havoc. With a good forecast ahead of us I knew we would survive long enough until the chopper pick up if the tent suffered further kea damage. By mid-afternoon I had caught up with Lee who had seen a lot of tahr but no really big bulls. Lee had also seen a buck chamois that got his attention but like all rutting buck chamois at this time of the year they are on the move looking for does to mate with. It was our last hunting day tomorrow so we planned to come back in the morning and see if we could get our eyes on the chamois buck again.

We were up early, couple cups of coffee and plate full of porridge were soon we heading up hill to our glassing spot. It wasn't until late afternoon before we spotted the buck chamois a long way below us. The buck was on the move disturbing two does in the high scrub. The light angle made it difficult to get good look at his horns even though the spotter was on 45 power. The buck waved its head around marking its territory on some tussock.

The horns were very long. I have seen a lot good bucks in my lifetime and this buck was a beauty. My heart missed a beat. This buck was a great trophy. I told Lee to get going as the gap between us and the buck was an hours climb down a steep ridge. Lee finally got to within 300 m of our last sighting. After half an hour I managed to spot the buck again crossing in small clearing while it was making its way back to the bush. Lee was unable to see the buck as he was too low and couldn't see over the mountain scrub. Before the buck disappeared, I got another good sighting of those horns, yes that buck was a very good trophy. That evening we decided to come back in 2026 and see if we could find

the big buck. By the time we packed up for our flight out next morning the outer fly of my alpine tent was unusable. Keas 0 Eric \$450.

On the drive back to Nelson I was already scheming and thinking about our trips for 2026. Next year cannot come quick enough. Summing up, Lee and I had hunted four locations in the South Island seeing good numbers of big game animals and taking some good trophies along the way plus having a great a time in the process. The trophy animals are out there; one just has to make a plan and go and do it.



Cheers

Eric

Stewart Island (The World if Flat) *by Eric Simmons*

Stewart Island had long occupied that space between dream and plan—a trip repeatedly discussed but never executed. This year, everything finally aligned. With logistics masterfully handled by my wife, we flew from Nelson to Invercargill, were shuttled to Bluff with our Click & Collect groceries in tow, and by late afternoon were boarding the ferry south. An hour later, we stepped onto the wharf at Oban, greeted by caretakers from the Book-a-bach we'd call home for the next few nights.

Oban may be small, but it hums with a quiet confidence. A couple of cafés, a pub, and a waterfront grocery store make up its core, and within minutes we were chatting with a local fisherman who, without ceremony, handed us a freshly caught crayfish. That unexpected act of generosity became our entrée to Stewart Island life—humble, unhurried, and full of character.

Ulva Island: The Calm Before the Weather

The next morning we headed to Ulva Island, one of New Zealand's most enchanting predator-free sanctuaries. Over four leisurely hours we wandered through lush bush alive with birdcalls.

Yellowheads flicked through the canopy, kākāriki rummaged in the leaf litter, and kākā surveyed us from above—boisterous but not as mischievous as their alpine cousins.



Ulva Island is a paradise for native bird lovers with close encounters with many species rarely seen on the mainland

After another hearty pub meal, packs were sorted for the days ahead. Our wives were embarking on a four-day tramp from Oban to Mason Bay via Port William. We, meanwhile, would fly in ahead of them to begin our hunt.

A Rough Flight to the End of the Earth

The next morning we helped load the Piper Cherokee Six at the Oban airstrip. The pilot warned of “a bit of bumpiness crossing Freshwater”; it turned out to be a generous understatement. Still, the landing—straight onto the hard-packed sands of Mason Bay—was effortless.



After a bumpy flight in the Cherokee made a smooth landing on the windswept sand in Mason Bay

Waiting inland sat Cavalier Hut, part of the network maintained by the Rakiura Hunters Trust. Modest, clean, and surprisingly well equipped, it's tucked perfectly out of the prevailing wind—a strategic choice, no doubt, from whoever sited it decades ago. After settling in, we headed out to explore the country.



Cavalier Hut is managed and maintained by the Rakiura Hunters Trust and provides a great comfortable base

A First Deer Far Sooner Than Expected

A DOC sign announced that the Doughboy Bay track had been rerouted along the beach “for improved maintenance.” We took this to mean the original track had been abandoned—and, being hunters, decided to follow it anyway. Predictably, it disappeared into thick muttonbird scrub and miki. Some determined bush-bashing eventually delivered us back onto faint remnants of the old trail.



At a small clearing, we paused to glass. Too early for movement, but the terrain looked promising. Minutes later, as I scanned a ridgeline with the thermal, a bright heat signature appeared—an animal standing on the bush edge, 80 metres away.

“Shall I shoot it?” Dave whispered.

“Yeah.”

