



MOUNTAIN ECHO

Newsletter of Nelson Branch NZDA May 2021



Nelson member Carina Jackson in action at National Benchrest Championships at our own Packers Creek Range this Easter. See how she fared (and all the results) in full report below!

Next Club Night Tuesday 25th May
from 6.30pm

Bring in your monster stags!

Trophy heads and photo competition night! Note earlier time! Doors open early to allow more time for measuring. More below.

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Editorial

Well, I hope it's been a great April for those lucky enough to have got out for the roar, all reports suggest three things – all across the country many hunters had a great April (weather aside!), some great trophies have been had and meat larders filled, and so far everyone has made it home safely (there have been a relatively few SAR/evacuations but no major or fatal incidents). Given the apparent numbers of hunters, itching after constraints last year this is a good result and shows much care and attention.

This Echo has two main stories. That reflect the two main streams of our sport, competition shooting and recreational hunting. Nothing demonstrates this better than our members showing their prowess at a National level in benchrest shooting and others getting the full joys of a week in the bush (and sea as it happens!).

Noting we also have a wildlife conservation focus I have included the GAC kea sighting story; these fantastic birds are a highlight of our high country (and often surprisingly low country too) and a beacon for the health of our wilderness.

Continuing to do all in our power to ensure these activities can be maintained as an enduring part of recreational sports in NZ is ongoing. We submitted on members behalf on the latest round of Firearms Regulation proposed changes and while obviously supportive of all due care in regard who gets licensed, how and where firearms are stored and used, we also must criticise proposals that are impractical, overly constraining in the context of the risk that they are proposed to manage, or dare I say it just downright silly in the context of allowing legitimate use. There will be more to come in this arena and at local as well as national level we will remain on watch, keep you informed and respond as relevant with submissions etc.

There is much afoot in the Molesworth area re OSPRI possum control and flow on affects re hunting access. The last Echo had a piece on this. We remain in constant touch with our colleagues in Marlborough Branch and will keep you updated as and when definite plans, or changes emerge.

You will note that we have brought our annual Competition night forward to this month. We have deliberately extended the time with doors opening at 6.30 pm (arriving later on is not a problem). This is in part to allow those doing the measuring to have more time and allow more time for “tall tales and true” amongst everybody.

We are planning to develop more Club Nights this year with a greater social and hunting informative focus rather than the usual “lecture” format...stay tuned for next advisory on this.

Another development to be advised soon is more clarity around local supplier discounts to card carrying members (additional to the nationwide ones already available to all members).

Good hunting! Richard Wells



Game Animal Council - Tahr hunters contributing to kea conservation.



Media Statement

29 April 2021

The NZ Tahr Foundation, Kea Conservation Trust and Game Animal Council have collaborated to develop the Tahr Ballot Kea Sightings Project.

With the annual tahr rut getting underway, tahr ballot block holders are being asked to record their kea sightings to help conserve kea in the central Southern Alps.

“Kea are a fantastic part of the mountain hunting experience in the Southern Alps, and given how much time tahr hunters spend in the backcountry they are ideally positioned to help monitor these special alpine parrots,” says NZ Tahr Foundation Scientific Advisor Kaylyn Pinney.

Each hunting party receives a Tahr Ballot Kea Sightings Project pamphlet along with the NZ Tahr Foundation’s tahr returns and information booklet at the helipad before being flown in to their ballot block. They are requested to record their kea sightings on the pamphlet and submit it along with their tahr returns in a dedicated box at the hanger following their flight out.

“This project will help provide valuable information to the kea database and ensure better management decisions are made for kea in the future,” says Tamsin Orr-Walker, Chair of the Kea Conservation Trust. “We know that kea are attracted to tahr carcasses and tahr hunters have a lot of interaction with the birds so this project is a really great way for them to help contribute information on kea ecology and behaviour.”

“Tahr hunters are really passionate about kea and many already do support kea conservation,” says Game Animal Council General Manager Tim Gale. “This project is a great example of how hunters, who spend long periods in the mountains, can contribute to achieve good outcomes for native species.”

The kea sightings pamphlet asks for detailed recordings including: sex, age, behaviour and if any leg bands are identifiable. Hunting parties are also provided information to help identify different kea.

“A big thank you goes to the helicopter operators who have come on board to help facilitate the distribution and returns of both the kea sightings pamphlet and tahr returns booklet,” says

Pinney. "It is this on- the-ground support that is so important to ensure the success of a project such as this."

While the Tahr Ballot Kea Sightings Project is specific to tahr ballot holders, other hunters and members of the public are encouraged to report kea sightings at www.keadatabase.nz.

The Tahr Ballot Kea Sightings Project form and information pamphlet can be viewed at www.bit.ly/3eyDyKQ.

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We saw 7 kea in Moeraki this April and got them logged; above is a wet and bedraggled (as we were) one, Ed.

