



Southland

**NZDA**

New Zealand Deerstalkers Association

**The**  
**Southern Hunter**

February 2026



## Club Night

**18th February 7.30pm Club Hall [24 McKerchar Rd, Longbush](#)**

## President's Report

Hi all welcome to the new year . We had the privilege of helping out the Spirit Army recently the Deer to Care guys had to much venison to process and we we're asked if we could process a couple of deer to be shared out between the family's the Spirit army help out. Thanks to the guys that helped .

We have the kids hunting weekend coming up. With limited spaces available if your keen be in quick it will come around fast.

Were also in the process of setting a trapping program around the red stag lodge in Mavora if your keen to assit please get in touch with Myself Gareth or Wayne.

Catch you at the meeting

Cheers Shaun



## Editorial

Back into it for the New Year and I hope everyone had a great break.

The summer months have been rather productive hunting and fishing wise which is great.

The forestry blocks have been successful for many so this is great for both the members utilising these and also the forestry companies.

Hopefully many of you have managed to obtain Balloted Roar blocks or are in the process of Planning and preparing for a trip into the hills as it's not too far away now.

On the legislative front, reform to New Zealand's firearms laws is underway. A proposed Arms Bill has been introduced which aims to simplify aspects of the law, create an independent firearms regulator separate from the police, and close regulatory gaps while enhancing public safety. Hunters should pay attention to this as it may impact licensing processes and firearm governance moving forward, Doug expands on this further.

COLFO have released a consultation guide which I have attached a link to below, I urge you to have a look and make a submission, This is your chance to have a say in the way firearms laws are written.



[Click here for COLFOs consultation guide](#)

## On the snowline

With Doug Gordon

Already the days are starting to get shorter, the Roar will be under two months away. The year is moving and so is our government. As you will all know, submissions on the Bill for a New Arms Act led by the Hon Nicole McKee are only days away from closing.

We need a new Act, the old is an amended mess. We need to be all making a submission supporting the Bill. But don't expect to see a reversal of all that occurred post the Christchurch Mosque shooting. At some time in the future there will be a change of government. We don't want or need an Act that is a target for any new government to change. Thus, we must ask for but don't expect to get everything we request. The New Act must not become a political football.

As expected, the anti-firearms lobby are having their say, from what I am told They have produced about 40 pages

Lowlights include:

Banning all bolt-action centrefire rifles with a detachable magazine.

- Banning any centre-fire rifle with a built-in magazine that holds more than 5 cartridges
- Banning any shotgun that has a non-detachable magazine that holds more than 5 cartridges
- Limiting the number of firearms that can be owned by a licence holder.
- Increasing the age for obtaining a licence from 16 to 18
- Banning children from using firearms under close supervision
- Banning pistol carbine conversion kits
- Banning large-capacity pistol magazines with no exceptions

Not great if implemented and think of the cost if bullet point one was implemented with buyback!! (Or worse without.) Also, the cost to our balance of trade from importing all those replacement firearms.

I enjoyed some good times with my daughters hunting and target shooting when they were teenagers. Both shot for Southland at Smallbore and the youngest was a full NZ Women's Rep by 18 years something no longer possible if this was implemented.

How many in New Zealand 18 years or younger have been involved the mass shootings that have occurred?

Then we have the actions on gun control in Australia post the Bondi Shootings.

What the results will be I have not seen. Though one of the things I heard was proposed is the banning of bandoleers (Shotgun ammo belts). Most likely because the gunmen used them! Well, I have at times used them but found them slow to reload a shotgun compared to a couple of deep pockets in the front of my vest or jacket, or a small bag slung over my left shoulder. They should if they want to slow down one's ability to reload ban all bags slung over one shoulder (Including women's handbags) and limit it the size of clothing pockets. Try enforcing that on the population! But what do you expect when their Prime Minister thinks a high-powered rifle and any firearm are exactly the same thing, passing shotguns off as high-powered rifles. (We all know I hope that a high-powered rifle is a type of firearm but is not a shotgun?)

The deadline for submissions on the new Arms Act is 11.59 pm on Monday, 16 February 2026. You still should have time on reading this to make a submission. We all have received plenty of information on how from both NZDA and COLFO. One does not have to submit on all issues highlighted. Even if you say as a licenced firearms owner you support the Bills moves to make firearms law more sensible and usable for shooters, and support NZDA's & COLFO's submissions on the Bill.

"Too busy to do so, or it will not count", does not cut the mustard Think of all the spare time you would then have if there was no firearms and hunting.

