



# MOUNTAIN ECHO

Newsletter of Nelson Branch NZDA February 2021



You can't teach an old stag new tricks! Branch Treasurer Aaron Shields and his indicator dog Cloud combine to outwit this wily old stag and fill the Xmas freezer.

[www.nzdanelson.co.nz](http://www.nzdanelson.co.nz)

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# Editorial

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What a year that was.....

I am always fairly dismissive of journalistic types wallowing in last year's events to create a news story.....but here I go too.....because.....

last year was "special". Outside of all the national and international political shenanigans that so enthrall us, nature gave us a very sharp reminder via Covid that our firmly held belief of "we can do what we like, where we like, and when we like" is not as certain as all that. Without making light of the huge impacts on families and businesses here and globally, what Covid has done for me is make me realise how precious our basic freedom of movement is, and how important are our connections with people, recreation and the outdoors (which for me is often hunting with friends and family). We have perhaps taken a lot for granted and clearly should not. We need to nurture, treasure and respect these aspects of our lives and we must guard them too.

Further movement is occurring with Arms Law reform with media reporting on second round of buybacks for specific firearm types. Further, this year the need to manage ranges with certified Range Officers becomes a reality with our own need to ensure certified Range Officers are available. It has been notable of recent weeks that there are shootings (causing injury or death) seemingly almost daily in communities around NZ which appear to have no relationship to lawful use or activities with firearms, i.e., they are deliberate shootings by people using firearms as weapons against other people, not accidents. Until the Government demonstrably apply equal resources and endeavour to meaningfully reduce unlawful possession and use it remains hard for one to maintain a balanced perspective on the matter of "gun" control and community safety.

Our National Constitution has in its front piece as an objective "the fostering of interest in native flora and fauna and their conservation". In our region there are an increasing number of projects and groups occupied in this arena and many of our Branch members are a part of this. From the big projects such as the Brook Waimarama Sanctuary (it's a great place to visit and get a good walk in) to council wilding pine removal, trapping programmes (e.g., to protect banded rail) and numerous native tree planting schemes. We can be proud of the work being developed, managed, and undertaken by some of our members in pest animal management and wilding pine work with DOC (much more below). This group within our membership is growing in number and activities and will benefit both the region and the Branch in the future, so a big thanks to them, and perhaps this year we can focus a club nite on what you have done, are doing and have planned!!

Richard Wells



# Game Animal Council Information on Firearms Law Reform



## NZ Game Animal Council Media Statement 20 January 2021

Game Animal Council <https://nzgameanimalcouncil.org.nz/> working to improve new rules for firearms users. The Game Animal Council (GAC) is applying its expertise in the use of firearms for hunting to work alongside Police, other agencies and stakeholder groups to improve the compliance provisions for hunters and other firearms users.

The GAC has been a part of the Firearms Community Advisory Forum (FCAF) since 2018 and along with other hunting sector stakeholders successfully advocated for a number of practical changes to the Arms Legislation Act. "While we continue to have concerns over the fairness and practicality of some aspects of the legislation we are working with Police and other groups seeking to develop practical rules and guidance going forward," says Game Animal Council General Manager Tim Gale. "A major part of this work is making sure Police fully understand the impact of the new rules from a user's point of view and apply them fairly." A significant concern for the GAC has been the complexity and objectivity of the proposed new firearms licensing application process designed to identify whether an applicant is a 'fit and proper person'. "So far we have succeeded in getting aspects of the application process made more reasonable and additional changes we are working through will further simplify and enhance the natural justice provisions of the questionnaire without compromising public safety."

The GAC also represents hunting interests on the Range Certification Engagement Group that is tasked with determining the appropriate application of recent legislative changes for shooting ranges. "As drafted, the Arms Legislation Bill went beyond the intention to certify the activities of formal permanent ranges and instead sought to impose unnecessary and onerous compliance on informal and temporary ranges." "Clarification is necessary to make sure that hunters can conduct appropriate safety training and have somewhere to sight their rifles before going hunting. We know that having an accurately sighted-in rifle [www.nzgac.org.nz](http://www.nzgac.org.nz) is essential for the ethical harvesting of game animals and that hunters require safe and compliant places to do this." "Positive progress is being made through the Range Certification Engagement Group to sort out some of these issues and it is expected that it will report back by June 2021 with recommendations that will then go out for public consultation," says Gale.

