

THE SOUTHERN HUNTER
Southland Branch NZDA Newsletter
October 21



Island Hill (centre right) Masons Bay Stewart Island
Branch email is: enquiries@southlanddeerstalkers.org.nz
News Letter douglasgordon@xtra.co.nz
Branch website <http://www.southlanddeerstalkers.org.nz/>

Monthly Meeting

Monthly meeting 7.30pm Wednesday 20th October at the Branch Club Rooms Longbush Hall McKerchar Road off State Highway 1 between Kennington & Woodlands

GUEST SPEAKER

Tony Caudwell from Back Country Foods on how they make Back Country Cuisine

There is to be a spot prize of some back Country Cuisine for some lucky member who is there on the night.

FACEBOOK:

HAS MOVED WITH THE TIMES AND NOW HAS ITS VERY OWN FACEBOOK PAGE FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO ARE ON FACEBOOK, CHECK IT OUT, YOU WILL FIND HELPFUL INFO ON THERE AND IT WILL HOPEFULLY ENCOURAGE NEW MEMBERSHIP AND CLUB INTERACTION. WE ENCOURAGE ALL MEMBERS TO CONTRIBUTE TO IT

NEW MEMBERS

New Members please welcome them

Bradley Diack, Keiran Stevens, James Fleming, Stefan Beeching,
Joseph Heperi-Mills, Brendon Ferguson, Samuel Winsloe, Simon Oke,

Club Hunts

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

Working Bee Wapiti Lodge

There is to be a Working Bee at the Wapiti Lodge Weekend 5th to 7th November
To give the place a good tidy, trade skills appreciated
For more info phone S McKelvie 027 635 0490

Office Bearers

Club Office Bearers

President: S McKelvie 027 635 0490 **Vice President:** T Caldwell

Secretary A Nesbit **: Treasurer** T Mead

Magazine Editor: D. Gordon 216 6383 **Immediate past President**

Membership A Nesbit **Huts** N Miller

Executive: W Ashmore, N Dawson, E Garrick, D Howden, J. McCallum,

L Payne, R. Phillips.

Sub Committees

Hall Luke Payne

Young Hunts Nathan Dawson – (Need to confirm this)

AGM Shaun McKelvie & Andy Nesbit

Trophies Tony Caudwell & Luke Payne

Pistol Range Doug Gordon

Rifle Range Andy Nesbit

DOC Liaison Ray Phillips & Shaun McKelvie

Library Shaun McKelvie & Tom Mead

Club Hunts Shaun McKelvie & Tom Mead

Guest Speaker Shaun McKelvie & Andy Nesbit

Photo Competition Doug Gordon

Social Media Erin Garrick, Tony Caudwell & Shaun McKelvie

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.



Presidents Report October



October 2021

Spring is well under way now most of the stags will have dropped their antlers now is a prime time to get out and fill the freezer with the fresh growth starting to entice the deer out of winter mode and become more active.

We're getting back into hosting our normal meeting this month things will be slightly different with covid but I think we're all getting used to masks and signing in everywhere now, Tony From Back Country Cuisine will be our guest speaker this month he's going to talk us through how some of the products are made and also he has organised some spot prizes for the night .It'll be great to see everyone there and catch up again.

There is quite a bit going on behind the scenes and we have a few working bee's lined up in the future and will advertise them as we have dates organised . The club has some awesome assets that we aim to look after as best we can so they are there for future generations so if you're able to come along and help it would be greatly appreciated. Were unable to organise any Hunts out of our area just yet but will do our best to get some hunts going as covid levels allow.

Hopefully you've all had a chance to download the new NZDA app it's a great idea and shows the membership and has a direct link to the H&W Magazine.

As Always Safe Hunting and Hot Barrels.

Cheers Shaun



Editorial

The first thing all hunters should do in these changing times is get vaccinated against Covid 19. Who wants to head into the hills with the non-vaccinated? We all need to do our bit to control this pest. As for what hunting we can do, things are likely to be a bit uncertain in at least the short term. At least it is all go while we are on level two so get out there while one can.