We are in an election year we need to be active in numbers for the causes that are important to recreational hunting. That means standing up and being counted. We need to show we are more than just the numbers that rely on National Office to talk for us. You only have to look to Australia to see how pear-shaped firearms law can go overnight if we don't put and keep our presence out there.

Take care stay safe out there.

## Book Review

### THE HOLLOWES BOYS

By Peta Carey.

Published Pottan & Burton

Like a lot of other hunting books, I have received this book turned up over Christmas. But unlike most hunting books I acquire it did not come via the local bookstore. Though it was collected from Paper Plus. It was ordered online and delivered there (free). There being no copies of the book on the shelves in Invercargill.

It is the story of the three Hollows Boys Garry, Mark & Kim who ended up in Te Anau hunting and flying helicopters during the heyday of the venison industry from 1970 to the turn of the century. While three brothers hunting out of Te Anau may sound different. It isn't actually. It could have been said to be common There were the

Deaker's, The Kane's and the Thompson brothers all together in the area from time to time. Then there was the four Browns who worked for Alpine, though only two were brothers, the other two no relation.

As I read the book various memories from the past came back to me. Mixed in with the new knowledge of events that occurred that I had known little about. The book is a typical one of the type. Talking of the adventures misadventures and disasters that occurred in those eventful times. When there was big money to be had chasing wild deer. To me it is a trip down memory lane, to most it is hopefully a interesting history, for those keen on hunting and it's New Zealand history. It is not a been there shot that type of hunting book, or a guide on wh ere to hunt.

Unfortunately, by the time I finished the book I was left with a sense of sadness, as I remembered all those, I knew who had died helicopter hunting. Then there was the others who survived the industry but are no longer with us. It is now some time since most of what was written about occurred, we are not getting younger!

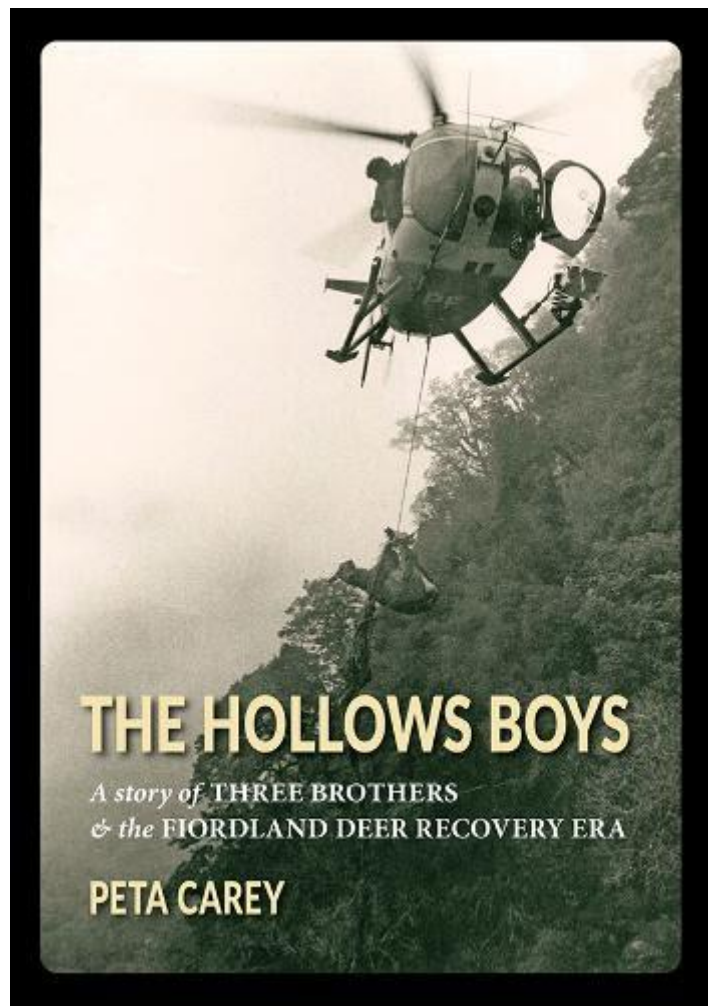
It is good that books like this one are put together and the story of those times, those who took part are told. There are a lot more stories who haven't been written down, and will become folk law, as memories fade and we lose who took part, and their pictures are lost. Yes, it was worth the purchase and the read as far as I am concerned. It is a good example of this sort of book a valuable contribution to the history of those times. I hear copies are being passed around and read in some Te Anau offices. (I also hear Paper Plus Te Anau has had copies on its shelves)

I hope our NZDA National Museum in Wellington remembers to purchase a copy to add to its collection.