The GAC wants to remind hunters and other firearms users that a number of changes relating to the licensing system came into effect on 24 December 2020. These are available at <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/firearms-and-safety/newfirearms-laws-and-what-they-mean/24-december-2020> There are also changes regarding the possession of centre-fire pump action rifles with some requiring an endorsement and a special permit. More information on eligibility for these and how to apply is available at <https://www.police.govt.nz/advice-services/firearms-and-safety/newfirearms-laws-and-what-they-mean/prohibited-firearms-added>. The NZ Game Animal Council is a statutory organisation responsible for the sustainable management of game animals and hunting for recreation, commerce and conservation.

Contact: Tim Gale, General Manager Phone: 021688531 [tim.gale@nzgac.org.nz](mailto:tim.gale@nzgac.org.nz)

# Ken Horner Memorial Shoot Results

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The annual Ken Horner shoot was held at the Murchison Range on 6<sup>th</sup> December.

Results:

## Overall competition

1st Alister Ching with 117.4  
2nd Mitchell Horner with 109.6  
3rd Cory Jones with 109.4

## 100m standing

1st Alister Ching 27  
2nd equal Graeme Ching and Cory Jones with 24



Alex Monahan awards Alister Ching with almost more trophies than he can hold at once! Great shooting Alister!

# Nelson Branch Conservation Initiatives

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As noted more briefly in the Editorial there has been a recent resurgence in conservation activity locally that can clearly be classified as community good undertaken by our members.

We should recall that this type of activity is not new, Will Rickerby was awarded Nelsonian of the Year in 2016 for long term conservation work in the hills above Richmond as well as further out in our region and of course others have done much as well. However, it is also good to see another cohort of keen, younger members stepping forward and becoming involved.

There are currently three main thrusts to this revitalisation and increase in activities – animal pest control in the Wairoa Bike park in partnership with the operators of that recreational facility, wilding pine control in the Hackett/Browning area in conjunction with DOC and more recently goat control in Kahurangi, also with DOC.

Before any exciting stuff happens there is always donkey work and the guys (Aaron, Mike and Mark) who have spent a lot of time organising access/permissions, paperwork, safety plans and helicopter training etc as well as then managing communications with everybody need some recognition.

Here is brief summary of recent work:

There have been two wilding pine eradication days with members flown in by helicopter for all day work. This has amounted to many person-hours of work and DOC report back to their national HQ on such contributions with a calculated dollar value of the labour provided.



View from chopper on way to a goat control mission in the Crow catchment.



The relationship with the Wairoa Bikepark has been a good one and members have logged 400 hours of animal pest control time in the Park which has yielded an astounding score of 115 goats, 24 pigs, 12 deer, 111 possums and 4 “other” better known as cats. Those doing this work have also generously donated back meat harvested, to both the Bikepark volunteers (those who do track maintenance, wasp control etc) and also to members and supporters of our Branch who may find it hard to come by some. See note from manager Dave at the BikePark to his members on wasp control:

*We've got a couple of extras helping us tmrw, and just want to give them a shout out. Greg and Carina and Mike from the NZDA will be laying and clearing out some VespeX on other blocks in the Reserve. The NZDA have done an amazing job this year keeping down the goat numbers. Goats are one of the prime reasons for rubble on our lower tracks in summer, they eat the native vege which makes the hillside dry and then trample lots of rubble down onto the lower tracks. Cheers NZDA*



More recently just before Xmas a small group of members flew into the Crow catchment (flight courtesy of DOC) and shot 50 goats and a chamois over 2.5 days (see more from Coxy below). Great work!

More opportunities are in the pipeline but need more support.

