

September 2026



[Link to DOC Goat Competition Website](#)

[GAC Ballots Information for all regions and blocks](#)

Chance to Hear and Discuss the changes to the Arms Act

SAVE THE DATE

Arms Act 2026 and Firearms policy

10th October 5.30pm Saturday @ the Honest Lawyer in Stoke.

Public meeting with Hon. Nicole McKee, Minister for Courts and Associate Minister of Justice will be in Nelson to discuss the Arms Act 2026 and Firearms Policy that become law in September. Come along to find out more info and a Q&A session

More info to come Monday, anyone can attend this public event

[Target Shooting Nelson](#)



THIS MONTH

EDITORIAL

A Word from GAC

Changes to Ballots

Range Matters

Before & After

Wilberforce Adventure

Trapped!? In the Greenstone

Well Travelled

Molesworth Roar Ballot

Lighten Up

Club Night

To Be Advised

TSN Range
Rooms Weds
28th Oct @
7pm

Editorial

Plenty is happening out there for hunters and shooters.

The goat competition continues, if you chasing goats check the link above for getting your tails in the competition.

If you want to know the latest on firearms law and policy and have a chance to discuss, make sure you get along to hear from Minster Nicole McKee who has led the charge on reviewing and refreshing the Act – details above.

Mid-month there is a big hunting and 4x4 expo here in Nelson, our Branch will have a stand (and looking for supporters) and it will be a big thing – so get along!

Also, changes to Molesworth permitting. Firstly, the roar period this year is a ballot not a “first past the post” system and because it’s new, it will be open for applications till the end of November (i.e. 2 months). Further news is that from then on, year-round hunting permits will be by ballot too, the same as the Blue Mountains. No more midnight watches. So, stay alert for communications on this from DOC, watch their website. More on this below.

I have repeated GAC’s newsletter this month as it has particularly important news – definitely worth the read and attention. If you are a tahr hunter, please do the feedback they seek, silence is approval!

My story about trapping (and hunting) in the Greenstone is a window into other Branch activities and opportunities for NZDA members wherever they hail from – it was a good trip.

Safe and Happy Hunting & Shooting

Richard Wells - The Mountain Echo Editor. Contact richardw@nelsonnzda.co.nz



A Word from Game Animal Council



CEO Update September 2026: Putting our RHAs back on the map

By Corina Jordan, CE, NZ Game Animal Council



The Game Animal Council (GAC) has recently published a new information resource focused on New Zealand's recreational hunting areas (RHAs). This is the first time that information on all eight of our RHAs can be found in one spot.

RHAs cover around 178,000 hectares of public conservation land and are areas where recreational hunters can enjoy and harvest from without commercial competition. They were formally gazetted between the early and mid-1980s, following the hugely successful commercial recovery boom.

There are four RHAs in the North Island – Pureora North, Kaimanawa, Kaweka and Haurangi/Aorangi; and four in the South Island – Lake Sumner, Oxford, Blue Mountains and Greenstone-Caples.

Our new RHA information resource provides hunters with practical information about each RHA, including the game species present, access, huts and tracks, hunting opportunities, local NZDA branches and local hunter efforts.

A big thank you must go to the local NZDA branches and hunters who contributed their knowledge to help inform the project.

Current RHA management

RHAs are currently managed by the Department of Conservation (DOC) under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977.

The RHA management framework explicitly allows for further control measures to be undertaken by the statutory manager (currently DOC) where animal impacts become too high. While the ability to undertake control exists, there is limited information and coordination to deliver better hunter outcomes while continuing to protect conservation values.

RHAs need to be managed with focused leadership to address challenges and provide coordination. The lead management agency must understand hunter values and be able to work closely with local hunting communities.

If provided with the mandate to manage them, RHAs provide a significant opportunity for recreational hunters to demonstrate what hunter-led game animal management can look like.

The recently designated Sika and Wapiti [Herds of Special Interest](#) (HOSI) gives us a fantastic opportunity to demonstrate that at scale, and our RHAs provide further opportunities for hunters to do this all around the country.