His .270 cracked, the shot struck true, and the deer bounded a short distance before collapsing. Our first Stewart Island whitetail—less than an hour into the hunt. The island, it seemed, wasn’t out to humble us just yet.



In less than an hour of leaving the hut Dave had the first Whitetail in the bag.

Wind, Tracks, and Quiet Frustration

Over the next few days we walked miles, discovering pockets of exceptional habitat—and endless fresh sign. Time after time, returning along our route, we found tracks crossing our own from only hours earlier. The most tantalising was a large buck leaving distinctive prints along the beach every morning, including one unusually wide-splayed hoofprint. He was clearly nearby, moving deliberately, and just ahead of us.

Kiwi sign was equally common, though the birds themselves remained elusive. As for the weather, we quickly learned that “windy” on Stewart Island means something closer to “horizontal.”



Walking the beaches was a real mission as the gale force winds and wind blown sand added to the challenge.

Still, the learning curve was steep—and we were stubborn enough to enjoy that.

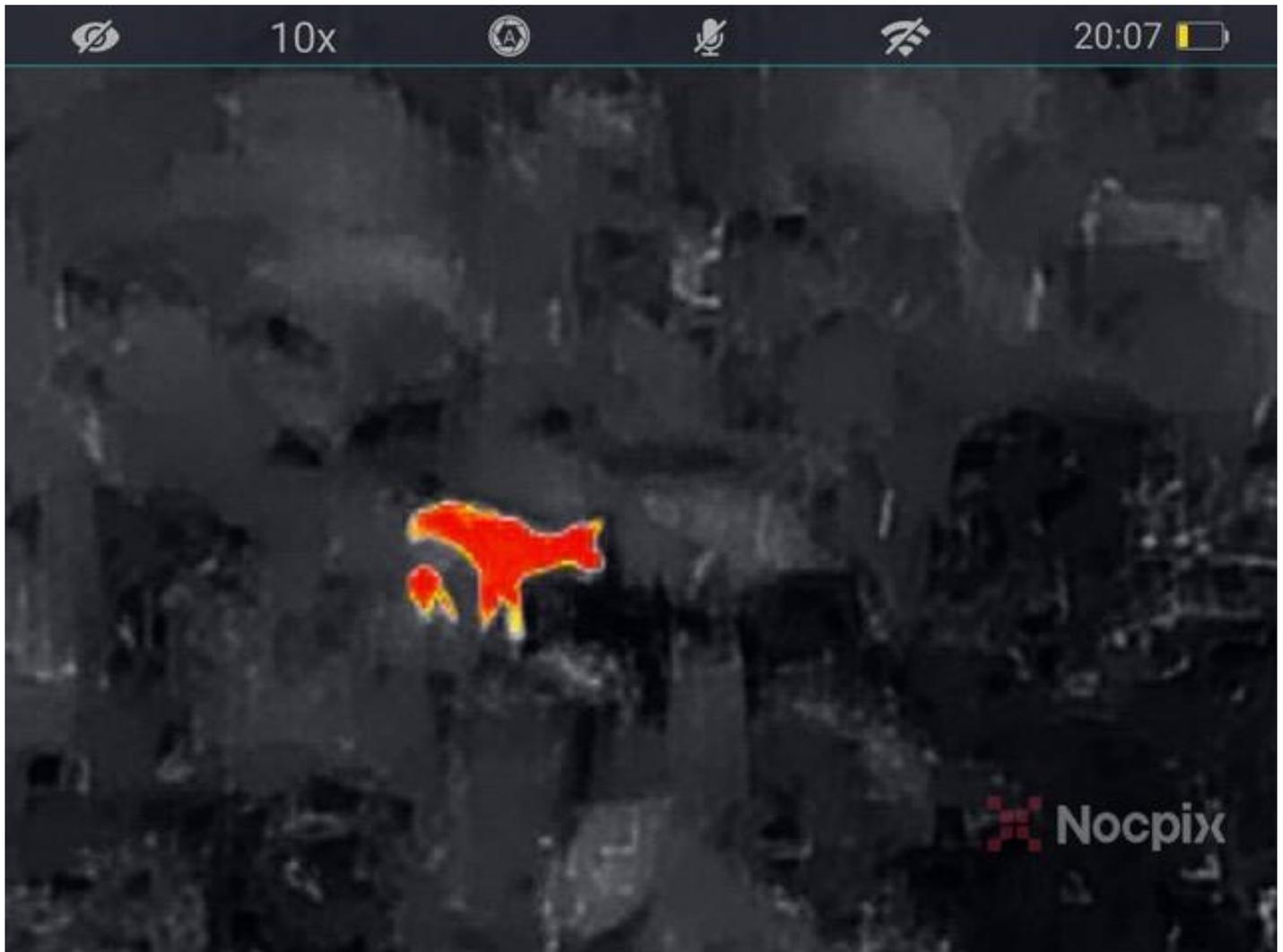
A Misfire, a Second Buck, and a Perfect Evening

The day our wives were due to reach the hut, we finished our morning hunt, made a late breakfast, and waited. They arrived mid-afternoon, four days of tramping behind them and plenty of stories to trade. That evening, we headed back out for a final attempt.