Participation through communication is the only way so if interested check in with Mike DeGray (see contact at end of this Echo)

Much of what is happening is more visible on our Branch Facebook page so hook in to that <https://www.facebook.com/NelsonNzda>



# Roar 2021 – Be Prepared to Enjoy

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Well for many, last year was a fizzer.....but with good management and a smidgeon of luck (which is currently being severely tested) this year we will be able to go forth in March and April as usual.

The Mountain Safety Council site has some good reminders about how to get the best out of hunting and especially in what can be the intense hunting of the roar where many joys and risks are magnified. <https://www.mountainsafety.org.nz/learn/activities/big-game/>

The two areas key to ensure a great trip to be done BEFOREHAND are “get organised and get fit”.

Thorough organisation of team, gear, transport and proper sighting in of rifles means no rush and less risk of disappointments. It can be no small matter to book leave and time away from home; if possible arrange a Plan B hunt so if weather, light injury or some other constraint comes to play you won't totally miss out. I always like to have a West Coast and eastern option as its rare for both sides of the Mainland to be buried in poor weather.

Use the DOC website <https://www.doc.govt.nz/parks-and-recreation/things-to-do/hunting/> and Walking Access NZ <https://www.walkingaccess.govt.nz/> to see what is available to you for hunting.

Another point to consider is that if you feel all the red deer spots are “full up” then use this time to hunt something else such as fallow, chamois and tahr as there may be less competition for these areas at that time. Chopper companies will know about this, and options in their areas.

Don't forget to look at the pesticide areas when planning <https://www.doc.govt.nz/nature/pests-and-threats/pesticide-summaries/> but keep in mind a lot of public land is unaffected and animal numbers can be pretty good, there has been very little WARO over the last year and of course fewer overseas hunters.

Getting fit is a pain, takes time and comes at a time when for the last month the modus operandi has been to eat more and do less.....younger folks are probably in the clear here, us more “experienced” types may need to pay more attention. It is interesting that we focus so much on the weight of our rifles and gear etc and invest significant \$ to reduce it and then, if you are like me, carry round an “extra” 5 kg or so of “tissue” on the body that not only makes you tired but isn't likely to extend one's lifetime either! Quick way to test this is to put 5kg in a day pack and go for a short jog, you sure will feel it....because bodyfat is evenly distributed it's not felt in quite the same way but if it's there, it's there adding to strain on knees and everything else in your engine room and drive-train.

The best advice I have seen on this matter was Willie Duley on NZ Hunter Adventures who seems to race around the hills effortlessly but noted in one episode the need for time spent carrying a pack of full waterbottles up and down a local hill to get prepared. It's a good way to reduce risk of injury and help you to do the things and get to the places you want to. There is more on exercise for seniors below!

Next edition some reminders on safety while out there!



Memorable (for the occasion.... not the antlers!) Preservation Inlet stag from the roar 2008

## First Packers Creek Range Officer Training a Success

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Given the need for certified Range Officers under new regulations, and also the benefit for members to go through the training regardless of whether they choose to be officially certified, Bill O'Leary ran the first of a series of RO training sessions for Packers Creek Range last Saturday (note three members have also recently been trained and qualified by Bill for the Murchison Range).

We had nine members attend, some long-term, some newer, some with range officer experience in other Branches or countries, all keen to support the proposition that Ranges are an important part of our sport and therefore being prepared to help meet new standards required.

The day included indoor briefing on the requirements and then the particulars of ranges and Packers Creek in particular. After that it was outside for practical briefing, demonstrations and practice. Then an assessment written exercise at the end.

So....a very worthwhile and interesting day with a nice group of people. There will be more courses run so keep an eye on your emails for when the next one is scheduled.





Range Officer training at Packers Creek.

## Coxy's Corner

### Notes for Hunters from Motueka DOC Office

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Hi Nelson NZDA members,

I hope everyone has been fit and well during /after the festive season.

I would like to thank the members that gave their time and made the effort to complete some wilding conifer and goat control pre-Xmas. The wilding conifer control being drill and fill method was carried out in the Miner Stream catchment upstream of Whispering Falls in the Hackett valley. Twelve of us were flown in and out by helicopter. Over six hundred conifers in an area of 6 ha were treated. Production forests have an approx. density of 350 per ha.