[To read about all eight of New Zealand's RHAs and find out about the hunting opportunities they provide, head to the RHA page on our website here.](#)

Hunter support key to Sika HOSI success



The [Sika HOSI](#) was designated in July and we're currently working closely with the Sika Foundation to implement the Sika HOSI herd management plan. This includes working alongside hunters, mana whenua, and community.

The HOSI model is built around adaptive management. We monitor the herd, the forest, and hunter satisfaction, understand what is happening, undertake the appropriate management, and then adjust things as the evidence tells us more.

And this is where recreational hunters have a really important role. A key part of the Sika HOSI's success will be hunter engagement and support. We will be working closely with hunters on herd management and will be seeking hunter information on the health of the herd, their satisfaction, and the overall hunting experience. Together, this enables us to be able to shape management in a way that provides for hunters while continuing to protect conservation values.

Ultimately, we want to achieve a high-quality sika herd, a healthy forest and enjoyable hunting opportunities. That means ensuring we get the balance right.

We will be sharing more information on what the operational work plan for the rest of 2026, and 2027 looks like, and where there's opportunities for hunters to get actively involved in the Sika HOSI management framework. Keep an eye on our channels for further updates.

[If you'd like to stay updated with key Sika HOSI updates and operational notices, please sign up to the Sika HOSI email newsletter here.](#)

Tahr hunting – your feedback



We are keen to hear from tahr hunters about what sort of experiences you have been having. If you are comfortable sharing your experience, please get in touch by sending us a message on social media, or emailing media@nzgac.org.nz.

We'd like to know:

- Number of animals seen
- If you were hunting in a ballot area
- State of the environment
- Harvest success (or not)
- Trip satisfaction (high/medium/low) and why

Understanding hunter experiences is crucial to the GAC being able to represent the views of hunters and advocate for actions that improve hunting and game animal management in New Zealand. Thanks to those who have already provided their feedback.

Tahr are currently managed by the DOC under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977. This is done through the Himalayan Thar (sic) Control Plan 1993 (HTCP). The GAC has, for a number of years, provided advice to DOC on how control can be done in a way that minimises impacts on hunters as far as possible. This includes things like targeting females during control and putting more emphasis into areas that are less accessible for recreational hunters.

The hunting sector has been advocating for nearly 10 years for a review of the HTCP and wider tahr management framework to enable management that provides for hunting and conservation outcomes.

The GAC supports moving tahr management from the current control framework into a values-based, sustainable and truly adaptive management framework under the Game Animal Council Act 2013.

[See the GAC's previous advice on tahr management on our website here.](#)

All the best,

Corina

Changes to Ballots



Kia ora koutou,

I'm writing to give you an update on the transition of DOC hunting ballots to the new online system. The Blue Mountains ballots have been running online successfully for a few months now, so ahead of the 2027 season, the South Island roar ballots will move onto the online hunting permit system (excluding the Haast roar and tahr ballots, which will move to the new system next year).

Application windows are:

- **Murihiku** (combining Leithen Bush, Waikaia Forest, Pomahaka): 1 October to 31 October 2026
- **Wānaka**: 1 October to 31 October 2026
- **Coastal Otago**: 1 October to 30 November 2026
- **Catlins** (combining Catlins-MacLennan, Tautuku Forest, East Catlins): 1 October to 30 November 2026
- **Molesworth**: 1 October to 30 November 2026
- **Greenstone-Caples** (April-May): 29 October to 30 November 2026, with the June-September ballot opening 1 February 2027

Over the next couple of months we'll also look to extend the use of the ballot system to the non-roar period for Molesworth, with the intent of running a monthly ballot similar to Blue Mountains. This is to address feedback we received from hunters who had difficulty securing places under the current first-come, first-served booking system. At present the aim is to have this change take effect immediately after the roar period, since permits have already been issued prior to the roar.

Updated information will be on the relevant DOC web pages before applications open. Please pass this on to anyone in your networks who would find it useful, and if anything here raises questions, please reach out by emailing - info@doc.govt.nz .