Range Matters

Please all note that **over Queen's Birthday the range will be closed** to members as fully engaged in the Zuppa Shoot. Make the most of coming weekends to sight your rifles.

Nelson's Packers Creek Range is the venue for the National Benchrest Champs each year and 2021 no exception. The weather gods initially looked like they would be unfavourable, but overall, we had a pleasant and warm weekend. Entries were a little below par but the quality was still there.

After a full day of setup and practise on Good Friday, Saturday commenced in earnest with the Light Varmint championship.

The conditions were mild but tricky with the 5 groups at 100yds not producing anything outstanding. Peter Haxell from Auckland lead home the field with a .2510 aggregate.

Conditions remained reasonable in the afternoon as attention turned to 200yds. Maybe the barbeque lunch dulled the senses as again the groups were ok but not what we expected. The drift conditions certainly made life difficult. Nelson's Frank Frost turned in the smallest group at .370 (**5 shots on a 50-cent piece at 200 yards!**) The overall LV Championship went to Sue (Auckland) followed by Peter Haxell and Steve Williams (Nelson)



Top three in Light Varmint – Steve Williams (Nelson), Sue of Auckland and Peter Haxell (also Nelson)

Sunday again dawned fine and cool enabling a start as soon as the sun was high enough to get out of the front of the scopes. It was to be a contrasting day with good conditions in the morning with increasing conditions in the afternoon.

Several .1 groups turned up at 100 yds (5 shots on a 10-cent piece) with Peter Haxell showing all his experience to take both yardages and therefore the Aggregate. His .2630 at 100 and .2584 at 200 was well ahead of the field, followed by Nelson President Greg Couper and Steve Williams. The 2 Gun Award (combined LV and HV) was taken home by Peter Haxell.

Easter Monday is a change of pace with targets being shot with the .22 Rimfire cartridge at a distance of 50 metres. Rather than group shooting, the Rimfire Target is a 25 bull, 1 shot per rondel for a possible score of 250.25.

Nelson's Graeme Smith finished round 1 with a 250.12, followed by Michael Kidson (Nelson) on 246.07 and Carina Jackson (Nelson) on 244.13. Conditions pretty much held for Round 2 though the late finishers were caught with a strong easterly getting up.

Graeme Smith again headed the field with a 248.23 and Greg Couper with 245.11.



Waving flags may be good at a yacht regatta but not so good at a .22 rimfire competition.



Tony Titheridge (Christchurch silver) and our two local lads Graeme (gold) and Greg (bronze) the Heavy Varmint top placegetters

Round 3 was a battle with the wind in full force and the scoring suffered accordingly. Christchurch shooter Tony Titheridge headed home the field with 244.09, Graeme Smith 243.08 and Greg Couper 237.03.

Overall Graeme Smith took Gold, Tony Titheridge Silver and Greg Couper the Bronze medal. The 3 Gun Trophy (LV, HV and RF) was taken by Greg Couper followed by Carina Jackson and Graeme and Tony tied for third – a great result for the weekends efforts.

That puts another event in the records and we meet again mid-winter for the Zuppa Shoot at our Range.

Thanks for report by Graeme Smith

Surf and Turf at Stafford Creek

Committee member Mike Grant and friends were pretty disappointed last year with Covid preventing him from going to his ballot block (he was not alone in that!). However, DOC rolled them all over to this year, so he managed his planned escape. Stafford has a hut by the sea so it's a good place for some multitasking and based on the pics provided they did just that!

The West Coast ballot blocks offer a wide range of experiences from virtually full alpine hunting where trophy animals and "by-products" such as chamois are present, to river blocks with easier going and the odd trout as well as a few coastal experiences.

Those blocks with huts are a bit easier (although often more popular year-round so hunted harder) but offer a great break away with a range of experiences. The chopper guys at Haast know all the ins and outs and several places a not unreasonable walk too.



Stafford hut, south of Jackson's Bay [Info Here](#)



“That’s what we’re here for innit?”



Who could complain eh?



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



Hi Nelson NZDA members,

I hope all have been successful during the various ruts and roars so far this season!

I'd like to thank the members who have worked on the wilding pine and goat control operations this summer. The wilding pine operations in the Hackett valley have been very successful along with the goat control especially the hunting around the upper Crow valley that was based from the Crow Clearing.

I did a follow up aerial hunt this week and picked up a couple of dozen additional goats around the upper Crow to complement the 50 that Davey, Keith, Jody and Simon shot.

I also hunted Mt Owen observing numerous chamois. Granity Pass hut being the closest base for hunters to access these.

Contact icox@doc.govt.nz for more information.

Cheers Coxy!



