



MOUNTAIN ECHO

Newsletter of Nelson Branch NZDA March
2020

From this Month's Editor

Branch Vice President
Richard Wells

Look Back... then Go Forward

It has been a pretty bumpy few years in terms of feeling secure in our sports of hunting and shooting. Outrageous and brutal terrorism in our country understandably escalating public fear of firearm ownership, an increased budget and focus on aerial pesticide use to reduce effect of introduced predators on native wildlife, the plan to eradicate Tb from Molesworth which went badly awry in terms of bykill on the recently rejuvenated deer herd, uncertainty in tenure review and land sale processes and of course "Tahr-mageddon".

Churchill famously said "never has so much been owed by so many to so few" after the young fighter pilots from many countries prevented enemy forces from dominating England airspace and thus certain invasion. The few for the many.

NZDA is a small organisation of less than 10,000 members which in the context of NZ hunters and firearms owners (240,000+) in the country is a pretty small percentage. But...and it's a big but.....NZDA remains the accepted, outward face of the hunting and shooting fraternity of New Zealand. Why is that? Easy...brand and credibility. But you don't invent a brand, it's earned and NZDA's consistent presence, in Wellington and the regions, with a reasoned and facts based approach has done that. Its credibility based on real knowledge with regard firearms safety, game animal and recreational hunting value, management and importance, hunter training and many other matters means it is NZDA that get asked, by the bodies that really matter, to comment, engage or be part of discussions that affect all hunters and shooters.

Of late it may be fair to say that we are getting a hard time from Government agencies...but to that I say..."what would we have been happening if we were not there at all!?"

As an organisation we must do better, administratively, politically and in communicating with ourselves, potential new members and the community at large.

www.nzdanelson.co.nz



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- Tuesday 24 March
- 7.30pm
- Fish & Game Rooms

That need is recognised...but delivering on it will be harder than we like, take longer than we like and cost more than we like. But it must and will be done.

But there is one certainty.....without members NZDA is nothing, without NZDA, hunters and shooters are reliant on webgroups and blogs to vent their feelings and frustrations....but there will be no peak body in Wellington (where the policy and decision makers that hold our sport, in their hands, tend to operate) and where we need to be on watch day in day out.

Here endeth the lesson..if it sounds like a call to arms that's cos it is.....we must stay the course for our, and our future hunters' and shooters' sakes.

On a brighter note I am pleased to advise we have had some positive events lately including the excellent wee BBQ that Mike DeGray and Co arranged and where we ate food and talked about hunting.....more of this please.....!

Your faithful servants Greg Couper, Bill O'Leary and myself travelled twice to Blenheim. In the first instance to meet with OSPRI and Marlborough Branch and others (inc. North Canty Branch and Game Animal Council reps) to hear first hand what has and will be done to mitigate the effects of next 1080 anti-TB/possum eradication campaign in the Molesworth. The positive here is that there has been a long stop to proceedings in Molesworth, extensive trials and discussions had and while not a perfect world Marlborough Branch have stayed the course with a reasoned but firm approach. OSPRI, along with DOC and farm management, have worked hard on research and it appears that the mitigation of deer bykill by a number of means will be a significant and real part of next drop (to be presented in full at March 24th Club nite **be there!**).

Finally we went back to Blenheim the following Saturday and had a regional meet with Marlborough Branch. Unfortunately our bretheren from West Coast and Golden Bay were unable to attend. This meeting was very constructive and informative (noting especially the frameworks they have developed and documented with DOC regarding specific management of hunting areas) and we see many ways we can support and learn from each other...more to come by email to you or in next month's edition of The Echo and Club Nite 24th March.

Oh yeah...and what about some hunting?!...the roar.....well I'm going, hope you can too..... Trying to get fitter, digging out the blaze, binos and all other essentials for a safe, fun and effective trip. Hope many of you in the same position over next two months and look forward to some great pics and stories from you in May!

Cheers Richard

Club Nite Tuesday 24th March 7pm at Fish and Game:

- **OSPRI present on Possum and TB Eradication in the Molesworth – This year's 1080 Operation and Deer Bykill Mitigation**
- **Marlborough Branch describe how they have chosen the path of 'Collaboration' when working with organisations for better outcomes. Examples will be to talk about our MOU with DOC and the 'Post 2017 Molesworth 1080 Operation Liaison Group'**

Upgrade of Collina Terrace National Office – Report from Gwyn Thurlow

The key point is our building remains largely on schedule and on budget (we did opt to re-roof the entire building, not just the extension).

