

The southern hunter



September 2008
Southland branch
NZ deerstalkers association

Noticeboard:

Executive Meeting: Wednesday 17th September 7pm

General Meeting: Wednesday 17th September 8pm

Executive and committee members (2008-2009)

	President	Jim Ridley	
Vice.	Nathan Dawson	235 8852	
Jnr. Vice	Murray Barkman		
Secretary	David Howden	2130962	
Treasurer	John DeLury	217 5890	
Immediate	Roy Sloan	2352813	
Huts	Neville Miller	216 8654	
	Newsletter Editor	Nathan Dawson	
	Executive:		
Roger Stratford	Steven Long	Brendon Bell	Ray Phillips
	Wayne Cook	Murray Colson	
	Euan Butters		

GUEST SPEAKER FOR SEPTEMBER 17th MEETING

Your N.Z.D.A. National President Alex McIver will be speaking at this meeting, Plus Colin Bishop from DoC and either Dave Taylor or Jessica Bernard will accompany him, They have some serious issues to discuss and I'm sure if you hunt the Waitutu Forest (or for that matter, just hunt) then YOU need to have an input here.

Rat Control Project Homestead Block Stewart Island.

9th August saw seven members of the branch fly to Mason Bay for the beginning of this years rat control program. We landed at Duck Creek in the sunshine and shortly after Letitia and Matt from DoC arrived with the food. The next four days were spent recutting the old tracks we first cut two seasons ago and cleaning and setting the old traps. We also put out some extra traps on the dead end tracks to make them more of a circuit. There are now almost 300 traps out. 52 rats were caught in the traps which was pretty good for early in the season and the fact we were concentrating on track work. Four deer were seen, two within a 100 metres of the homestead but then we had little time for hunting. We did get some interesting snippets of English history - when we could understand the accents of Davie, John & Ernie that is. All too soon it was time to come home, a very enjoyable time. Thank you to all the team for your hard work and good company.

Wallaby Hunting 'Dawson Bros' Style!

Well I couldn't make the last trip to the Hunter Hills because of work commitments and things were 'panning' out the same way, so a couple of nights and a Saturday afternoon catching up settled the score and made the trip a definite 'yes'!

Sometimes we have to put that little extra effort in to do the things we enjoy the most. We left, seven of us in two 4x4's from Invercargill just after mid-day on Friday and travelled up to the Hunter Hills behind Waimate with a short stop for tea and met up with the crew from Christchurch, Nathan's brother Daniel and mates about 7.30pm.

The weather looked good and the 'boys' had been spotlighting off some quad bikes and had started the tally for the weekend. The chains were fitted to the 4x4 and down the track we went to the hut, very flash for a hunters pad. Since I hadn't shot wallaby before Simon kindly offered to carry the spotlight for me to try the new Tikka .223 out. We hadn't gone more than 20mins from the hut when the light picked up a 'sitter' and the first round was on it's way and so was the wallaby. The next shot was taken with him at full speed (bounce!) through the tussock. Unlucky he was as he ran into the bullet and another took off above him. Tally 2x, told Simon it's not sporting to shoot them standing still!

The next day dawned crisp with a fine blue sky and 8 or 9 of us lined up spread out some with shotguns and some with rifles to sidle through the tussock, matagouri and Spaniard grass [yuk!]. Shortly after, a couple of wallabies had been taken a medium size boar took off with guns and shotguns blazing and finally taken running some distance away with a head shot! John Paton eased down to collect his prize he says it's the only way to shoot too!

We all linked up back at the hut later in the afternoon and some keen men took off spotlighting that evening. All up total of 220x wallabies and 1x pig amongst good company and great weather with a good covering of snow on the distant hills. I'll be back again next time. If you are interested too, put your name down and join in the fun. Thanks again Nathan for organising a great trip.



Vermin vanquishers: Members of the Southland branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association recently spent five days in Stewart Island's Mason Bay waging war on the resident rat population.

Photo: Supplied

The rat pack is back

BY MATT MALEY

IT'S a tough life being a rat on Stewart Island these days, but you won't hear the birds complaining.

Over the last three years a collaboration between the Department of Conservation and the Southland Branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association has ensured the pesky varmints are kept under control and away from fledgling bird populations.

DOC animal threats ranger Letitia Ritchie said the group had first come on board after the initiation of a pest liaison group on the island and had readily volunteered their services.

"They approached DOC and we thought it was a really good idea," Ms Ritchie said.

Seven association members travelled to Mason Bay recently for five days of clearing trap lines and setting up 241 rat traps in the area.

All trap lines received a tidy up, traps were wire-brushed, oiled, and set with peanut butter, initially catching 52 ship rats.

Stewart Island is home to all three rat species present in New Zealand, the Norway Rat, the Kiore, and the aforementioned ship rat.

"They're pretty much all over the island and it is unusual that we have all three species," she said.

"They're quite hard to control because they're all a bit different."

The main aim of the project is to reduce rat

numbers over the bird breeding season and give the birds a chance to breed.

"Any small birds are the most vulnerable. The larger birds can fight them off, but the young ones in open nests like the fantail, bellbird, tui and robin can get really hammered."

Ms Christie said January was the prime breeding time for rats, as it was for birds, with a plentiful food supply boosting populations, hence the concentration on trapping at this time of year.

Without the support of the deerstalkers, such a project was unlikely to get off the ground, she said.

"We don't have the resources to do large scale rat control, it's so expensive without using toxins.

"We did look at involving local hut wardens over the summer period, but that was a big enough task on its own. There would have been no control at all."

For the deerstalkers it's not just all work and no play while on the island.

"It's a very complementary project, they can come down and do the rat traps and also do their hunting."

The project continues on into the spring and summer and parties of hunters will fly into Mason Bay once a month (twice in October) from September until January to clear and rebait traps.

September Hunting Tips:

Never Shoot at movement alone.

If going away for week hunts grab a mountain radio from Southland Mountain Radio Service, better to be safe than sorry!! Always check weather before going away and pack accordingly extra grub won't go astray.

Animal Skin Tanning Service

Adam Cowie

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Wild Food Safety

Check out the new wild food safety DVD by going to www.nzfsa.co.nz and requesting a copy or phone 0800 693 721. Also available with Spring edition of Hunting & Fishing

Editors Comments

We still need people to step up to take on the monthly hunts for the club so if your interested let me know nathan.adrienne@xtra.co.nz or 03 2358852

***We would like to have more stories and/or photos etc. would be appreciated.
Don't necessarily have to tell where you've been ☺***

August Wallaby Trip

Following are Photos from the wallaby shoot, Sam Thurlow with the second wallaby shot for the trip and John Paton with his Pig shot on Saturday after the first wallaby had been shot.



