

# Deer Farmers Look To Future

By Farm Editor Jim Childerstone

It is boom time back on the (deer) farm; but many responsible people involved in the fledgling industry are beginning to ask the vital question... "Where do we all go from here?"

Yet at this moment, and in the immediate future, the scope for this unique form of stock farming appears to be unlimited.

And the industry, conceived and suckled by a few pioneer farmers in the pastoral nursery of New Zealand, is hardly out of its nappies. But as with most growing youngsters, some sort of disciplinary line is going to be needed.

Those at the grass roots level believe that the discipline should come from within, whereas those involved academically or through government department affiliations have some reservations.

One thing seems certain. There is a strong market for venison in various forms, as well as the four main deer by-products. And what is more, the market is said to be continuous and unlimited.

There are currently two distinct divisions in deer product exports.

First, the export of wild deer meat, mostly to Germany, and the export of tails, sinews and hard antlers to a variety of overseas markets, mostly East Asia.

Second, mainly from farmed deer, the export of antler

velvet to East Asia and meat to Australia and the USA. The latter exports are very much of an exploratory nature, and at the moment it is the sale of antler velvet which is proving most profitable to deer farmers.

## BREEDING STOCK

The other main income earner for those who have established a foothold in the deer farming business is the sale of breeding stock to farmers, businessmen and entrepreneurs who have recently decided to get into deer farming.

And the prices being paid during recent on-farm auctions (from a low of \$150 to a high of \$800 per animal), indicate the demand and rapid expansion of deer farming as a new enterprise.

The original herds, started in the late 1960s and early 1970s, were built up mainly from live recoveries by helicopters at a time when costs were considerably lower than now. Breeding and management have since played a part in producing the type of animal most suited in size and conformity for farming purposes.

Although live deer recovery is still being undertaken there is now a considerable drop in the number of wild deer still at large in the remote back-country areas. Most are still coming in as shot "game" deer for the European market. Since 1972, according to the Invermay Research Centre, the numbers have dropped from 120,000 carcasses to 89,000 carcasses in 1976.

## DROP FURTHER

Figures released through the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries at Invermay predict that numbers of shot wild deer will drop even further within the next few years to about 60,000 carcasses.

Also, helicopter recovery costs are rising. At least four or five carcasses now need to be lifted out in an hour to make such aerial recovery pay.

Germany is New Zealand's best customer for game venison exports, buying up more than 80 percent of our total output. It consumes some 17,000 tonnes of venison a year, of which 7,800 tonnes are imported. New Zealand, with 3,150 tonnes in 1973 was, and still is, the biggest single supplier, with Otago and Southland supplying about 40 percent of the total.

Although the number of tonnes exported have since dropped from a peak of 4,370 in 1972 to 2,600 in 1976, overseas earnings from game meat have increased to approximately \$11 million a year due to the increased prices being paid.

The main problem now is that although supplies of game meat are expected to remain reasonably constant for the next few years, how do we keep the Germans happy and make full use of that market (And don't forget the Germans do not want to know about farmed deer meat).

## STRINGENT RULES

For a start there is considerable difference in import regulations for game, or shot meat, and slaughter (farmed) meat into Europe — the latter is bound by stringent EEC hygiene rules.

At the moment, and for obvious reasons, the two branches of the industry remain distinctly separate.

The commercial venison branch swung into action in the late 1950s and built up through the sixties to a peak in the early seventies. In that time 34 game collection depots were established in the Otago-Southland area servicing three packing houses in the South Island.

All game packing is carried out under the surveillance of MAF veterinarians who inspect the meat for export. In June, 1975, new regulations gave recognition to two types of deer meat — meat from slaughtered farm deer, and meat from wild (feral) deer. But the regulations for the former are considerably tougher and a variety of options are currently being studied.

At this moment the farmed deer branch of the industry is finding its feet at the by-product end of the market, namely

antler velvet, which has steadily increased in value from \$5 a kilo up to \$80 and beyond. The farming of deer is a comparatively new concept, having only become established in the past five years after a number of trials and tribulations.

## QUESTION NOW

The question now is who will take on the responsibility for the future guidance of the industry as a whole and its future economy within the structure of New Zealand's primary industry, its general expansion and its logistics of marketing?

The farmers who pioneered the whole thing and the businessmen behind them are claiming they are ready, willing and able, as well as having the necessary expertise, to look after the industry themselves.

Although they are willing to listen to advice and suggestions from state institutions, they would balk at the mere suggestion of a bureaucratic finger in the pie.

A farmer who was in on the ground floor in developing the industry is Mr Bernard Pinney of Dunrobin near Mossburn, now the treasurer of the N.Z. Deer Farmer's Association.