Birds eye view Crow Clearing 3/5/2021

NELSON MARLBOROUGH FISH & GAME REPORT



- **OPENING DAY:** Our compliance team spent the day in the Kaikoura area, which is part of Nelson Marlborough Fish & Game region. There was quite high participation, with many ponds having multiple hunters, however it was disappointing to see alcohol being consumed at several of the ponds. Staff in this region have not seen this behavior at all in the past 6+ years, however it appears this part of the region is a hot-spot for this reckless activity and future compliance efforts in conjunction with the Police will be made.
- **FISH RELEASE INTO LAKE ARGYLE:** A release of 40 huge brown trout was undertaken at Lake Argyle. Most of the trout were 10+ pounds, with many in the range of 15-16 pounds. For those wanting some May fishing action - the Branch and Leatham rivers remain open until the end of May.
- **TASMAN PINE FORESTS UPLAND GAME HUNTS:** There has been a good uptake of Tasman Pine Forests (TPFL) upland game hunting bookings. All eight hunting blocks were booked for Opening Weekend, and there is plenty of interest in the following weeks. If you feel like a good day walk with your dog in search of quail, visit the Nelson Marlborough F&G website where we have set up a special TPFL page for information and to book a block.
- **WAKAPUAKA PUKEKO DRIVE:** The annual Wakapuaka pukeko drive will take place on 11 July. If you wish to take part in the hunt email Jacob Lucas (jlucas@fishandgame.org.nz) to register. This is also a good opportunity to give gamebird hunting a try if you are thinking about giving it a go, it is simple to purchase a day hunting licence for the event.



Ranger Lawson Davey carrying out a compliance check.

Next Club Night Tuesday 25th May doors open 6.30pm

How does your's measure up?

Annual Trophy and Photo Competition

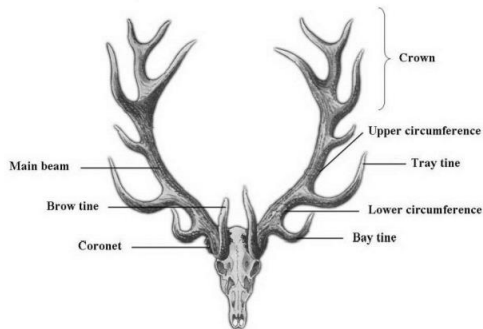


Figure 1
The measured parameters of a red deer trophy (by Szederjei, 1960)



Always one of our most interesting and best attended meetings of the year, so don't miss this one!

We have been kindly sponsored by a local business MTN gear for winners with Trophy Hooks (check out website www.mtngear.nz)

The Committee is also putting up a prize for the “wackiest head” or character trophy so bring in your handle bar stag or three horned spiker for something a bit different.

Personally, I get a big kick out of seeing who's had success over the last 12 months (well 9 months!!) and just what sort of animals are getting around.

- Photography competition entry night as well. Many a future hunt is inspired by this event, and tall tales told, so come along and have a yarn with fellow hunters.
- Eligibility – head must have been shot in the last 12 months, not taken behind a fence and not harvested with a spotlight or thermal scope after dark. Individuals must be paid current members of NZDA
- For those of you wishing to enter, just a matter of bringing your trophy along, entry forms will be on hand at event. You need to be a paid up member of NZDA.

Competition Categories

Peoples Store Trophy - Best Nelson deer head.

Wackiest Head – Non-typical trophy

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Williams Cup - Pig tusks.

Eddy Trophy - Best trophy on Douglas score conversion

Sports Depot Cup - Best Chamois head

Bob Baigent Cup - Best head taken by a junior / family member under 18.

Bob Baigent Trophy - (Horned game other than Chamois) e.g. Tahr, Goat, Wild sheep

Whitcombe Challenge Trophy - Best NZ Deer Head. On DS

Rakiura Trophy - Best Whitetail

Shuttleworth Trophy - Best Red deer head.

Photography - Sections for human interest, stalking country, wild game photo, hunting country scenery, native birds, other wild-life and fauna. Photos need to be printed not digital

RETURN OF COMPETITION CUPS

Could all members holding cups from last year's competitions please drop off bring on the night or return to Warren Plum. Thanks.



Red Deer Lodge

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

Contact for Accom: info@starnaudholidaycottages.co.nz

Use the website at www.starnaudholidaycottages.co.nz

Remember to advise you are a Nelson member.



2021 Committee

President: Greg Couper terminatorproducts@xtra.co.nz

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

Secretary: Warren Plum plumstone@xtra.co.nz

Treasurer: Aaron Shields 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:

Convener: Graeme Ching, graeme-doreen@xtra.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 [Range Info](#) and check your emails for updates or changes to range opening times.

Branch Hunts and Activities:

Convener: Mike DeGray miked@nzdanelson.co.nz

Hunts Courses:

Website: [Hunts Training Courses](#)

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

Members: Lawson Davey, Alistair Ching

New members:

email nelsonnzda@gmail.com or go to our webpage [Membership](#)

The Mountain Echo:

Bill O'Leary and Richard Wells