The contract has a completion date of 4 June 2020.

The building will be water-tight this week with the final veranda roof and large stained-glass window installed. The two front doors are on order.

The insulation has been installed as well as the first fix of electrical, data, air-conditioning, gas, water and plumbing. The roof will be finished in the next week with the lift install and kitchen install scheduled for late March. The painters are on site already.

Of the 10-month build time, we are 6 months through or 50% of the way. The re-piling, earthquake strengthening, concreting and new extension work to get out of the ground was the hard part.



The NZDA building committee team are working very hard to keep things on track and are making decisions almost daily. I, Tim Watson and John Kovacs are taking the bulk of the workload, with Peter Thurlow designing and helping with the joinery and appliances. Rob and Wally have also helped when possible. Wellington Branch president, Joe Hubmann, helped design our complex air-conditioning/HVAC system. It has been an undertaking by a bunch of volunteers. We have meetings onsite fortnightly (Wednesdays) but that is reducing to 3-weekly for the foreseeable future.

I can say is this building will be awe-inspiring and something for the hunting community to be proud of.

Kind regards,

Gwyn

Do You Know Anyone Who Is Interested In Taking Up Hunting?

HUNTS - National Hunter Training Scheme

Nelson Marlborough Fish and Game and NZ Deerstalkers Association are again offering an introductory course in hunting (both game bird and big game) that is designed to help and encourage **new and potential hunters** (minimum age 16 years, conditions apply) into the sport. This course is “hands on” and a great opportunity to gain practical skills and information from experienced instructors.

The course will cover the Hunter National Training Scheme (HUNTS) programme plus an introduction to Game bird hunting.

Topics will include:

- Hunting ethics & wildlife management
- Equipment & clothing
- Navigation & safety around water/river crossings
- Game species - biology, habitat and behaviour
- Firearm safety and shooting technique
- Hunting techniques for different species
- Skinning and meat processing
- When things go wrong.... And much more!!!

The course (held at the Fish & Game Rooms in Champion Road, Richmond) involves 8 evening sessions held Monday evenings starting **20 April 2020. (7pm-9pm) plus two weekends**

Cost:

- Adults \$325 which includes the NZDA membership subscription that provides access to the NZDA Rifle Range and Public Liability Insurance.
- Under 18yrs - \$225
- NZDA member - \$150 (above costs are part of being a member but available all year)
- Hunting trip costs (\$25 - 50) are extra and are determined by the location.

For more information please contact:

Fish and Game NZ, Nelson Marlborough Region **(03) 544 6382** or

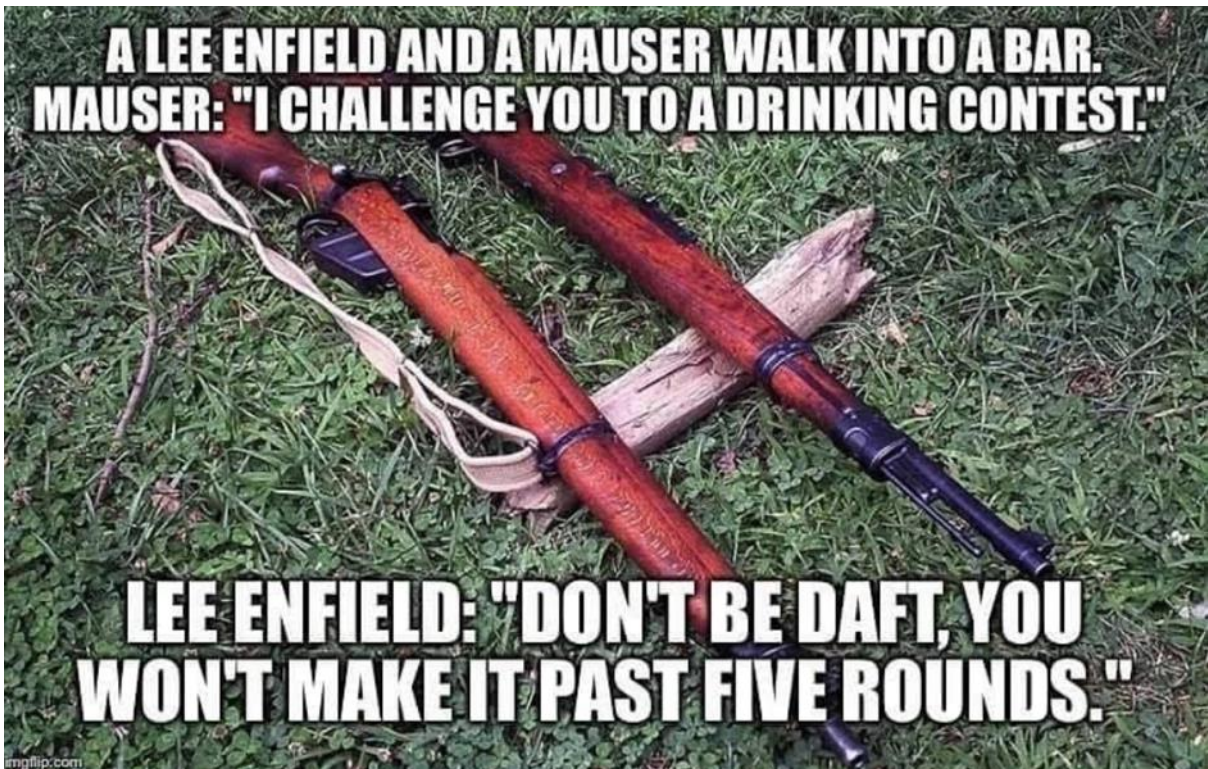
Bill O’Leary, NZ Deerstalkers’ Association **027 4305008**