With the Government busy there is no over much around in need of submissions at present. But we need to keep awake or someone will try to get something undesirable to hunters through. About a month ago Real Journeys withdrew their application to use little glory Cove in Stewart Island as a long term mooring point for their tourist boats. How much this decision was influenced by the number of opposing submissions we may never know. I would like to believe they were a big factor. So yes when submissions are called for regarding something of concern. Take the time each and every one and submit. Thinking they won't take notice so why bother will definitely get you whatever they propose. One has nothing to lose by making submissions but some time. If it's not worth submitting don't complain later.

There was finally some good news this week via National Office, in that the Police are finally going to extend Firearms Licences, affected by delays in relicensing. With those affected notified by the Police. Funny nothing on the News about this.

This year for the first time in memory there is no takers for the Christmas Ballot for the Wapiti lodge. More covid side effect? So don't be shy if you would like a week up there over the summer it could well be still available.

Doug Gordon

Sponsors

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



SOUTHERN ADVENTURE

THE IN STORE FOR THE OUTDOORS



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The following are in stock and available for purchase @ \$35 each

5 x Medium

5 x Large

5 x Xtra Large to arrange payment

5 x 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
06-0925-0270758-000 with details of *your name Polo Shirt and Size*.
(If unable to do online banking contact Tom 0278471882)
First in best dressed

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.

SOUTHLAND DEERSTALKERS PRESENTS

SPRING BOOT CAMP

**A 6 Week Program designed at
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**Sessions held every Tuesday and
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Carpark area off

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No equipment needed

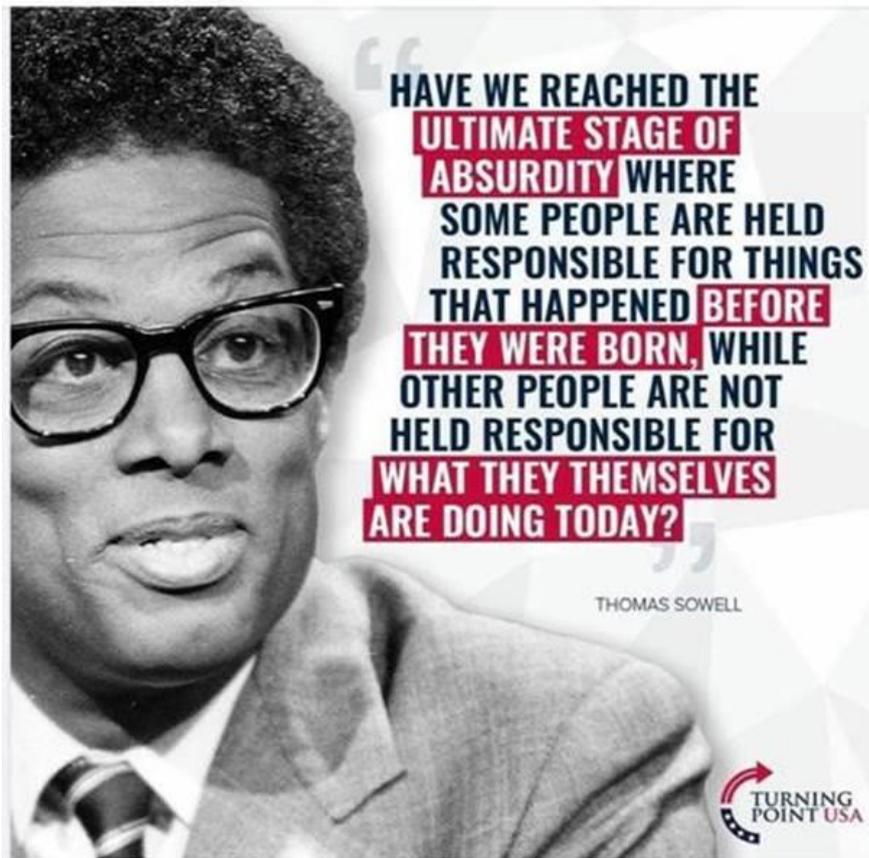
For more info contact

Andy 021 917 808

Tom-0278471882

Shaun-0276350490

JOKES FOR THE MONTH



Since it is Fishing Season

One morning a husband returns to the cabin after several hours of fishing and decides to take a nap.

