THE SOUTHERN HUNTER

Southland Branch NZDA Newsletter
September 2025



Mason Bay Sunset

Monthly Meeting

7.30pm Wednesday 17th September the Branch Club Rooms Longbush Hall McKerchar Road off State Highway 1 between Kennington & Woodlands

Guest Speaker

Rachel from **Hunters for Conservation**



wwwhuntersforconservation.co.nz

NEW MEMBERS

New Members please welcome them.

Kieran Wilson, Ashley Taylor, Nathan Holdaway, Kyle Anquetil, Brent Cororan, Trevor Saunders, Corey Hirst, Issac Riwhi

BRANCH FACEBOOK:

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE ON FACEBOOK, , YOU WILL FIND HELPFUL INFO ON THE PAGE . WE ENCOURAGE MEMBERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO

IT https://www.facebook.com/southlandnzda/

BRANCH CONTACTS

Branch email is: enquiries@southlanddeerstalkers.org.nz
News Letter douglasgordon@xtra.co.nz

Branch website http://www.southlanddeerstalkers.org.nz/

<u>List of the Branch winners at Nationals</u> website

https://www.southlanddeerstalkers.org.nz/index.php/new newsletters/winners-at-national-level

Wanted

Stories, ads, letters to the editor, or whatever for the newsletter, send to or contact the editor. Guest Speaker's needed, Ideas wanted, who do you want, and names needed, suggestions to Executive

Club Hunts

None advised

All hunts for Southland Branch NZDA Members (with full NZDA membership) as Public Liability Insurance required).

Office Bearers

President: Shaun McKelvie 027 635 0490 Vice President: Luke Payne

Secretary Andy Nesbit 021 53 8676 : Treasurer Scott Hall 027 859 3533

Magazine Editor: Doug Gordon 216 6383 Immediate past President

Membership Andy Nesbit Huts Neville Miller

Executive: Wayne Ashmore, Tony Caldwell, Gareth Coyle, Nathan Dawson, Paul Fitzek,

Scott Hall, Dave Howden, Jason Leishman, Jamie. McCallum, Ray Phillips. Scott

Thompson, Nic Whyte.

Life Members (National & Branch) John DeLury, Ray Phillips (National) Roger

McNaughton, (Branch), Doug Gordon Dave Howden, Neville Miller,

Sub committees

Rayonier Hunting Liaison Shaun, Luke & Andy

Lodges - (Red Stag & Mavora) Neville, Shaun, Dave

Hall & Library Luke, Jamie & Wayne

Club Hunts Tom, Luke and Wayne

Invercargill Rifle Range Tom, Shaun & Andy Nesbit

Invercargill Pistol Club Doug

NZDA Range Officers Shaun, Tom, Wayne, Andy, Luke

DOC Liaison Ray

AGM, Trophies & Douglas Scoring Shaun, Doug, Wayne, Luke, Ray & Andy

Competition Committee Shaun, Tom, Andy

Hunts Coordinators Andy, Shaun, Tom, Wayne, Luke, Nathan

Douglas Score Measurer's

Judge/coordinating Tutor, Ray, Judge/ Tutor John, Level One Shaun, Tom, Wayne, Luke & Andy

Website manager, John Delury.

Please do not allow your IN BOX to become full.

As I do not chase up on failed e-mail delivery due to a full mail box

Doug Gordon

Wapiti Lodge Xmas Ballot

See add in this newsletter

Presidents Report



September

Hi all not much to report this month from me flat out calving . Hope to see everyone at the meeting looking forward to hearing from Rachel from Hunters for Conservation. Thanks Shaun

Editorial



Another month and we are officially in spring. Though it feels more like winter than some of what we had late August. Never mind life goes on. National Office produced their monthly newsletter at the end of August in which I was glad to see that they had submitted on the Cape Palliser access issue. There was around 3500 submissions on this issue including at least three from the Southland Branch Executive The issue if you have not read it is the local Council want to close a paper road to all public access. After having been approached on the issue by the owner of the neighbouring land. The road goes along the foreshore from the lighthouse to a Doc Reserve. (That has I am told Hunting). The paper road is a mess of potholes, and mud. Not always located where it should be. It and the neighbouring land have been abused by 4x4 drive vehicles. The plan is to close all access for three years to allow the land to recover then review it. Perhaps then allowing nonvehicle access then if the land has recovered. There has been reports on the TV1 News and TV1 Q&A. the Outdoor Access Commission did appear and believes that denying foot access is illegal and are challenging the Council on this. Doc was not on the programme or news and appears to be sitting on its hands and not standing up for public access to a Public Reserve. As they under