I am glad to see Kim's short film Ata Whenua (Shadowland) has endured and is still being shown at his Te Anau Picture Theatre. It is something worth seeing for those who love Fiordland. As for those who don't yet it may change you.

Kim thanks for getting you and your brothers story written down and told.

Doug Gordon



Eyre Mountains poison Notice



Ray Phillips, a founding trustee and secretary/treasurer of Rakiura Hunter Camp Trust, chatting with Minister for Hunting and Fishing, Hon James Meager at Hapatuna hunter hut.

The Minister will now have a better understanding of what volunteers can achieve on conservation land.

RHCT maintains 18 huts on Rakiura, all at no cost to the taxpayer.

## Club Contacts

[enquiries@southlanddeerstalkers.org.nz](mailto:enquiries@southlanddeerstalkers.org.nz)

[Southland Branch Website](#)

Office Bearers

President: Shaun McKelvie 027 635 0490

Vice President: Luke Payne 027 828 2619

Secretary: Andy Nesbit 021 53 8676

Treasurer: Scott Hall 027 859 3533

Membership: Paul Fitzek / Jason Leishman

Newsletter Editor: Luke Payne [ssj4\\_luke@hotmail.com](mailto:ssj4_luke@hotmail.com)

## Pistol Club sighting in

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

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

11<sup>th</sup> February Andy Nesbit 021 538 676

25<sup>th</sup> February Wayne Ashmore 027 810 1814

4<sup>th</sup> March Doug Gordon 0276372206

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sighting in of rifles and also participating in programmed Invercargill Rifle club events.

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- 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 021 538 676

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.**

[Click here for full Summer Calendar](#)

## Wapiti and Red Stag Lodges

Bookings to

Andy Nesbit

Ph: 021 538 676

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.**

## Sponsors

We're proud to be supported by a number of generous sponsors who help make our club activities and events possible. Their backing plays a vital role in keeping our community strong and ensuring members can enjoy the outdoors.

Please support them where you can!



**SOUTHERN  
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THE IN STORE FOR THE OUTDOORS



**The**  
**Southern Hunter**

DECEMBER 2025



## **Club Night**

**No club night December.**

## **President's Report**



up to all the best I hope Santa  
treats you well stay safe and we'll  
catch you in the New year.

Cheers Shaun Mckelvie

Southland NZDA President

## Editorial

The past month has brought a few important shifts for hunters across NZ. The big news is the release of the first Herds of Special Interest (HOSI) management plans for public consultation. These proposals cover Fiordland wapiti and the central North Island sika herds, and mark a move toward a more balanced, partnership-based approach to managing game animals. Hunters were encouraged to read the draft plans and have their

say before consultation closed on 8 December, Thank you Doug Gordon for writing a submission on behalf of the branch.

Changes are coming to Blue Mountains ballots. While the November ballot used the old system, DOC will introduce a new online booking and permit process for 2026. Keep an eye out for updates so you don't miss access windows.

Across the South Island, reports of rising deer impacts on native bush and farmland highlight why responsible hunting remains essential. Hunters continue to serve an important conservation role, especially where animal numbers are high.

Finally, a recent coroners report of a fatal accident is a sobering reminder that safety must always come first. Steep terrain and dense bush etc can turn a slip into tragedy — please stay vigilant, prepared, and cautious.

Wishing everyone a safe and happy Christmas and New Year period!



**On the snowline**

With Doug Gordon

By the time you read this the submissions on the Herds of Special Interest will have about closed (Midnight 8<sup>th</sup> Dec). How many of you took the time to submit that you supported these moves? How many deleted the messages on this, and kept on going doing? How many assumed as it is a government proposal it will happen.

How many of you took the time to read the following message from National Office on Thursday night? This should have awoken you, did it. We need to constantly push our case.

### **Advocacy Alert:**

#### MPI's New Deer & Pig Programme Announced

(For those who have not read this message from National office check your e-mails)

The Ministry of Primary industries has launched a programme to control deer on farm and forestry land (and perhaps Doc land as they are involved).

