

HISTORY  
OF  
The Southland  
Acclimatisation Society

---

NEW ZEALAND

Founded 14th March, 1867.

Registered 9th January, 1886.

---

Secretary: D. CUTHBERTSON, INVERCARGILL.

## Red Deer in Southland.

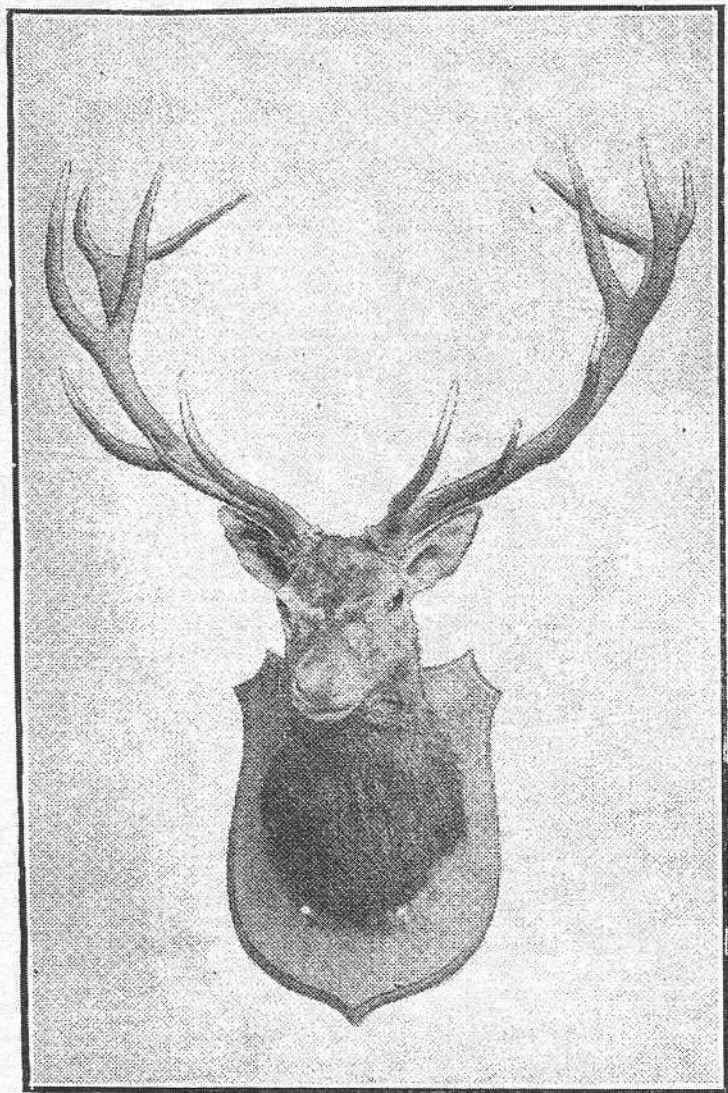
RED DEER were first liberated by the Society in 1900. These comprised two stags and five hinds, which were liberated on Davis' Flat, at the head of the Lillburn Valley. These came from Nelson and are descended from Lord Petre's Essex herd of Park bred deer. In February, 1905, a second lot, consisting of seven stags and ten hinds, were liberated at Manapouri and one stag and five hinds at the Hump. These were the gift of Sir Rupert Clark, of Victoria, and are descended from Park stock. About 1900 one stag was secured from Lake Hawea and liberated at Birchwood and one stag and two hinds from Nelson at the same place.

In 1909 three deer secured from Warnham Court, England, were liberated at Dusky Sound. In April, 1901, six hinds from the Wairarapa herd were liberated on the banks of the Freshwater River, at the head of Paterson's Inlet, Stewart Island. These deer are descended from the Windsor Park herd in England. In 1902 twelve more, secured from Miss Audrey Chirnside, Wirribee Park, Victoria, were liberated in the same locality.