Although not familiar with the lake, the wife decides to take the boat out, since it is such a beautiful day. She motors out a short distance, anchors, and reads her book.

Along comes a Game Warden in his boat. He pulls up alongside the woman and says, "Good morning, Ma'am, what are you doing?"

"Reading a book," she replies, (thinking, "Isn't that obvious?")

"You're in a Restricted Fishing Area," he informs her.

"I'm sorry, officer, but I'm not fishing, I'm reading."

"Yes, but you have all the equipment. I'll have to write you up a ticket."

"For reading a book"? she replies.

"You're in a Restricted Fishing Area," he informs her again.

"But officer, I'm not fishing, I'm reading."

"Yes, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment. I'll have to write you up a ticket and you'll have to pay a fine."

"If you do that, I'll have to charge you with sexual assault," says the woman.

"But I haven't even touched you," says the Game Warden.

"That's true, but you have all the equipment. For all I know you could start at any moment."

"Have a nice day ma'am," and he immediately departed.

MORAL: Never argue with a woman who reads. It's likely she can also think.

Sure God created man before woman. But then you always make a rough draft before the final masterpiece!!.....

WORSLEY WAPITI HUNT 1972

A couple of weeks after I finished my Dusky Sound "Moose Hunt" I was again on the road to Te Anau. This time the Series 11A Land Rover was weighed down with myself, Brian Williams, Vern Thompson and the gear that we would require for 3 weeks hunting in the Worsley river catchment. The fourth member of our party "Aussie" Greg was to meet us in Te Anau.

It's a damn long way from Christchurch in a Land Rover, especially when you are loaded down and towing a 5 metre boat, also full of gear. So by the time we finally rolled into the Te Anau Township, we were more than ready to stretch our legs at the bar of the Te Anau hotel.

After dropping off the boat at my cousin Brian Kelly's house (actually the single man's quarters of the Fiordland National Park service) and a meal we all attended the pre hunt briefing given by the people, who, at that time controlled the hunting and general affairs relating to the New Zealand Wapiti herd. Each year they ran a ballot to allot the hunting blocks to those who wished to hunt what was then New Zealand's premier trophy.

Preference was given to hunters who had previously participated in the culling of Red Deer. These 10 day foot hunts took place in the spring, (Labour weekend) and then again during the Christmas / New Year period. They were supplemented by aerial helicopter shooting of red deer type animals with the meat being recovered

The actual "Bugle" hunting period was due to open the next day. With most of the hunting parties departing for their allocated blocks first thing in the morning there was a great excitement at the gathering.

I had been lucky in that I had been granted access to the Worsley block and after some correspondence with the other two parties, who were also sharing our block, had arranged that we would hunt in the upper portion, basing out of the "Bog Clearing".

I was particularly keen to get into the Worsley as it offered several advantages as far as I could see – access was available directly from Lake Te Anau, so there was no need for expensive air charters. Also the presence of a very good 6 man Parks Board hut on the beach at the river mouth provided a great first base – no need of large tents and cooking gear, plus it was a warm, dry place to retreat to and store our additional gear. The main driver however, was the sighting of a magnificent 16 point Red, at a NZDA conference, it had been taken in the Worsley the previous year. It was, in my opinion a trophy of a lifetime and to secure something similar was our aim.

Our first full day in Te Anau was taken up arranging for our air drops of food and supplies onto the "Bog Clearings", (airdrops were still allowed providing they were not packed in straw or similar material, as this had introduced non-native weeds at some sites). We had

packed food, that we thought would provide for 10 plus days, into 4 large clip top cans and hoped that because they were tightly packed any damage would be minimal, (no eggs)! As it turned out, although the outsides had some dents, the contents were undamaged, it might have had something to do with the bog that gives the clearings their name!