During a recent talk he concludes with the words: "The dialogue and rapport established in which scientist, businessmen and farmer are trail-blazing together provides a model for how research extension and agriculture should work."

But he did concede in an interview this week that the greatest danger to deer farming was the lack of continuity in the market. By this he meant that the demand was so great that there was a danger we would be unable to fill and maintain quotas.

## ALLIANCE

To overcome this, and other marketing problems, an alliance has been formed with the Game Industry Association to look after interests in the farmed deer sector.

Mr Pinney has adopted a realistic approach to the business of deer farming (see story facing page). He believes that while the sale of velvet and breeding stock is currently at boom levels, there is going to be a settling-down period.

Based on current and projected returns from his own operation, he figures that income per hectare could drop from \$547 to \$169 after the settling-in period. He runs 750 deer on 240 hectares of marginal land.

Taking into account present land, fencing and stock valuations, it would cost more than \$500,000 to set up a deer farm of this size.

During the settling-down period, according to Mr Pinney, gross returns could halve thus bringing the overall value down to just over \$300,000.

He warns that anyone thinking of going into deer farming now should have plenty of spare capital, as debt servicing on current rates could be disastrous.

"It is not a quick money business for a fly-by-night operator, but rather for the professional businessman or farmer who would use wise management techniques and have a reasonable amount of marginal land available," he said.

During the settling-down period, Mr Pinney foresees in-

creasing supplies of farmed venison being exported to Australia and the United States as well as a certain amount sold within the home market. These would possibly be marketed under different product names in the recipient countries — such as deer meat for deerburgers in the United States.

## OFFICIALS CONCERNED

However, there is some concern in official circles that because most deer farms only started up within the last few years, there have been very few culled or aged animals on the market.

Dr Ken Drew, head of the Invermay Research Centre's deer unit, has found that the best time for slaughtering stags is 15 or 27 months old. After five years, the fat increase is expected to be considerable.

While velvet is the main money spinner in deer farming, stags will be kept for as long as they are capable of producing a reasonable amount of this product. Research done privately has shown that velvet production

peaks at about the seventh year, giving approximately two to four kilos per animal.

But according to Mr L. Smith, manager of Criffell Game Park, near Wanaka, there are stags around still being velveted after 12 years.

Therefore, say MAF officials concerned with maintaining meat quality, within about five years there will be a large number of fat stags on the market which will considerably lower the quality of meat.

Dr Drew, however, thinks that if these were slaughtered during the low production time of the year, at the end of winter, the meat could be considerably leaner with a lower fat content and quality could be reasonably maintained.

This problem is recognised by the responsible producer and, says Mr Pinney, steps are being taken to prevent any deterioration of the product.

With the expansion of the industry, the other problem needing immediate attention is the processing of farmed deer

meat to the quality required by export regulations.

The deer farmers took on this task with help and advice from the MAF, and have already produced a portable slaughter facility which underwent trials in Southland last season.

Approximately 400 deer were slaughtered under this arrangement on a trial basis, but a variety of problems have to be ironed out before it could be granted a licence.

However, it is recognised that something more permanent is going to be needed and the establishment of a co-operative factory could be a possibility. But whatever happens, deer farmers do not want the problems currently bedevilling the freezing industry.

The actual number of deer being farmed in New Zealand at present is estimated at between 15,000 and 17,000. Up to November 30, 1976, permits had been issued for 17,700 deer since deer farming received the official go-ahead.



# Deer Farming Expensive

## Business

Anyone considering going into the deer business should have a good, long think about it before putting the house and farm into hook and selling off the family jewellery.

It is certainly not a game for amateurs, or a means of making a fast buck. Those who have ventured into it have had to carry out a good deal of planning and research, and have initially put in much hard work.

The stakes may be high at present, but so are the risks.

Mr Bernard Pinney, who runs the Dunrobin Station deer farm in partnership with Wilson, Neill Ltd., lists 14 reasons why deer farming can be risky.

They include such unknowns as disease, collapse of the market, poor processing, industrial strife, handling problems, broken fences, escaping deer and so on.

To set up a deer farm for a start, permission has to be sought from the Forest Service under the Noxious Animals Act.

If this is given, the project could still be turned down flat by the Ministry of Works and Development's soil and water conservation division on the grounds that there could be a risk of deterioration of the applicant's property.

Even if he manages to convince the first two depart-

ments, the applicant still has to get approval from the animal health division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries who will want to know all about the management of the project.

### BIG DEEP

And once he has cleared these hurdles, or better still, before he attempts them, the hopeful deer farmer will have to dig deep into his capital to get started. Just to get breeding stock will set him back \$300 to \$400 an animal. Then there is the special requirements of fencing and yarding.