And check our website: <https://www.nzdanelson.co.nz/hunts.html>



Participants and Instructors on the 2019 HUNTS course

Joke for the month.....*always looking for appropriate jokes!* – The Ed.



Biblical Events – The Tempest and The Herd

Another great short story from Warren Plum and glad he avoided plague and locusts – The Ed.

“Had a recent trip into Kaikoura country, with a couple of lessons learnt.

Leaving your vehicle to walk up shade-free bare rock riverbeds when its 31°C in the shade at 10.00am in the morning is not exactly the best time to be doing this. With the reflected heat off the rocks, even constantly soaking one’s self in the creek left us feeling nauseous and exhausted, and 2 additional hours of struggle to get to our campsite.

Then camping on an exposed alpine ridge when heavy winds were predicted, not so smart, despite having worked out what we considered a safe hole in the tussock. Fortunately, the Hunt-tech fly tied down tight with the addition of a few boulders survived the night. But what a battle getting it down in the constant 60 to 70 knot wind in the morning.

One person lying on it while the other dismantled saved it being lost over the cliff below. No chamois seen, and only goats harmed on the adventure. At least will be a bit fitter for the roar. Photo of a Mum and baby, which were left unharmed. “

Here endeth the second lesson!



Is that near Jerusalem or the Clarence.....?

After seeking short stories with pictures from members we have received something the opposite but equally welcome...a thousand (or 2) words without pictures...but this following story (the first of three) prompts a thousand pictures in one’s mind. So, thanks Phil, and enjoy, readers as you think about how these things may have happened in your experience! The Ed.

A Mixed Bag

Names, the exact timings and locations have been changed to protect the innocent and not so innocent – or have they?

About 10 years ago, I was a recent immigrant (not so now, of course) and although I have been shooting in the UK, it was what the Brits term “rough shooting” and consisted of wood pigeons and rabbits with the occasional pheasant and using a shotgun only so I was anxious to sample the delights that New Zealand hunting could provide.

Bill, also a “pom” who has been here since the early 1970’s (now retired) is (or so he reassured me) an experienced hunter. He knows a farmer near Whanganui that would allow Bill to hunt over his property “any time”. Just pay for the food that the farmer and his wife would supply. Together with a married couple, John and Julie, we made up a party to go down for a long weekend and see if we could bag a meat deer each. What could possibly go wrong, eh?

Bill is inordinately fond of his ancient car, a Mitsubishi converted to run on LPG gas so it has virtually no storage space for luggage in the boot due to the LPG tank occupying the majority of the space. Junk occupied the remainder. He added to the problem by bringing his dog which occupied the back seat. No worries, she’ll be right.

I travelled down with Bill on the Friday. John and Julie couldn’t get the time off work so we arranged to meet them in Taumaranui later that evening.

As we waited in Taumaranui, it started to rain and by the time John and Julie turned up, it was pitch black, persistently peeing down and wetter than an otter’s pocket. After a pit stop for tea and a bite to eat, we set off and miracles of miracles, the rain stopped for a while.