the Council plan will continue to have vehicle access for themselves. Along with possible access for other unnamed groups, (I suspect this could include F&B as not a twitter has been heard from them either.) I also assume as per normal the media has not asked NZDA for comment. Nothing was mentioned regarding the Game Animal council either. Though the locals who were upset about the proposal were interviewed. (including local surfers).

Our news media have a bad habit of being selective in who they interview. It does their reputation no good and some harm. Who remembers the pet firearms owners they interviewed on changes to the firearms law, instead of the affected shooting & hunting bodies.

Doc has a bad history of not standing up for public access to the land they administer. You only must see the High-Country Tenure review results regarding access. I believe they do not want the public on a lot of the public land that they administer. They want to "protect the Unique biodiversity "of the land. To me all biodiversity is in some ways unique (prove me wrong!) Do they want all people removed from New Zealand? That is a possible conclusion, or at least the land they administer.

While this is only a 3km section of unformed road. It could start a lot of access issues if the council is allowed to proceed, it sets a precedent for another method of taking public access from the public. Closing public easements through farm and forestry land for health and safety reasons has been another. I have heard a story of a person denied assess in February due to lambing.

Watch the News and National office for possible updates.

Doug Gordon



Southland branch has registered for the National Goat comp this year. Details are below

We will have measuring days at our monthly meetings

September 17 October 15 November 19th

At the Branch Hall 24 McKercher road 730pm. Or if you can't make a meeting Invercargill Hunting and Fishing are also excepting entries

Anyone questions get in contact

enquiries@southlanddeerstalkers.org.nz

https://www.doc.govt.nz/news/events/national-events/national-wild-goat-hunting-competition/

Sponsors

Southland Branch would like to thank its regular sponsors and recommend them to its members.





A lifetime experience to a very special place' Mason Homestead Hunting Block, West Coast, Rakiura Stewart Island

August 16th - 22nd 2025 Trapping/Hunting adventure

Author Michael Atwill (Newbie hunter and NZDA Southland Branch member)



Hunters/Trappers

Craig Cunninghame
Tony Caudwell
Michael Atwill

Mason Homestead Hunting Block



It gives me great pleasure to report to our club my recent trapping and hunting trip in August 16th to the 22nd 2025. I wish to thank Craig and Tony for their passion, support and knowledge to help make my experiences a special one.

I also wish to acknowledge John Delury, our NZDA Southland Branch, and our sponsor Hunting and Fishing Invercargill. A huge thank you to you all.

After weeks of preparation, Friday 15th had arrived. Out comes the check lists and my home turns into what looks like another branch of a hunting and fishing store. Tick, tick tick; crossing off items to make sure I was ready to go. I've been corresponding with Craig and Tony on Facebook Messenger, gathering intel and making purchases ready for the big day. Finally, late that evening, I was all set, ready to go.

Saturday 16th and it's on. Travelled to Craig's place in Invercargill and arrived at 9am, about to unload the gear when Craig receives a phone call. No go. Too rough at Mason's Bay beach yet it appeared fine in Invercargill. Bugger. I live in Edendale so for me it was the perfect excuse to drive home past my favourite coffee shop at the Grocer in Woodlands.

Along comes Sunday, arrived at Craigs place; phone call came in and yup we're departing at 12pm lunchtime. We meet tony at the airport. Thanks to Craig's partner and daughter for dropping us off at the airport. All three of us checked in and eventually we departed at 12pm. The pilot was excellent, great flight to Rakiura Stewart Island and landed perfectly on the beach at Mason's Bay. I haven't flown in such a small plane let alone land on a beach. It was truly an amazing experience.



Once we unloaded our gear from the plane, it took off. I'm impressed with the pilot and the service they offer. Looking out at the surf, it easy to see why it's really the only way to go. The surf is too rough or too high to manage a safe boat landing. I guess this is why this place appeals, raw west coastline - difficult access.