By the time he is established, he possibly deserves all the profit he can get — if only to service the loans.

Bernard Pinney began thinking about deer farming many years ago.

But it was while he was on a Nuffield Scholarship in the United Kingdom in the mid 1960s that he became really interested after visiting deer farming projects in Scotland.

He bought the 14,000-acre Dunrobin Station nine miles south of Mossburn in 1968 and was eventually into deer farming by 1972.

undulating with 300 acre tussock hill runoff at the back. The total area was 592 acres (240 hectares) of marginal land carrying 200 stock units at the time.

About 60 hectares was broken in and sown down in grass seed and fertilised at the rate of 250 kilogrammes of super per hectare. It was also top-dressed with lime.

And now the same area is running the equivalent of 1,414 stock units per hectare. The current return on this land runs at \$547 per hectare — mostly from the sale of antler velvet and breeding stock.

The success of the whole operation, says Bernard, hinges on the situation of the yards. These are situated at a focal point in relation to the paddocks which are subdivided into roughly four hectares each. All enclosures are penned off and boxed with half-

The grazing habits of the deer have both surprised and delighted him. They do not graze as closely as sheep or leave the paddock pugged and clumpy like cattle. There is in fact a uniformity of growth not unlike a cross between a lawn and parkland.

Bernard has so far put in 14.3 kilometres of deer fencing to subdivide the area into 14 paddocks.

He says he has now reached a stage where he is undecided as to where best to invest his capital. He runs 11,000 sheep and about 800 cattle, but because prices remain the same he figures deer the better investment, even though he realises the market must settle down at some stage.

One thing rings loud and clear. An excellent way to raise production of certain types of marginal land is through the running of deer — but only if you can afford it.

## Hunting Seasons Questioned

(P.A.) ASHBURTON

A suggestion that hunting seasons should be introduced for the control of wild game has been challenged by the national president of the New Zealand Big Game Hunters' Association Mr B. Candy of Ashburton.

The suggestion came from Consolidators Traders' Ltd in submissions to the Noxious Animals Bill.

Mr Candy said it was ironic that a firm that operated helicopters in the pursuit of venison would suggest the introduction of hunting seasons.

"Would they guarantee to keep their quarter of a million dollar machines grounded in the off-season periods?" Mr Candy asked.

He was also dubious about the suggestion that the responsibility for the control of wild animals should lie with landowners.

Mr Candy said landowners would be able to block the recreational hunter by selling animals on his land to commercial firms.



"WHERE DO we go from here" . . . these stags seem to be saying at Invermay Research Centre.

Bernard was told at the time that it could not be done. It would be impossible to handle the deer. They would break down the fences. They would make a mess of the paddocks.

### PERSEVERED

However, like the J. Faulks-T. Wallis partnership at Criffel Park near Wanaka, he persevered until he built up to his current stock numbers of 750 deer — half hinds and half stags. Bernard estimates their value at current market price as being in the vicinity of \$400,000.

The patch of land he chose to run his deer on was flat to

inch boarding so deer cannot see out, or even into the neighbouring pens.

Some of the pen doors swing in such a way that the area of the pens can be reduced to hold from a few dozen down to a single deer.

The wing fences leading into the yards at either end allow for a gradual, narrowing approach from a long distance out. The net result makes for easy, injury-free yarding and losses to soft antler velvet are minimal. Much of this system was devised by Bernard himself and is being used elsewhere in New Zealand.

## Copter Crash

(P.A.) ROTORUA

A 35-year-old Taupo man is in a satisfactory condition in Rotorua hospital yesterday after a helicopter crash near Reporoa on Saturday.

Mr R. D. Nairn, the pilot suffered second degree burns to his back, left arm and hand in the crash.

He was the only occupant of the helicopter at the time.





A LINE-UP of breeding hinds on Mr Bernard Pinney's farm near Mossburn.



THE HELICOPTER revolutionised deer recovery, both live and dead...

## Deer Rival Cattle For Growth

While many deer farms in the South Island have utilised marginal lands for deer, the Invermay Research Centre's deer unit is carrying out intense farming of deer on first class land.

A team of researchers headed by Dr K. R. Drew have shown that deer rival cattle for growth, topping the best production recorded from beef anywhere in New Zealand.

Dr Drew and his team have been studying deer reproduction, growth and development, yield of meat and by-products, carcass composition and the slaughter and processing of farmed deer.

It has been found that with better management at calving, problems of calf mortality are being overcome and the red deer's natural reproductive potential realised.

The marked seasonal growth pattern of wild deer is retained by farmed deer, despite abundant feed supplies. They maintain or lose weight in the autumn

and winter period and grow very rapidly from August to February, according to Dr Drew.