NOW things started to go wrong. It started to rain again and when Bill switched the wipers on, nothing happened - the nut securing the wiper cross arm to the wiper motor had dropped off and the wipers would not wipe. Bigger (to use a Kiwi expression). We drove on, trying to dodge the spray thrown up by the juggernaut trucks that were travelling in the opposite direction. Bill was convinced that he had X-ray specs on and could see “just fine”. I was less sure and was gibbering like a lunatic by the time we stopped at the next pit stop. We called the AA out to try to sort the wipers. Unfortunately, the nut was nowhere to be seen and the front end of the Mitzi would have to be dismantled to get to the wiper arm which at 8 o’clock on a July Friday night just wasn’t going to happen.

What to do? Bill wouldn’t abandon the car and as he was the only one who knew where we were going, then the Mitzi had to come too. I remembered a rallying trick that worked in similar circumstances which involved opening the windows, tying a cord to one wiper arm, leading it through the car and tying it to the other arm. Close the windows until they were open by about 1 cm and the passenger pulls on the cord to operate the wipers ... which works on a closed rally circuit in rain but not when a whacking great truck goes past stirring up a monsoon volume of water and spray off the road and its wheels. After quite a few truckloads of water and me pulling on the cord until grooves were worn in my fingers, I had chip choppers elbow and was rapidly losing my sense of humour. John and Julie said later that their heart was in their mouth following us down a pitch black road on a pitch black night and Bill driving like there was no tomorrow. They should have tried it from my perspective! The dog must have seen it all before as he wasn’t bothered.

Eventually we arrived at Harry’s farm and after parking up beside the guest huts, unloading the car and the dog. I wasn’t much help as my hands were like claws by this time. We trudged through the rain to the main farmhouse and met Harry. A hot cup of tea and a dram of whisky allowed me to straighten my fingers and we retired to bed.

The next morning was still raining but we had wet weather gear with us and what was wet weather gear for other than to wear in wet weather? After breakfast, Harry discussed tactics with us. He would take us out in two parties on a quad bike and use his expert knowledge to locate the deer and allow us a shot. No problems, sweet as etc.

We rode through the rain and saw plenty of feral goats which we passed up on – it would disturb the deer if we shot them - and despite Harry's best efforts, Bill and I returned to the farmhouse empty handed. The deer had more sense than we humans and they were doing the deer equivalent to staying in the house, keeping warm, watching TV and drinking beer on the sofa. Julie and John went out after lunch as Bill and I massaged our bruised backsides and warmed up, discussing the possibility of shooting that nice, young, juicy meat deer. Or goats. Or whatever.

By the time John and Julie got back it was just on dark so after a shower and a clean-up, we had dinner and retired with whisky and tea to bed.

Next morning was a repeat of the previous day except that the rain was even worse and a howling gale had set in – John and Julie taking the morning shift and getting a couple of goats, Bill and I the afternoon one. On the way back, Harry said that we should shoot some goats for meat for his dogs (both he and his wife kept packs of dogs for pig hunting) so we shot one each. The goats were on the side of a hill (now there's a surprise) and the one I shot rolled down the hill and ended up on the track we had ridden down. Cool! Self-retrieving game. I was impressed. It saves a lot of legwork.

Due to the wind and rain, we watched TV (instead of possum shooting) that evening and after the usual whiskey and conversation, bed.

The weather hadn't improved in the morning although the wind had dropped slightly and Harry was getting quite despondent at the lack of deer. Bill and I took the morning shift and Harry said that one valley on his property definitely, absolutely 100% would contain deer as it had standing water and in the prevailing weather conditions was the best sheltered place on the property.

He dropped us off at a point just around the corner to the entrance to the valley and advised us to walk cautiously up the valley and see what we would see.

Bill set off and I followed at a good infantryman's 20 metres behind. Suddenly Bill raised the rifle to his shoulder and I froze on the spot. It just HAD to be a deer! Bill fiddled with the scope and I was getting nervous. Surely the deer couldn't fail to see him and take off. Shoot for heaven's sake. Bill continued to fiddle with the scope and I started to mentally curse him. "Come on Bill. Shoot!" I was developing an itch in a place where the sun doesn't shine (and I don't mean Greymouth), my nose was dripping and I desperately wanted to cough.

Bill lay prone (WHAT???) and again fiddled with the scope. What the blue blazes was he doing? After an eternity BOOM! His .270 broke the silence and tension. Good old Bill, he must have well and truly nailed the deer. I slung his Howa 6.5 Swedish over my shoulder, scratched, sniffed and coughed and walked towards him.