Once we loaded our packs onto our backs, we set off for an hour trek to the hut. This is where I started to learn from my mistakes. I had too much gear and I was too hot. I was anticipating the wind chill factor being the west coast but actually, it was quite mild and not raining.



We finally arrived at the Homestead hut which was to be our home away from home for the week. How I made it, I have no idea. I had nothing in the tank, exhausted from overheating and carrying too much weight. Lesson number one learnt.

We unpacked at the hut, set up our sleeping arrangements and got dinner set aside ready to cook for teatime. We rested for a few hours and then a decision was made, let's check out the Mutton Flat hunting area. All three of us left the hut approx. 3.30pm, about a 40min walk through the bush, following a labelled track and bingo, we arrived to what I can only describe as beautiful place and many advantageous hunting areas. There were many viewpoints looking down to a lot of small valley or ruts. This is where the experience of Craig and Tony stepped in and soon enough both where onto a whitetail. After a brief glassing throughout the valleys and ruts, we soon located its position where Tony now had it in the gun scope. Tony set up for the shot, fired and went to recover the animal. He yelled with excitement as he retrieved to what looked like a very healthy whitetail deer.



Tony's Whitetail Deer

Craig and I went down into the small valley to see Tony and help him process the deer.

Darkness arrived and we all have very good headlamps which in my opinion is a vital

requirement. Once the processing was done and packed away, we decided to head back to base. I haven't trekked in the bush at night before. This was all new but strangely rewarding. I like the labelled tracks and the trapping lines. Plenty of flags, signs and using the electronic map was very accurate. There was a couple of places on the track what I would call 4x4 drive bush trekking, but it was manageable. However, it was a taste of what was to come over the next few days. We arrived back at the hut, deer in the meat safe and Tony cooked one of his dehydrated beef meals and it was delicious and very filling. After dinner, we hunkered down in our bunks ready for the next day. The hut is cosy and has a very cool fireplace that does the job. It certainly throws out the heat.



Homestead Hunters Hut

Monday and Tuesday, after brekkie, we focused on the trap lines, clearing, resetting, rebaiting, repairing if necessary and most importantly recording pest captures. Some parts of the track were extreme with climbing up rope etc. even on good weather days, the bush is very wet in some places. I'm glad I wore my hunting wet weather gear in the bush. It kept me dry even when trekking though some swampy parts of the bush.



Tony servicing traps

After finishing for the day and they were challenging days, we arrived back at the hut. I decided to go for a quick walk to check out the woolshed and the Homestead building. I took my phone to take photos. I was halfway down the track when I decided to stop and took a few photos when to my surprise, a white tail 'grey ghost' simply 'popped' out of the bush five meters in front of me. I stood still and managed to get photos. I didn't move, I just stayed still as I estimate I was standing still for about four minutes before the wind swirled and that's it, it took off. Another magical moment and a first for me.



An unexpected encounter four minutes 10 seconds before the disappearing act

Soon after DOC had arrived dropping off supplies for their southern operations next door to us. At teatime, my curried farmhouse stew with rice and naan bread, seemed to be appreciated and very filling.

Early Wednesday morning and all hell breaks loose. A bunch of kiwis started a kiwi convention centre outside the hut at 3am in the morning squawking away. I was lying in bed trying to decide if a rooster was better for a natural alarm clock, maybe squawking away as from 5am, but a bunch of kiwis at 3am? Once dawn broke, all of us managed to see what the fuss was about. We were spectators of the Kiwi Grand Prix. I never seen kiwis chase each other at a reasonable running pace. I was lucky to capture them on my phone's camera and even a video. Since coming back to the mainland, I did show some people and even some kids photos and videos of the kiwis and to my surprise, very few have seen them. They were lapping it up seeing the footage. I've come to realise just how very special this place is.



Later that Wednesday morning, we only had a couple of smaller trap lines to do. I was still in a walking state after two hectic days in the bush servicing traps but it was decided I would service a smaller nearby trap line and Tony finished off the last remaining trap lines. I think we were all done by lunch time.

Trapping can be hard work, tough on the body as there's so much balancing, planning where to put your feet etc. I must have fallen over at least four times without injury. I did pick up a light knee strain but I was still in walking condition. It at this point that I realised I had the wrong boots on, way too stiff in the ankle area, my boots were a great entry type boot, but trekking in the bush for a few days took its toll as my ankles started to get sore. I've now invested in a more flexible type of boots that can handle a loaded backpack and offer the flexibility required for extreme bush trekking. Lesson number two learnt. Thanks to Southern Adventure for fitting me with new boots.