The working around helicopter training provided by Helicopters Nelson was put to the test with winds rising prior to our pick-up. Well done for all involved for following instructions and keeping things safe.

Four NZDA member hunters were flown in and out of the upper Crow valley in Kahurangi National Park just before Xmas. The weather conditions were touch and go for the flight in, but they got there in the end. The hunters had a great trip dealing to fifty goats in 2.5 days hunting. One chamois was also bagged.

These results are excellent and hopefully we can build on these successes in the following months.

I also did a few hours aerial goat control in the Northern Arthur range before things got busy with people heading out for the holidays. [Numerous red deer were sighted well above the bush edge around the Mt Arthur area.](#)



NZDA Pine Control Crew in Miner Stream

Contact me by email if you need more info. [icox@doc.govt.nz](mailto:icox@doc.govt.nz)

Cheers Coxy!



# Club Nite Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> Feb at 7.30pm

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Come along and hear from Mike Darling. Now owner of Richmond Hunting and Fishing he has also been a deer culler and hunting guide; he has many perspectives on hunting and shooting. A great chance to ask questions about hunting gear too!



## Fish & Game Report

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- **LEATHAM FISH RELEASE**

The Leatham River received 200 tagged fish in mid-December. The tags are a light brown (beige) colour, and we are interested in receiving any tagged fish returns from the Branch/Leatham catchment, including instances of adipose fin clipped fish, wild rainbows, and brown trout.

- **LAKE ARGYLE INTAKE MAINTENANCE (1-28 FEB)**

Work is scheduled for the Lake Argyle intake for the entire month of February. For this work, the lake will be held at the normal operating low level for the duration. Water normally coming down the canal to replenish the lake will be diverted down the Branch River, meaning there will not be much water at the top end of the lake. Fishing will still be possible, but best in the lower half of the lake. When the lake is filled, Fish & Game will be releasing some salmon into Argyle.

- **TAG COMP UPDATE**

The Lake Argyle tag competition is in full swing and, at the time of writing, has over two thirds of the tags handed in. Surprisingly, both \$500 vouchers are still swimming in the lake as well as some other great prizes. The competition will run until the end of February, and any prizes not claimed will be randomly drawn to those who have handed in tags.

# Red Deer Lodge

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

Contact for Accom: [info@starnaudholidaycottages.co.nz](mailto:info@starnaudholidaycottages.co.nz)

Use the website at [www.starnaudholidaycottages.co.nz](http://www.starnaudholidaycottages.co.nz)

Remember to advise you are a Nelson member.



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## 2021 Committee

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**President:** Greg Couper [terminatorproducts@xtra.co.nz](mailto:terminatorproducts@xtra.co.nz)

**Vice President:** Richard Wells [richardw@nzdanelson.co.nz](mailto:richardw@nzdanelson.co.nz)

**Secretary:** Warren Plum [plumstone@xtra.co.nz](mailto:plumstone@xtra.co.nz)

**Treasurer:** Aaron Shields [aarons@nzdanelson.co.nz](mailto:aarons@nzdanelson.co.nz)

**Members:** Bill O'Leary, Graeme Smith, Graeme Ching, Mike DeGray, Neill Cliffe, John Noakes, Mike Grant, David Haynes, Carina Jackson, Mark MacDonald.

**Range Committee:**

[www.nzdanelson.co.nz](http://www.nzdanelson.co.nz)



**Convener:** Graeme Ching, [graeme-doreen@xtra.co.nz](mailto:graeme-doreen@xtra.co.nz)

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

**Hazard or Incident Reporting:** website email ([nelson.nzda@gmail.com](mailto: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:**

**Convener:** Mike DeGray [miked@nzdanelson.co.nz](mailto:miked@nzdanelson.co.nz)

**Hunts Courses:**

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

**Convener:** Bill O'Leary [b.f.oleary@xtra.co.nz](mailto:b.f.oleary@xtra.co.nz)

**Members:** Lawson Davey, Alistair Ching

**New members:**

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

**The Mountain Echo**

Bill O'Leary and Richard Wells