"Well done, Bill! Where is it?" He pointed "There". Now being a city lad, new to New Zealand and hunting deer I couldn't for the life of me see a deer. "Where?" Again he indicated "There". "Bill, I can't see any deer". "Oh. It's not a deer, it's a feral cat. You have got to take your chances with them when you can". I then noticed the cat about 20 metres away looking very dead with a startled look on what was left of its face.

I was amazed. I know full blown political correctness hasn't hit NZ in all its glory but I very much doubt that a moggie's head mounted on a wooden shield and hung in pride of place above the mantelpiece is acceptable to polite society in Auckland (or anywhere else for that matter). I sarcastically offered to retrieve it just in case he wanted it for a trophy.

Bill didn't pick up on the sarcasm. "No – just leave it for the pigs".

We trudged our way back in the rain to where Harry was waiting and Bill told him about the cat. He was pleased but any deer that had been in the valley would have been doing an Olympic sprint in the general direction of "Away" by now.

On the way back, Harry said that we might as well shoot some goats and at least the weekend wouldn't have been a complete waste.

The goats were well used to the farm traffic and Harry stopped off near a group of about 20. He pointed to one "Shoot that one – it's got good horns". Who was I to refuse? I braced across the bonnet of the quad bike and at a distance of 30 metres the 6.5 bullet connected perfectly just behind the foreleg, halfway up the chest. The goat went down and the rest took off. Once again the goat handily self-retrieved to the road (definitely one of the better tricks) and I approached it with knife in hand ready to either put it out of its misery or bleed it out (if necessary). THEN and only then did I realise it was a billy ... I was about to say to Harry "That's another one for your dogs" when Bill chipped in "Can I have that one to feed my dog?". Harry, being a generous soul said words to the effect of "help yourself" and loaded the billy onto the front of the quad bike. Why one of the nannies that we had shot previously wouldn't have done I'm not sure but Bill (true to his namesake) selected the billy ... Hey Ho!

I'll remember the ride back. The smell of hot, wet billy goat being gently warmed by the radiator and the fragrant breeze blowing back towards us isn't something to be forgotten. Chanel No. 3 it most certainly was not. The smell wasn't so bad – it was getting it off your teeth afterwards that was the real problem.

Harry dropped us and the billy off at a shed and left us to gut and skin it. Bill acted as master of ceremonies, the billy was strung up from a gambrel and we set to work.

When I say "We" I meant mostly me. Bill had a brand-new knife with a blade just about long enough to peel potatoes. And it was blunt. My knife quickly made short work of my side of the carcass and as Bills dog had followed us into the shed, I sliced off bits of the skirt meat and tossed him the titbits. Keep on side with the dog is my motto. I continued around and field dressed the majority of the goat, under Bill's direction.

Naturally after handling the skin and meat, we ended up as fragrant as the billy and since I had no interest in keeping the horns (they reminded me too much of the Exorcist and Devil worshipping for my tastes) they got discarded with the skin and entrails. Several showers later and after dozens of hand washes I could still smell the billy on me and it took a few months for my boots to lose the taint. Or perhaps I'm just used to the smell by now.

As Bill was retired and the wipers on his car still needed to be repaired, John, Julie and I left late Monday afternoon for the drive back to Auckland while Harry and Bill used the farm workshop facilities to get the wipers working and follow later in the week.

Lessons Learned.

1. You NEED good wet weather gear. And a change of gear to allow the previous days to dry out. Same for boots.
2. Stainless and plastic stocked rifles are practical – I love walnut and blued steel but under those conditions, I'll grab the "plastic fantastic" and stainless rifle every time.
3. A good knife with an adequate blade that does the work for you (a newbie hunter does more work, but you can't rely on this ...) is essential. And keep it SHARP.
4. Carry cord in your car. Or don't drive around in the rain in a 30-year-old car.

5. If you are shooting goats, check the naughty bits and positively identify the sex of the beast before you pull the trigger – I'm making this the eighth rule of firearms handling. This rule can be ignored only if you keep a pig in the corner of your living room as an air freshener and don't mind the smell (either of the goat or the pig).
6. Feral cats outrank deer in the trophy animal stakes (and I don't mean the steaks you eat, either).

New Zealand hunting? I'm seriously thinking of giving it up and taking up lamp shade making instead.