There is a reward though, trapping work. It gave me a better understanding of the place, about the bush and why we are doing this all seems worthwhile. Then there's the views from the highest points on the hill. Amazing views. Deer sign everywhere, yet we didn't see any deer in the bush. They are tricky customers whitetails. It's nice to know we are making a difference. The good news is there's stats and data collected on pest capture rates.

Wednesday afternoon, I offered to stay behind at the hut and allow Craig and Tony to go hunting. Turns out that was the right decision as Craig got his whitetail. The guy's got back later that evening and I had the fire going and boiled water etc around 7pm ready to have dinner and prep the meat into the meat safe. I was very pleased for both Tony and Craig obtaining a deer each. It just makes the trip very worthwhile and a privilege.

At teatime, Craig's mean venison sausages were divine.



Craig's Whitetail Deer

Thursday morning and DOC is flat out with their operations with what I would estimate about seven helicopters servicing the southern areas from us. We have been very lucky with the weather very little rain and some cold nights but awesome days, mainly overcast. Craig and I went out to the hunting grounds that morning. Tony wanted to chill so off we went. When we arrived, what I saw next still amazes me. Two red deer in board daylight approx. one kilometre away were simply chasing each other in the sand dunes having a great old time. I've never seen red deer run so fast. We spotted both whitetails and some reds further way towards big sand hill. The right opportunity to hunt didn't materialise and went back to the hut afterwards.

We mainly did maintenance about the place including repairing some traps and reinstalling them back into the line(s). It was a nice take it easy day and sure enough, we get a visit from DOC and security staff. All was good, they just logged in their paperwork requirements at our hut. A friendly bunch.

We had lunch and it was decided that all of us to go to Mutton Flat out the front by the beach. Just before 3pm we trekked through the bush and arrived on our advantageous ridgeline, we glassed the smaller valleys or ruts and by 4pm, everything changed. Tony had spotted a spiker 148 yards away, happy grazing away in the valley below in broad daylight. I was nearby scanning the western side when I saw Craig waving to me. I thought here we go. I very quietly crawled over to their position and saw what was happening. Craig quietly told me to set up my .243 rifle. With the tripod extended and lined up the target. I managed to locate it through my scope and started to zoom in for better visual. The deer at this point of time is front on but then changed to its side, that's when I had the perfect alignment to its shoulder. I fired and to my relief, it instantly dropped. Both Tony and Craig were thrilled I bagged my first ever deer and it was whitetail. A huge wave of relief come over me as its only taken me two years since getting my firearms licence, buying the rifle and only firing three times ever over that time period. I recently fitted DPT suppressor. This was my fourth shot with the new suppressor, and I get a whitetail. Incredible circumstance. I want to say thank you to Scott at Shooters World in Gore as they not only fitted the DPT suppressor but also zeroed the rifle in at 200 yards. I took 16 rounds and only used one. Amazing. A massive thankyou to both Tony and Craig for giving me the opportunity to have a go and it was successful. I've learnt a lot from this trip, and I encourage anyone to come over for the experience. I would love to see new hunters' team up with experienced hunters to offer them an experience money can't buy.



Mike's first ever Deer and it's a Whitetail spiker

Friday arrives and its clean up and pack up day. We processed our venison by deboning it and I learn a lot of about cuts of meats etc. We had brekkie, lunch, finished the deboning and started to clean the hut, pack everything away and repack our back packs including our meat. We decided to leave earlier and arrive approx. 2.30pm at the beach. We dropped our backpacks and decided to go and scope out the hunting grounds from the beach side.

It gave a different perspective looking back from where our scoping ridgeline was. Deer tracks everywhere, interesting points of reference for future knowledge. We arrived back to our pickup point on the beach, waiting for a while and the plane flies overhead and lands safety right in front of us. We loaded our gear hopped in and said goodbye to a very special place. We landed in Invercargill airport and thanked everyone for a great time. Craig was kind enough to make up mince packets and I also got the Grocer to make up 5kgs of a Danish salami for lunches/wraps etc.