Ngā mihi,

Cameron

Cameron Hyland

Visitor Services Manager

Heritage and Visitor Directorate

Range Matters - Results

26-27 Outdoor Summer Series

13-Oct-26	2 x International Target		
	T1	T2	
Carina Jackson	244.09	243.1	487.17
Greg Couper	241.07	243.1	484.14
Graeme Smith	240.08	240	480.1
David Quick	233.05	244.1	477.10
Graeme Vallance	228.04	233.1	461.1
Anne Marie Kidson	226.03	219	445.1
Michael Kidson	225.02	210	435.1
John Ronaldson	209.01	217	426
John Mitchell	206.04	205.00	411
David Hill	210.02	200	410.04
Ian Harper	209.01	199	408
Donald Jaffray	100	152	252.01

Series Points

	13-Sept	18-Oct	15-Nov	20-Dec	17-Jan	7-Feb	7-Mar	18-Apr	Aggr.
Carina Jackson	12								12
Greg Couper	11								11
Graeme Smith	10								10
David Quick	9								9
Graeme Vallance	8								8
Anne Marie Kidson	7								7

Michael Kidson	6	6
John Ronaldson	5	5
John Mitchell	4	4
David Hill	3	3
Ian Harper	2	2
Donald Jaffray	1	1

Note **Packers Creek** is **CLOSED 24th and 25th October** for a Shooting Event

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 & our Facebook page or email for closures
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](#)

Before and After



Proof of a good working bee team in the Greenstone! I took the picture on the left and a few days later the second team sent me the one on the right. Solid work!

Wilberforce Adventure *by Warren Plum*

Having been unsuccessful in all the roar ballots this year my mates had decided on a pre roar trip into the Wilberforce in March. Big country in the heart of the Southern Alps and home of Rakaia Red genetics. When one of the participants had to pull out, I was offered the opportunity to fill the spot.

Despite some reservations about being 70 with major knee problems, it seemed too good an opportunity to pass up, particularly as we would be flying in and with luck be staying in a public hut.

Turned out there were two hunters even older than us already ensconced in our preferred destination, so it was back into the machine and up a side valley to a lovely little hut hidden away in the bush. No one present so that was it, home for a week.



The scenery was fantastic, albeit very big and intimidating with major climbs to get into the peak hunting country. Amazingly I had been just over the ridge 42 years earlier in the Mathias and if anything, the peaks appeared to have grown in that space of time.



Any way I had a great time wandering around by myself, being unable to keep up with my companions. Up at dawn and most days back after dark. Taking photos and seeing considerably more deer than I expected. Albeit most were at long range, or climbing into bluffs out of range when they winded me. Disappointingly, stags were few and far between, and nothing of trophy size. Likely because of WARO, with the valley having been worked over earlier in the month.

Clearly, they were the target as there were plenty of hinds and fawns. (The closer photo of bluff & tussock in basin was typical animal country. I saw 33 reds and 2 chamois that day.)



Best stag I saw was medium sort of 10 pointer who had winded me and was running at an unbelievable pace across a bluff. Time quickly passed and other than a fawn I shot for meat, and an annoying mouse trapped in the hut (trophy buck from famous Rakaia herd) nothing else was harmed with the exception of a chamois buck that had the misfortune of encountering Eric.



Overall fantastic weather, which was just turning to rain as we exited the valley, so a wonderful trip with great mates into serious alpine country that I had initially thought might be a bit much for an old bloke. *Warren* [that's some mouse alright! The Ed.]