Mr. Harold Hodgkinson, of Hawea, the well-known deer-stalker and guide, was commissioned by the Society in 1912 to report on the Lillburn and Hump herds. He favoured the opening of shooting and was of the opinion that there were sufficient deer to warrant the issue of eight licenses, limited to two heads each. The quality of the stags seen by him was of good type, whilst the hinds were big and well-grown. All the young deer appeared strong and healthy, no signs of malformation being visible.

Licenses were first issued to stalkers in 1914 for the Lillburn and Hump districts, eight licenses being sold for the taking of two head each. Up to the present time the majority of the stalking has been done in the Lillburn Valley and Lake Hauroto districts and the results have shown that the country is eminently suitable for the propagation of Red Deer.

Comparing the quality of the heads secured with those of their ancestors, they show on the average a greater length and growth of horn. A type of the above class of head is shown in this issue and was shot by Mr. P. Scott, of Clifden, during the 1914 season,



RED DEER HEAD, LAKE MANAPOURI.

Length, 40½ in. ; spread, 41½ in. ; beam, 5½ in. ; points, 7 x 7.

Owing to complaints made by settlers in the Lillburn district regarding the depredations of deer on their farm lands, restrictions were raised in 1923 on an area bounded by a line drawn from Sandhill Point to Goldie's Hill, to the mouth of the Borland on the west, and bounded by the Waiau River in the east.

Although this affected the sale of licenses considerably, the herd has been greatly reduced, the Forestry Department last year having purchased over one thousand tails of deer shot in this district. The question of culling has always been kept in mind by the Society, who realise that the quality of the herd can only be maintained by judicious culling and several grants have been expended from time to time in this direction, but unfortunately the nature of the country is such that any practical scheme for reducing the herd is only possible at very great expense.

#### Manapouri Herd.

Licenses were first issued for stalking at Manapouri in 1915. The quality of the heads secured during that year proved the herd to be a sturdy one, and some of the heads shot rank among the finest in New Zealand. This locality has since become a famous stalking ground and yearly draws stalkers from all parts to participate in the sport. The head shown shot by Mr. N. R. McKay at the Monument in 1918 is a splendid example of the type obtained in this locality. The dimensions of the head are: Spread outside  $41\frac{1}{2}$  inches, length 42 inches, inside beam  $34\frac{1}{2}$  inches, circumference between by and try  $5\frac{1}{2}$  inches. Another head secured by Mr. L. Murrell the same year had an outside spread of 42 inches and length  $42\frac{1}{2}$  inches.

#### AXIS DEER.

In 1909 five Axis (*Cervus Axis*) or spotted deer were imported from East India and liberated at Dusky Sound. No licenses have yet been issued for stalking this herd, but from reports received from time to time they are becoming well established.

#### MOOSE (*Alces Malchis*).

On February 24th, 1910, a shipment of moose imported from Western Canada, consisting of four bulls and six cows, were liberated at Supper Cove, Dusky Sound. This part was chosen as the most suitable owing to the swampy nature of its rivers and the less precipitous mountains and being at that time seldom visited by man, was most likely to ensure the successful acclimatisation of these animals. In December, 1912, a report



was received from a mining party, which visited Dusky Sound, stating that they found distinct traces of both young and old moose.

In February, 1921, Mr. F. Moorehouse was sent under the direction of the New Zealand Government to make an investigation into the herd. Mr. J. H. Wadworth, representing the Southland Society, accompanied the party.