Having our own transport to the Worsley meant that we were independent and in no great rush to be off – it also allowed the other two parties, who were travelling on the old Tawerea to get established and travel to their respective sections of the watershed before us.

We departed the Te Anau Downs harbour slipway the next morning in perfect weather, no wind and bright sunshine, in two boats, mine and Brian's smaller runabout, which we aimed to keep with us during our hunt. Once we were all installed and Brian had departed for home, our minds turned towards the actual hunt. The plan was to have a good dinner, then breakfast the following morning before making an early start on the trek to the headwaters of the Worsley and our destination for the next several days, "Bog Clearing".

Of course the weather the next morning was typically Fiordland – misty rain and cool, actually not bad for hiking under heavy packs. Because we didn't know how long the journey would take we carried our fly tents, some food and cooking gear, enough to carry us through a couple of days. This stuff plus spare clothes, "Fairy Down" sleeping bags and cameras etc. made for good heavy loads.

The actual trek was long but not too bad, some old game trails lead away from the lake front and headed upstream through the lakeside bush with only a few windfalls to negotiate. Then travel was mainly alongside the river itself with a number of open flats providing good going.

A stop at the confluence of the Castle river was necessary, firstly to look at the huge trout that circulated in the pool at the confluence of the two rivers and secondly to think about the two magnificent heads, that were secured by Don Malcolm and H. Keen during their 1950 hunt in the Castle. Would we see or get something similar? (These trophies are recorded in "Wapiti in New Zealand" as measuring 54 x 49 inches and 53 x 40. Malcolm's in particular is magnificent, with huge "Royal" tynes. It graced the entrance to the Christchurch airport for many years.)



Confluence of the Worsley and Castle rivers looking down stream.

Next stop was the confluence of Terminus creek, there is a nice open area and flat there, with a good patch of "Green" across from the mouth running up the side of the valley.

"Greens" are areas of deciduous trees such as fuchsia, which provide good food for deer and wapiti, but more of this particular "Green" later. Generally the river valleys in Fiordland are "U" glacial trenches with steep and often unclimbable sides, but these "green" areas generally grow on slip areas which have a more moderate gradient. Hence not only are they favourable feeding areas, they provide places which can be traversed with some ease.



Looking up the Worsley from the mouth of Terminus Creek.

On past Terminus and Prospect creek, coming in from our right and then crossing to our left up over the Worsley falls, to enter the upper portion of the watershed and the Bog Clearing.

The clearing has been the site of numerous camps and the remnants could be seen scattered about. We finally found the FRES campsite left after the previous year's survey of the valley and the animals. This was tucked away in some bush off to the side of the open area and had the advantage of being relatively high and dry, with a good framework for a plastic sheet and a corrugated iron fireplace. Luxury!

With the plastic fly arranged and plenty of fern put in the back, we had a nice dry and dark place to rest and sleep – being almost black at the back had the advantage of discouraging the ever present sand flies, a big plus in Fiordland.



The Bog Clearing camp site –note the corrugated iron chimney.

Once our camp was established and the air drops collected, the plan for the next few days were hatched. Brian and I were to head into the branch of the Worsley, which saddles with tributaries of both the Dark River and the Bernard Burn above Lake Bernard. While Vern and our Aussie mate were set on continuing directly up stream onto the Worsley Pass and the Rock Bivi there. The Bivi would afford them good shelter while hunting the top of the valley.

I think that all of us also had thoughts of taking a closer look at a large cream animal, which we could see high up on the steep open tops between the two Worsley tributaries.

Brian and I setup a fly camp in the last high bush towards the top basin and then progressed into the open grass and scrub of the headwaters, glassing revealed NO animals. (With the exception of the Wapiti, which we had seen the day before, no animals were seen above the bush line during the hunt).