Nestled in some Maram grass waiting for some action

Two hours passed without movement. On the thermal, a tiny, unmoving hotspot kept catching my attention—too small for a deer, resembling a grey “gummy bear” slumped beneath a shrub. By 9:15 p.m., the sun was gone and we were minutes from calling it. One last look—and the gummy bear sprouted ears. Then it moved.



Just as the light was fading, the gummy bear presented itself on the handheld thermal

Dave confirmed it through the thermal. I settled behind my .243. Click. Misfire. “Bugger.” A swift reload, a steady breath, and the next shot found its mark. The young buck dropped instantly and tumbled down the face. We reached him under full darkness, cleaned him by headlamp, and carried him home. Two animals between us—not bad for a place famed for difficulty.



Right on last light without a minute to spare a shot presented itself to secure my deer

Pāua, Kiwi Encounters, and Final Moments

With the hunting done, the next mission was food—specifically pāua. We walked four kilometres down the beach to The Gutter, arriving on low tide to find massive swells hammering the rocks. Plan B: the sheltered side. Things looked grim until Anne spotted a pāua. Then another. Soon we had half a dozen, all oversized and perfect for dinner.



Time for a new target species, black gold from the rock pools

The final goal was a proper kiwi sighting. Between the four of us we'd had fleeting encounters, but none close enough to savour. That changed on our final evening. As steady rain fell, Anne stepped outside for water and froze—there, in the clearing, a kiwi was probing the soft ground, completely unconcerned by our presence. We stood quietly and watched, grateful for the rare privilege of seeing one undisturbed in its own realm.





The sunsets at the end of the earth are truly spectacular while waiting for five minutes of action.

Departure Through the Clouds

Our final morning brought low cloud and showers, and for a while it looked unlikely the plane would make it in. Nearly an hour late, the Britten-Norman Islander materialised through the mist and touched down. The flight back to Invercargill was calm, and the girls enjoyed an aerial view of the routes they'd walked just days earlier.

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Stewart Island sits at the very edge of the world, and the wind behaves accordingly—everything travels sideways.
- If you're moving, you're going too fast. Sit. Watch. Wait.
- Trust your instincts; it's not as impossible as the stories claim.
- Prime hunting windows are brutally short—half an hour at dawn and dusk.
- Suppressors and bipods are dead weight here.
- A handheld thermal is priceless.
- And most importantly: don't trust the hut meat safe. Blowflies will take what you don't eat.

Club Night – BMG Gear Talk: Off Road Accessories

Come in to see Oscar and the team to talk about off road accessories from bull bars and bumpers through to lift kits, snorkels and roof rack systems, tyres etc, they look forward to having us in store, you can check them out online at www.bmgstore.co.nz



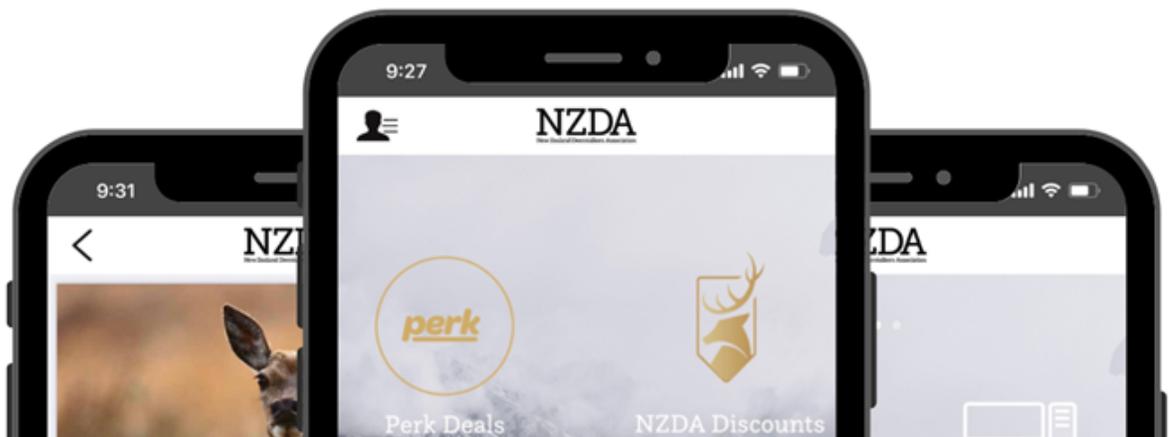
Where & When: BMG 20 Vanguard Street Wednesday 7 pm 25th March

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](#)

Important links

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](#)

Ballots

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