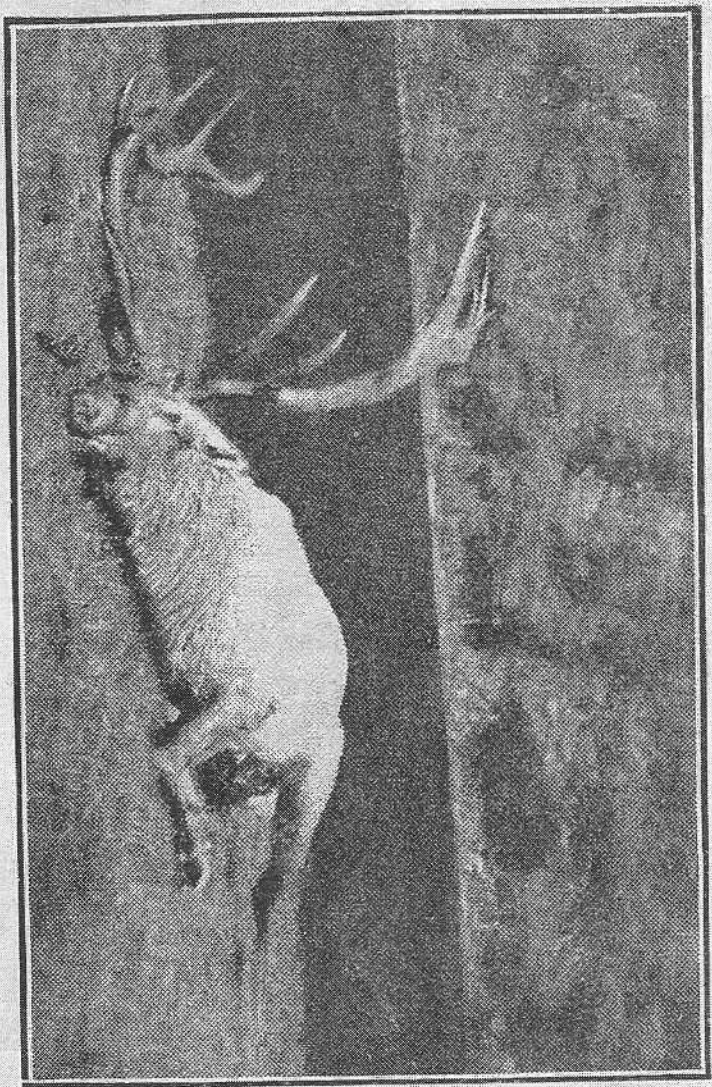
Traces of moose were found to be plentiful in the valley of the Seaforth River and signs were also seen at Wet Jacket Arm, but bad weather hampered operations considerably. In the Seaforth Valley a cow moose with a half-grown calf was sighted. This was the first definite proof that the animals were established, but in what number it was impossible to estimate. The fact that the main herd of moose was as yet confined to the valley of the Seaforth was, however, apparent. Early in January, 1923, Ranger C. J. Evans was despatched by the Society to Dusky Sound to conduct further explorations. This time the party were successful in obtaining photographs of moose, and evidence of their presence were to be found at many different points. At Fanny Bay, in Dusky Sound, he found unmistakable marks of them coming down the valley which runs between Mt. Bennett and Mt. Edgecumbe, whilst at Supper Cove moose were actually seen and photographed.

Well-beaten tracks of both young and old animals were seen along the Seaforth River, and in the valley leading from the head of the Cove in a northerly direction, past Mt. Vera, many of the trees had been rubbed to a height of nine feet by the antlers of the moose.

In view of this knowledge the Society issued two licenses for the ensuing season, entitling the holders to take one head each. These were taken up by Messrs. V. Donald, of Masterton, and L. Murrell, of Manapouri. The Seaforth Valley and surrounding country was stalked, but no head was obtained, and Mr. Donald remarked on his return:

"The most hopeful feature was the frequency with which we met traces of young animals, showing that breeding was progressing in a satisfactory manner."

Next season, 1924, two licenses were issued, these being taken up by Mr. Colin Deans, of Coalgate, and Mrs. E. J. Herriek, of Hastings. Ranger C. J. Evans accompanied this party and conducted extensive exploration of the parts hitherto unexplored.



WAPITI, LAKE KATHERINE, WEST COAST.      Shot by MR. V. E. DONALD.

Stalking operations were carried out in the Seaforth Valley, but no heads were secured, and it was decided that for the next season no licenses were to be issued.