We assumed that helicopter shooting had effectively removed most and sent the survivors into the bush. Undeterred however, the next morning saw us climbing through the basin and out onto the saddle above Lake Bernard. With the Bernard Burn and Wild Natives river country to our left and the headwaters of the Dark River to the right, we were in the heart of a fabled hunting area.



Map of the upper Worsley showing Lake Bernard and the upper basin.

We headed to our left in the general direction of the previously observed Wapiti. Glassing revealed NO animals, either on our ridge, or on the slopes above Lake Bernard, disconcerting for us, as being confirmed “tops” hunters from Canterbury we were used to finding some game on the open snow grass, even with pressure from helicopter hunting. This area had obviously had a lot of attention during the summer.

The plan to travel out along the ridge towards the Worsley Pass came unravelled within a few hundred yards, when heavy fog and light rain descended on us. Rather than getting caught further in unknown territory, we literally felt our way back into the basin and returned to our fly camp, there to spend the afternoon and next day in the nylon tent, with a typical Fiordland downpour in progress.

Thirty plus restful hours of soup, heated on our little Primus stove, (water no problem just hold the billy out in the rain), and sleep in a two man tent became too much to bear, so on with wet clothes, back packs filled and off we retreated to our Bog Clearing camp.

Vern and our Aussie mate turned up at our Bog Clearing base not long after we arrived there – they too had enough of the continual rain and fog. Vern had managed to secure a small, but attractive, 12 point head. They too agreed, that there was a definite lack of animals above the bush line.

The general decision was that we should spend some days hunting the bush in the vicinity of the Bog Clearing, as any attempt to find animals in open country above the bush line seemed a waste of time. It was during this time I got lucky.

Having wandered back down the track one afternoon I heard a roar close by and just up slope from the track. Making a swift approach through the bush, I put up several wapiti cows and then spied a stag with several Red hinds making off uphill.

A single round from my 7x57, a classic old calibre, much favoured by Canterbury hunters of the time and made famous as a calibre, being used to take many elephant, by Bell the famous Ivory hunter, was sufficient for me to secure the best New Zealand trophy I have been fortunate to take.

In my opinion he was a pure Red Stag and displayed the same characteristics as the one I had seen at the NZDA conference. No, he did not measure the fabled 40 plus inches in either length or spread, but he did have 12 very long and symmetrical tynes. I thought he was wonderful – a true wild and free trophy stag. Sometime later Howard Egan, a certified “Douglas System” scorer measured him at just 300 and $\frac{3}{4}$ points. The antlers still sit in a place of pride in my small den, along with a few other bits and pieces I have managed to collect. I consider them still, as the epitome of my New Zealand trophies.



My Worsley Stag where he fell.

Of course trophies taken from the Fiordland “Wapiti” area are often subject to some debate as to their breeding. The early trophies were without doubt, pure Wapiti or Elk as Red deer had not infiltrated into the area and most displayed all the typical character associated with North American Elk – huge mass, great length and spread, plus “throwback” tynes extending almost to their rump.

Later trophies were sometimes considered “Hybrid” or some sort of Wapiti / Red mixture, even though there was a school of thought that interbreeding in the wild was unlikely. That the two can interbreed has, of course, now been shown to occur on commercial deer farms and forms the basis for a lot of the deer bred for meat production.

Having secured my trophy stag it was now time to consider plans that would give the other two in the party a chance to take their own trophies. To this end we decided that a few days should be spent hunting Prospect creek, so packs again loaded with food and tents we descended the Worsley Falls and then climbed into the hanging valley of Prospect creek.

This is a typical Fiordland valley, with extremely steep sides, parts of them looked impassable, but with an almost flat floor and some slopes covered in good deer habitat, it is an excellent area to hunt. It leads, past the 3 lakes, to “Hunter Pass” giving access to the headwaters of the Dark River, for those really hardy souls, who would use it as an access route.



Lake Brownlee in Prospect Creek, Hunter Pass is beyond the cliff to the left.