Trapped!? - In the Greenstone *by Richard Wells*



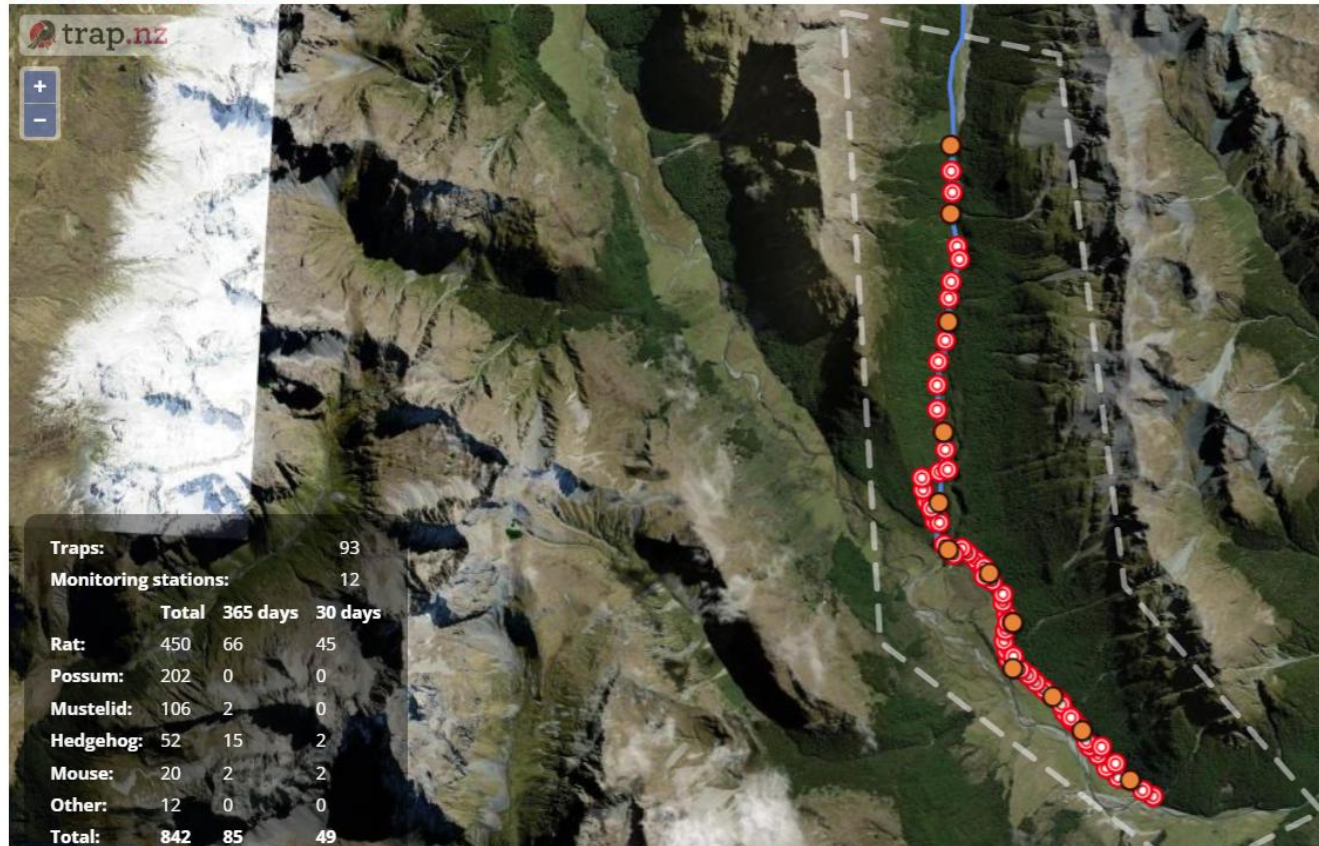
Recently I joined a Southern Lakes NZDA working bee in the Greenstone Valley west of Glenorchy. I did this 2 years ago and vowed to return. This time the weather was usual wind rain and snow with fine breaks but different was the fact that just Ross (from Auckland) was with me for the 5 days and we did the entire trapline in the Steele Creek block (58 trap boxes with many being twin trap jobs).



The rats have creamy bellies up here!