Ranger Evans was despatched in January, 1926, to explore the country lying between Dusky and Chalky Sounds, but no evidence of moose were seen in this locality. During May, 1927, Mr Leslie Murrell, acting under the direction of the Government, made a trip to the Sound to report on the herd. Some miles up the river a cow and calf were sighted, and a few miles on two young bull moose were seen standing in the river. They were under observation for about fifteen minutes, during which time photographs were taken. They were apparently four or five years old, the younger being a twelve pointer and the other, having reached the stage of palmation, had 14 points and a spread of about 3ft. 6in. They were in good condition.

No licenses were issued for the 1928 season, but further explorations have been carried out.

Up to the time of writing much of the spade work has been done by Ranger Evans, and as a result of his untiring efforts the Society is now in possession of a more accurate description of the lakes, rivers and mountains hitherto marked on the map as "unexplored."

It is only by perseverance and hard work, with perhaps a big streak of luck, that the honour of securing the first moose head can be obtained. The country is wild and rugged dense bush, which impedes vision except within a very circumscribed area. It remains to be seen if the moose are really in a suitable habitat like that of the Canadian wilds.

#### WHITE TAILED VIRGINIAN DEER (*Cariacus Virginianus*.)

On April 5th, 1905, eighteen white tailed Virginian Deer were imported from North America and nine of these, two bucks and seven does, were liberated at Pegasus, Stewart Island. These animals have become well established and provide good sport for those stalkers who prefer "still hunting" in preference to the open stalking of red deer.

Licenses were first issued for stalking in 1921 and the trophies obtained are quite up to the standard in America.

Owing to restrictions on deer being lifted from Stewart Island in 1923 the Society abandoned further cultivation of the herd.

Stewart Island has now been proclaimed a sanctuary for

Native birds and neither the Government nor the Society look with favour upon the introduction of any imported game.

#### WAPITI (*Cervus Canadensis*).

During the year 1905, wapiti (3 males and 7 females) were liberated on the 3rd March of the same year at the head of George Sound.

No attempt was made to determine whether the animals were established until sixteen years later.

In 1921 Ranger C. J. Evans was sent out by the Society to make explorations from Lake Te Anau and report on the herd. The first signs of wapiti were found above Lake Thomson, between the north-west arm of Te Anau and George Sound and a glimpse of a bull with antlers was obtained here. The same year Mr. F. Moorehouse, acting under instructions from the New Zealand Government, made an exploration of the George Sound country and found traces of wapiti there. At the head of Lake Katherine in George Sound a cow and calf were seen. Traces of the animals were also found at Caswell Sound. He was accompanied on the trip by Mr. J. H. Wadworth, representing the Southland Acclimatisation Society.

These animals showed that they had become well established over country with a radius of 30 miles from the point of liberation.

Two licenses were issued for the 1923 season, 1st March to 31st May, entitling the holders to take two heads each.