(left) View from the beach looking at Mutton Flat. Deer sign including highway traffic (Right) suspected I.D. Banded- Located on Masons Bay beach

The rat trapping trips are kindly sponsored by



Better Hunting

just a reminder for those who have lost their link and for new members.



Better Hunting education

The Game Animal Council has an online hunter training platform, Better Hunting. It is free to use for hunters and other backcountry users wanting to develop their hunting and outdoor skills.

Better Hunting can be used on a laptop, tablet or phone. Courses can also be accessed offline through the free mobile app. Just create an account and get learning. The platform saves your progress as you go so you can dip in and out as often as you like.

Go to the Better Hunting platform.

Available courses

The Better Hunting platform is made up of separate modules across different subject areas:

- Hunting Essentials includes New Zealand specific outdoor and hunter safety and skills with everything from weather forecasting, navigation, river crossing, first aid, preparation, access, game animal management and other bushcraft and hunting skills.
- **Firearms Essentials** is about learning safe and successful firearms use. This includes maintenance, sighting in, storage and transport, and technique.
- Pig Hunting is an introductory course to pig hunting in New Zealand, exploring
 important theory and dog handling techniques and how to get into practical training.
- Better Hunting also includes skill-building games, digital trip intentions, ballot calendars and more.

REWARD OFFERED



RECENTLY 3 STAGS HEADS WERE TAKEN FROM THE FENCE DISPLAY IN BLAYDON ST, WAIKAIA.

THE PHOTO IS OF THE LARGEST HEAD TAKEN. THE OTHER TWO WERE A 12 POINT RED STAG FROM GLENARAY AND A FALLOW DEER HEAD.

THESE OFTEN PHOTOGRAPHED HEADS HAVE BEEN ON DISPLAY FOR OVER 12 YEARS AND I WOULD LIKE TO HAVE THEM BACK.

REWARD OFFERED

\$300 FOR THE RETURN OF ALL 3 HEADS IN GOOD CONDITION, NO QUESTIONS ASKED.

\$1000 FOR RETURN OF HEADS AND INFORMATION THAT WILL LEAD TO THE PROSECUTION OF THE OFFENDER/S.

INFORMATION TO PHIL, PO BOX 41 WAIKAIA 9745 OR

PHONE: 0223931776

THANK-YOU AND I LOOK FORWARD TO ANY INFORMATION FORWARDED.

Meat cleaver for sale

Two purchased by mistake want to sell one \$80.00

Very sharp great for chopping bones

Ph Thomas on 0274283770





Joke of The Month



Rifle Sighting In At Invercargill Pistol Club

With the start of daylight saving the Invercargill pistol Club range will be again available. To Financial Members for the sighting in of Rifles on Wednesday nights from 5.30 pm finishing 7pm. At the cost of \$10 per person. Ear & Eye protection required Bring one's own targets with staple gun or on cardboard box.

Please Note with the changes to the Law NO Semi Automatics allowed. (Other than .22R)

To use this facility, you MUST contact the roistered person in charge **no later** than the previous Sunday night.

1st October Doug Gordon 0276372206

8th October Andy Nesbit 021 538 676

22nd October Doug Gordon 0276372206

29th October Andy Nesbit 021 538 676

3rd November Doug Gordon 0276372206

12th November Andy Nesbit 021 538 676

Invercargill Rifle Club Cobb Road Rifle Range

As honorary members of the Invercargill Rifle Club, Southland Branch members now have the opportunity to use the Cobb Road Range for sighting in of rifles and also participating in programmed Invercargill Rifle club events.

You will need to bring

Firearms Licence and Deerstalkers membership card.

Ear and eye protection

Target capable of being stapled to the target frame

Rifle (bolt out) + ammo – Up to and including .308/7.62 calibre Bipod or other front support and rear support.

The range will be operated by a designated Rang Officer who will make themselves known at the range.

General format will be

Allocation of target frame

Validation of rifle being able to hit target at 100m Shooting

200m and beyond after validation

If you are interested in attending and for further details, please first contact

Andy Nesbit 0215 38676 Shaun McKelvie 027 635 0490

NRA/F Class shooters – make sure you arrange someone to pull targets and RO, you may be the only shooter at the range.

Important: Range Re-certified – Make sure you check the new Range Standing Orders.