What is alarming is that from what I have been told the Minister of Hunting & Fishing was not consulted, nor it appears the Game Animal Council. Of course, NZDA was not involved. But others appear to have been missed no mention of Iwi and Hapu being involved. (A lot of Māori hunt and own land containing game). Was the Minister of the New Zealand Food Safety Authority informed, Were the Feral Game processing industry consulted. Forrest and Bird were, why? There is talk of the use of the poison Brodifacoum, for which the caution period is 3 years! This stuff is dangerous one only has to look at the problems it caused in Malbrough when used there on possums at the turn of the century. Have we got adequate controls over such poisons if used in large amounts on and near farmland. I can find no mention of buffer zones around poison areas for stock, only for feral game.

The near last thing New Zealand needs is poison residue turning up in Milk or Meat products. (The Last thing is passing is Foot & Mouth believe me).

I have received a couple of Hyperlinks on this situation over the last week as well.

[Newsroom Article 1](#)

and

[Newsroom Article 2](#)

This problem has been around and building for some time. Access to farmland for hunting and also through to Doc land beyond. Has been difficult to get. Farmers don't want people they don't know on their land or are saving the hunting for themselves. Doc must accept a lot of blame for not negotiating solid access to the land that they have acquired, for recreational hunters to use.

Of course, poor reporting (by the media) like not asking what NZDA think, do not help the situation.

The commercial venison industry is currently expanding again and will help if markets remain good. They are trying to contract landowners as clients in at least one place. Most likely paying the farmer for something that is crown property until legally shot.

I Believe NZDA and recreational hunters can have a role to play in some areas if given a chance and behave themselves when they get that chance. No cowboy acts. Some areas we should be able to help with others, like QEII covenant lands and small size blocks there are safety issues to consider. But we currently are not being considered it seems.

This is all but another chapter in the battle for the control of our game animals, what twists and turns will the New Year bring. Remember we are due a General Election next year. Have a merry Christmas be safe out there.

Post Script.

The above was written on the morning of Friday the 4<sup>th</sup> Dec. update below.

There was a second Advocacy update pm Friday from NZDA National office (headline below) which you should have received see the headline below.

Advocacy Update: Minister Meager Responds to MPI's New Deer & Pig Programme

Which is more helpful NZDA along with the Game Council now in on the discussion. I will leave you to read the details. Good work Gwyn & NZDA and Minister the Hon James Meager in getting recreational hunters' seats at the table. Still expect some more twists and turns come New Year. Some will not be happy we are at the table. This can be a good Xmas present for NZDA Members but there is a lot more work to do to make it so.

## Message from Senior Constable Peter Graham

You may have seen in the media that the Southland Police have teamed up with DOC and farm owners around the Mid Dome Conservation area in an initiative to educate hunters around hunting access to the Dome.

In the last ROAR local farmers were inundated with hunters crossing their private land without permission. Police were contacted and dealt with a number of hunters. One farmer had in excess of 18 people captured on game cameras over a two week period. Some of those captured were identified and spoken to and warned by Police. This unlawful entry creates a

very real risk for farmers, employees, contractors and legal hunters who have permission and should have blocks to themselves.

Those spoken to did have the correct permits to be hunting on Mid Dome Conservation area but had not read permit conditions re-entry points and also had not read that entry onto private land surround the Dome needs farmer permission beforehand. Obviously entry onto private land for hunting without the owner's consent is an offence under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977. The project will not limit any access into the conservation area and will hopefully increase access as we work with DOC on removing some restrictions.

The initial phase of this project is education, we would rather educate responsible hunters so they don't make mistakes or inadvertently get themselves in trouble. The second phase beginning in March 2026 will be more about enforcement as we target the unlawful hunters who give responsible hunters like you and me a bad name.

One thing Police will be targeting through the summer and into the ROAR is spotlighting from public roads. This is unlawful and the Act gives us some very strong powers to stop, search and seize property from those located unlawfully hunting. This includes seizing vehicles, firearms, tracking gear and normally results in a license warning or revocation review.

As part of the initiative Dept of Conservation have updated their permits with current farm owners contact details and will be upgrading signage at entry points to the Dome. In addition DOC are considering allowing limited access to areas not under wilding pine control when previously the whole conservation area would have closed.

The key message to hunters is ensure they read and understand and follow the conditions of your permit.

Don't just assume you know where your access is.... check your GPS or mapping Apps. Do your homework and if unsure contact the farm owner for information and permission.

Thanks and safe hunting

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Neville & Carol Miller

Phone 03 216 8654 Cell 02108219528 e-mail [nandc43@gmail.com](mailto:nandc43@gmail.com)

or [43 Bain St Invercargill](#)

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