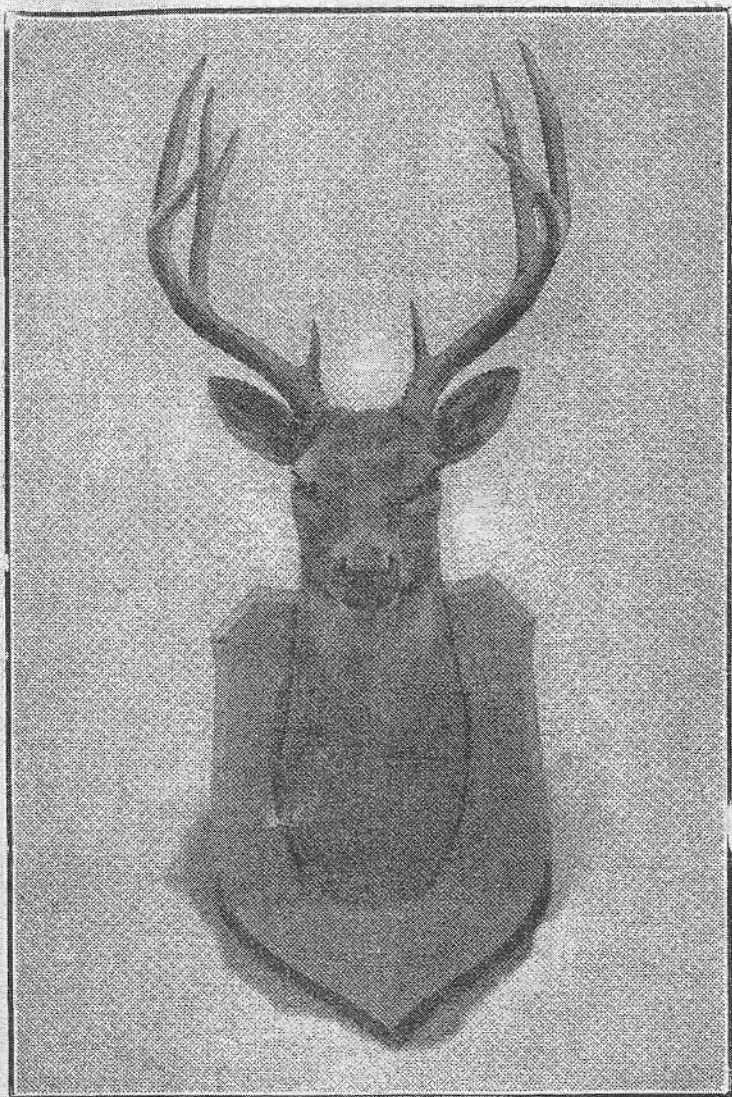
Messrs. V. Donald, of Wairarapa, and L. Murrell, of Manapouri, the first stalkers, were successful in obtaining three heads—two in George Sound and one in Caswell Sound. The bull shot in Caswell Sound was holding five hinds, all in excellent condition.

Speaking of his experiences Mr. Donald said: "For young animals they show a really wonderful growth of horn and I attribute this to the remarkable abundance of feed in the Fiord Country. It must be remembered that these are not specimen heads. We shot the only three bulls we saw."

Particulars of the heads are:—

- 1.—Points 15. Spread 53½in. Length 49in. Beam 6½in. Weight 27lbs.
- 2.—Points 11. Spread 40½in. Length 48in. Beam 7in. weight 35lbs.
- 3.—Points 14. Spread 47½in. Length 53½in. Beam 7½in. Weight 34lbs.





WHITE TAILED VIRGINIAN, STEWART ISLAND.

Next season seven licenses were issued and the country divided into three blocks — one at George Sound, one at Caswell Sound, and one at Lake Te Anau. Ranger Evans accompanied the George Sound party and conducted explorations on behalf of the Society.

Five heads in all were shot that season, the best head secured by Mr. E. J. Herricks, of Hastings, being a magnificent specimen and measuring only a few inches short of the world's record.

Eight licenses were issued for the 1925 season, but only four heads were shot, these being taken from the Caswell Sound block.

In March, 1926, Major N. McD. Weir made an exploration of the Glaisneek River, in the North Fiord of Lake Te Anau, but no signs of wapiti were found in this part.

An exploration was also made of the Worsley at the head of Lake Te Anau by K. W. Dalrymple, of Bulls, but no signs of wapiti were found.

The 1926 season was a poor one, only one head being taken and the next season the number of licenses issued was reduced to six. The weather in 1927 was the worst for thirty years and the results of the stalking were disappointing. Three heads in all were obtained, one at Caswell Sound and two at Lake Te Anau. The two heads taken from Lake Te Anau by Mr. E. J. Herricks were particularly fine specimens, one, a 17-pointer, measuring 58½ inches in length, and the other, a 15-pointer, having a spread of 38½ inches.

The 1928 season was a good one and seven heads in all were secured. The best head shot by Mr. R. T. Barker, of Geraldine, having a length of 59½ inches. On one occasion Mr. Barker's party saw upwards of 40 wapiti in one herd.

Up to the time of writing 23 heads in all have been taken and as a number of these are of a high standard this augurs well for the future of the herd.

A launch on Lake Te Anau, owned by the Society, and a boat service from Doubtful Sound to the coast blocks now makes the wapiti country easily reached.