All shooters must validate zero at 100M before shooting further back.

All shooting subject to the presence of a Range Officer. RO's may arrange shooting any day of the week outside the schedule below. RO's please note new range book format.

All shoots are open to casual or prospective club members – please come along and shoot - \$20 unless otherwise stated!. Shoots start at 1.00 PM unless otherwise noted.

Occasional Saturdays	Validation and Sight-in 1.00pm	Hunter style shooting, Range and targets at RO's discretion		
Sundays	Validation and Sight-in 1.00pm	As per below, otherwise PRS/Hunter Shooting, range and targets at RO's discretion		

Custom Guns Coaching – Greg will be offering individualised Training/Equipment tutorials, dates to be advised (will be scheduled between the shoots listed) Enquire with Greg.

Hunter Have-a-go Gongs – A series of shoots featuring differing styles of hunting rifles, you can bring something else, all welcome.

Long Gong Series – A simple hunting orientated gong series shot to the conditions of the day, bring your 22 and centrefire, we'll decide which is used depending on the weather. 22's will need about 50 MOA of dial for the 300Y version of this. All welcome

25 May 2025	Long Gong Challenge - Bring 50 rounds 22 ammo, 15 centrefire				
2 June 2025	Custom Guns King Charlie mil-serp shoot – snot some gongs with your service rifle (either original or sporterised)				
8 June 2025	Hunter Have-a-go Bush Pig shoot – bring any short barrelled rifle and we'll see how far back they'll go. 15-20 rounds				
22 June 2025	Long Gong Challenge - Bring 50 rounds 22 ammo, 15 centrefire				
6 July 2025	Hunter Have-a-go Lightweight rigs shoot – bring your lightest rifle and we'll explor getting the best out of them. 15-20 rounds				
20 July 2025	Long Gong Challenge - Bring 50 rounds 22 ammo, 15 centrefire				
3 Aug 2025	Hunter Have-a-go Small CF's shoot – 223's, Grendals, 7.62x39s, any of the little guys. 15-20 rounds				
17 Aug 2025	Long Gong Challenge - Bring 50 rounds 22 ammo, 15 centrefire				
7 Sept 2025	Man on Man 223 (other calibres allowed too) – If you can beat another shooter to get 6 shots on 3 targets then this is as much fun as you can have with your pants on. 20-50 rounds				
21 Sept 2025	Hunter Have-a-go Long Range rigs shoot – bring your long range rifle and we'll stretch it out to 600. 15-20 rounds				
	Check the Facebook page for changes/updates!!				

Long Range Coaching Clinics – Dates to be advised, contact Custom Guns

NZDA Members- You have affiliated membership to use the range (no range fees) But must have a range officer present contact Andy021538676

Wapiti Lodge, & Red Stag Lodge Mavora



Wapiti Lodge

Red Stag

Bookings to
Neville & Carol Miller
Phone 03 216 8654 Cell 02108219528 email nandc43@gmail.com
or 43 Bain St Invercargill

Please Note the Red Stag Lodge is on Doc land a hunting permit is required to have firearms at the site. Deposits for any bookings to be received within seven days or bookings will be cancelled.

Wapiti Lodge Xmas Ballot

Applications for this period must be in writing (Including e-mail) and inbetween 15th to 30th September to Neville & Carol Miller Members only, Period of hire 7 days

Starts 19th December runs to 23th January. Changeover is on Fridays.

Deposit to be paid by those successful in the ballot within a week of notification of success.

Southland Branch Polo Shirts



The following are in stock and available for purchase @ \$35 each Sizes Medium, large, Xtra Large, and XXL. Available at Branch Meeting or by emailing

enquiries@southlanddeerstalkers.org.nz

Subject line Polo Tee Shirts

Payment prior to delivery by online banking to the Branch Account 06-09250270758-000 with details of *your name Polo Shirt and Size*.

Freeze Dri



Purchase Back Country Cuisine freeze-dri meals direct at special prices, email Tony on info@bcfoods.co.nz to order or find out more information.

ANIMAL SKIN TANNING SERVICES -Tannery & ShowroomDan Dawson - 027 281 3026 118 Crinan Street Invercargill 100% NEW ZEALAND PRODUCTS

Now offering 10% Discount on all contract tanning services to members of NZDA