The upper reaches of Prospect with Hunter Pass round the corner to the left. Note the good deer habitat on the slope in the creek bend.



Eaten out understory on the traversable slopes of Prospect.

Over a period of days we hunted most of Prospect creek, seeing one large but rough Red Stag and several wapiti cows that looked like they were pure wapiti – large, cream coloured beasts, with white rumps and dark legs. Obviously some “pure” wapiti blood still existed in places.

No wapiti bulls were sighted, although one was heard bugling on the slopes above the outfall of Lake Brownlee. He gave us the slip and was last heard bugling his defiance as he departed out to the main Worsley catchment.

While I have never heard of a trophy of consequence being taken from this particular creek, it will always remain in my mind as a place that I would have loved to hunt during the golden period that produced the top heads of the past.

With Prospect explored it was time to return to the Bog Clearing and pack up our camp before the trek back to the shore of Lake Te Anau.

The journey downstream progressed well, by this time we were all fit and could travel quickly, until during our first stop at the mouth of Terminus Creek a series of bugles emitted from the slope opposite. The bull was obviously in the “Green” mentioned earlier.

Packs were shed, with the plan that Brian would attempt to stalk and take this animal if he was of trophy size. Brian is not a tall guy and as the Worsley is quite large at that point I accompanied him through the river. Big Mistake 1!

Climbing up through the open bush we put up several females which appeared to be mainly red deer in nature, but another bugle from above made us continue to quickly move up hill.

There he was, with several large cream coloured cows, a bull, big cream body with a dark mane and antlers. Oh, what antlers, the tops and throwback tines way up in the branches above his head, and he was walking towards us in the open bush.

This was going to be too easy! Brian had his .270 raised and was leaning on a tree, but not shooting! Had he not seen the length of antler that I had? I then made mistake 2. "Shoot the damn thing" said I, Brian panicked and shot. The bull wheeled away up hill and I shot as well, just a "finisher" as he slid sideways.

Except there was to be no excellent finish – when we got to where the bull should have been lying, no bull, no blood, just a skid mark in the moss on a tree root where he wheeled about. Gutted!

Then defiant bugles as he ascended the slopes above us.

Two very dejected and chastened hunters recrossed the river, picked up packs and continued downstream to the lake.

We had been over eager, over excited and stupidly over confident, hard lessons learnt, but ones which would prove helpful later when I started guiding hunters as a fulltime job.

The good news was that some years later I was talking to one of my guide friends, who worked on helicopter recovery in Fiordland, just after this time. (The NZDA, had lost control of the herd's management within a couple of years of my hunt and uncontrolled shooting was occurring.)

In the process of chatting I described the gigantic foul up at Terminus. Don looked at me and asked if I was talking about the large "Green" opposite the creek mouth. Yes that's the place. He then told me of being dropped off from a helicopter to hunt that particular area because a large 14 point bull had been seen there. He was not successful.

Our party then spent several anticlimactic days on the lake, "Aussie" Greg spent two days up round the Castle confluence and took a nice 12 Point stag. Brian was so dejected that he could not be convinced to have another crack at a trophy, so he and I spent our remaining time catching trout for breakfast in the lake.

Brian Kelly turned up with my boat, we loaded our gear, the three heads, a lot of memories, some "what might have beens" and headed for the Te Anau Downs harbour to return to civilization.

Three memorable weeks in an awesome part of the world completed.

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 .308/762 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

Dates: The range is not for casual use but is available for use on the following dates:

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

Andy Nesbit 021 917 808

Shaun McKelvie 027 635 0490

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

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.

13th October Andy Nesibit 021 917 808

27th October Nathan Dawson 027 235 8063

3RD November Tom Mead 027 847 1882

10th November Doug Gordon 03 216 6383/ 027 637 2206



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Bookings to Neville & Carol Miller Phone (03)216 8654
cell 021 08219528 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 still available over summer due to no takers for Christmas ballot

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