Takahe have been released in the Greenstone in an attempt to demonstrate that areas of suitable habitat well trapped will be safe for them. Southern Lakes have been running the trapline which also includes auto-traps for possums cats etc for several years and =check them several times per year. Its about persistence. We never got one stoat or weasel, just 43 rats and 2 hedgehogs. The line starts at the lower end of the Steele Creek block and the last trap is at Steele Creek Hut. It took about 2 days to do the whole line carefully and fully. The TrapNZ app allows newbies to find and record outcomes at every trap! Bloody good! There were kea, robins and riflemen around the hut – awesome!

Southern Lakes NZDA website





Particularly pleased to get 2 rats in one trap....now that's a rare thing!

Well Travelled.....and Not Done Yet!

Did you know you can take venison to Oz-Straya? I only discovered this recently and am about to give it a whirl with some meat from a complacent buck encountered in the Greenstone Valley.



The buck stops here....well no it doesn't.....a helicopter ride to Glenorchy, then 1000 km drive through scenic Otago, Canterbury and Tasman! Next stop Melbourne!



But there are rules so check them out before packing your bag, and definitely there are labelling rules so I got Amanda aka the Butcherette to get the labelling right for the authorities. Venison is OK, many other things are not e.g. pork etc so check Aussie Rules [DAFF Import Rules](#)

Molesworth Roar Blocks - Ballot

Link to DOC Molesworth Roar Ballot [Molesworth Roar Ballot](#)



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[Red deer](#) > Molesworth roar block system[Apply online](#) →

Information for Molesworth roar block system.

Important: Applications for the 2027 roar ballot will be managed online through the DOC hunting permit system. Applications open on 1 October 2026.

Applications will only be accepted online through the DOC hunting permit system.

Blocks are allocated through a ballot draw and are allocated for a seven-day period.

The balloted period is 10 March to 13 April 2027.

- Applications will only be accepted through the online hunting permit system.
- Applications will open on 1 October 2026.
- Applications close on 30 November 2026.
- Applications are limited to five choices.
- You can submit only one application per party.
- All party members must be listed on the application.
- No individual may be part of more than one application.

Successful applicants will be notified automatically following the draw on 6 December 2026. This notification will include a link to confirm the allocated block.

Blocks must be confirmed by 13 December 2026. Permits will be sent automatically following confirmation.

Lighten Up



Club Night



To Be Advised by Email Soon

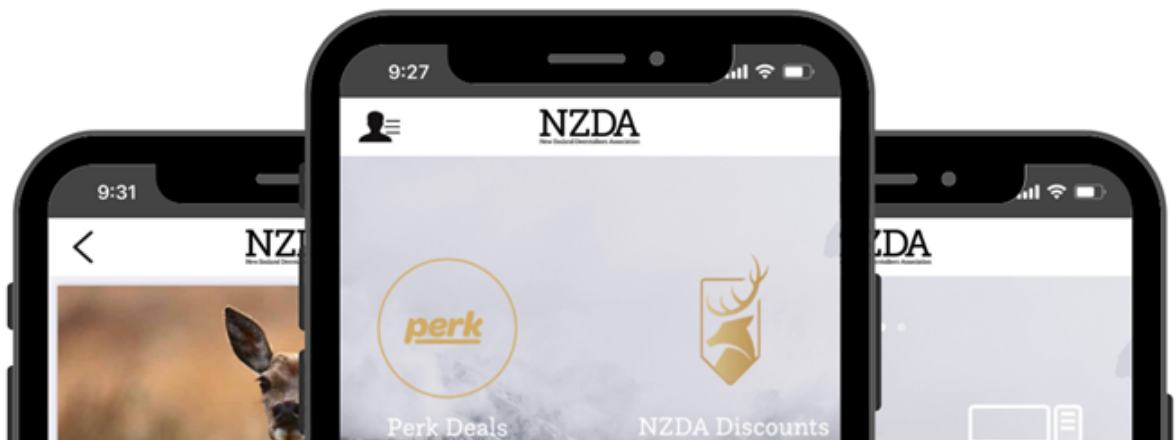
When and Where: Wednesday 28th Oct start 7 pm
@ TSN Saxton Field Smallbore Range

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](#)