NELSON MARLBOROUGH FISH & GAME REPORT



- ANNUAL TREND COUNTS COMPLETED: aerial and foot surveys of Paradise shelduck and swan have been completed. The swan population in Golden Bay is much higher than normal, and shelduck are up on last year also.
- DRIFT DIVE SEASON IN FULL SWING - at the time of writing staff have completed drift dive surveys of 18 rivers (30 separate sites). While many rivers have seen a decline in the fish population due to the December flood events, the rainbow trout population in the Branch/Leatham had a good survival rate and excellent fishing has been reported since.
- FISH SALVAGE: OPOURI RIVER - staff visited the Opouri River and salvage some stranded fish. These fish were moved to the Wairau Valley hatchery where they will be raised and re-released.
- RABBIT ISLAND PHEASANT HUNT: consultation with TDC on this years' Rabbit Island pheasant hunt. Three-year trial period has ended and F&G would like to see the hunt continue as it provides a safe upland game hunting area close to Nelson and is very popular with hunters.
- GAME NOTICE FINALISED: three week extension to swan season and increase in pukeko limit for Tasman/Golden Bay



Moulting paradise shelduck in the Aorere Valley.

Coxy's Corner - Notes for Hunters from Motueka DOC Office

Hi Nelson NZDA members,

I hope everyone has been getting out there chasing a few critters.....

Since my last correspondence the work scene has been pretty hectic with lots of goat control taking place and a lot more being planned for. A small army of hunting contractors and DOC Rangers (including myself) from two DOC Regions have been working collaboratively to reduce feral goat numbers on and around the Matiri Plateau (Thousand Acre Plateau). Over six hundred goats have been shot from the north and south branches of the Mokihinui river, east and west branches of the Matiri river and the plateau itself. Last Tuesday a follow up aerial hunt targeting the areas inaccessible to ground hunters came up with a few more.

There are very few red deer in these areas now, but pig and chamois numbers have increased. The next goat control operations are in the Cobb (NZDA), Hoary Head/Crusader (Mt Campbell Communications Staff), Abel Tasman National Park and South Branch Riwaka river (Backcountry Contracting Ltd).

It will be interesting to see what animals are present in the Cobb this year. Contact me by email if you need more info. icox@doc.govt.nz



Baton Saddle 14/2/20

Cheers Coxy!

Hunting First Aid Course



Covering potential accidents including:

- Knife and gun injuries
- Sprains and breaks
- Cook fire burns
- Hypothermia

This is a privately-run course facilitated by a trained professional from Triple One Care first aid providers. It is being presented specifically with young hunters in mind.

Saturday March 28 9am-1pm
Triple One Care 1 Tokomaru Place, Stoke
\$46

Spaces strictly limited.

Contact Kathy King 021-0389059 or 5nzking@gmail.com

(This course is supported by the NZDA HUNTS programme)



Do you need a knife sharpened?

Derek Forsyth does a great professional job reconditioning and sharpening hunting and fish filleting knives.



Derek's contact 027 2481493, 3 Waterdale Way, Brook, Nelson

His current fee is five dollars per knife and there is no charge for the advice on maintaining the edge.

I have tried all methods of sharpening knives in a lifetime of hunting and I unreservedly recommend Derek as the best option I have come across.

Bill O'Leary

Red Deer Lodge

Information on costs and bookings of the Red Deer Lodge at Lake Rotoiti

Contact the Calders: info@starnaudholidaycottages.co.nz

Use the website at www.starnaudholidaycottages.co.nz

Say you are a member!!

2020 Committee

Committee:

President: Greg Couper gregc@nzdanelson.co.nz

Vice President: Richard Wells richardw@nzdanelson.co.nz

Secretary: Warren Plum warrenp@nzdanelson.co.nz

Members: Bill O'Leary, Graeme Smith, Graeme Ching, Mike DeGray, Neill Cliffe, John Noakes, Mike Grant, David Haynes, Immo Neumann

Range Committee:

Convener: Greg Couper gregc@nzdanelson.co.nz

Members: Graeme Smith, Graeme Ching, Bill O'Leary

Hazard or Incident Reporting: website email (nelson.nzda@gmail.com) or contact member of Range Committee

Access, Rules and Safety: see website <https://www.nzdanelson.co.nz/range.html> and check your emails for updates or changes to range opening times

Branch Hunts and Activities:

Convenor: Mike DeGray miked@nzdanelson.co.nz

Hunts Courses:

Website: <https://www.nzdanelson.co.nz/hunts.html>

Convenor: Bill O'Leary b.f.oleary@xtra.co.nz

Members: Lawson, Alistair Ching

New members:

email nelsonnzda@gmail.com or go to webpage <https://www.nzdanelson.co.nz/index.html>

The Mountain Echo

Bill O'Leary and Richard Wells