He says that farmed stags slaughtered at 15 months yield, a clean carcass weight of 55 kilograms with only six to seven percent of fat.

Rising yearling stags stocked at 31 head per hectare gained 1,235 kilograms of live weight per hectare between August and February. This rivalled anything produced in the way of beef.

Also being studied is the different taste reputed to exist between wild and tame deer.

Dr Drew says that a neutral question that arose when deer farming began was whether or not the meat flavour would be different, but so far no clear differences have been found.

Preliminary taste panel findings show that it is hard to tell the difference between both classes of meat.

## Meat Warnings 'Scare Tactics'

Staff Reporter

WANAKA.—Warnings that meat from uninspected game could be a health hazard were described as scare tactics by the president of the Upper Clutha Deerstalkers Association, Mr Barry Wilson.

He said it was unusual that this claim should be made now, after New Zealand had been selling uninspected game meat overseas for years.

He challenged the Ministry of Agriculture to produce statistical evidence that consumption of uninspected wild game meat left people liable to tuberculosis, arthritis, pneumonia and blood poisoning as was claimed.

"I would like to know just how many cases were attributable directly to game meat," he said.

The game meat warning came from the Christchurch Ministry of Agriculture and referred to the "under the table" sale of wild game, especially venison and pork.

There was a health hazard in these sales because of the way the game was obtained in the South Island and the risk that deer were being poisoned by cyanide put out to kill opossums, it was claimed.

Many hunters were said to avoid having their catch inspected because of the 25 percent tax involved and the need to provide a whole carcass, rather than just the choice hindquarters. Yet the private sale of uninspected meat was illegal.

Mr Wilson said deerstalkers agreed with the idea of a prohibition on the illegal sale of meat.

But he said it should be done by imposing tighter controls on game meat generally, "not by using scare tactics which will sow doubt in the public mind about the wisdom of eating any game meat."

Mr Wilson also questioned the motives for singling out cyanide.

"No mention was made of 1080 poison — which is also used to kill opossums — which is likely to prove more of a health risk than those mentioned by the department," he said.



NEW ZEALAND FOREST SERVICE

### WARNING TO HUNTERS AND TRAMPERS

Toxic 1080 oat baits have been laid in Compartment 25, Rankieburn State Forest (State Forest 107) as from November 7, 1977, to combat damage from noxious animals.

A. V. Fuller  
District Ranger  
Tapanui.



Filthy and armed,  
gang boozed on but



# TRUTH REPORTER

## MANY farmers are slaughtering stock at home, and are selling meat to the public.

They are making fat profits by under-cutting retail butchers' prices, and by not declaring the income.

### THEY COULD ALSO BE SELLING POLLUTED MEAT.

Among diseases buyers could contract are hydatids, sheep measles, tuberculosis and food poisoning.

It's a dangerous health menace, and it's on the increase.

The Agriculture and Fisheries Ministry, the Health Department and the butchers are alarmed at this growing and widespread illegal trading because of the health risk.

Meat retailers are also concerned, because the farmers are pirating a large slice of their legitimate custom—and profits.

Some of this farm meat may be sold to hotels and restaurants at greatly reduced prices, compared with normal outlets.

So far nobody has obtained enough proof to prosecute the tax-dodging farmer offenders under the Meat Act or the Food Hygiene Regulations.

The culprits are extremely cagey.

Any official-looking strangers turning up at a farm and asking to buy meat have little hope of making a purchase.

The illegal traders seem to have an efficient "bush telegraph" system, warning them of "suspicious" strangers.

But Truth had some success.

Wellington is an area where the slaughtering of stock and the sale of meat at the farmhouse door has become common.

A reporter visited several properties and found that he could order portions of farm-killed beef, pork, lamb or mutton to take away when it became available.

He found foul conditions on one farm where stock is allegedly slaughtered for public sale and consumption.

**FIRST PROPERTY:** The farmer said he was killing at least two steers a month for sale to the public.

"Give me your telephone number and when we slaughter the next one I'll give you a ring," he said.

"Our prices are right, and the quality is excellent."

He mentioned that the owner of an adjoining farm was in the same business, and also sold dog meat in large quantities.

**SECOND PROPERTY:** A

woman said her husband would be slaughtering within a day or two. Pork would be available.

"How much do you want? Do you want a whole pig or just a side?" she asked.

Bacon was also available on order, but it takes longer, because it has to be cured."

**THIRD PROPERTY:** A man said an order for pork could be placed with another person, who was not residing on the farm.

"Just ring him up and tell him what you want. When it is ready, come out and pick it up," he said.

Beef, lamb and mutton was also occasionally available, "but we deal mostly in pork. It's the most popular."

**FOURTH PROPERTY:** Nobody was in residence. Truth inspected the yards and sheds where the slaughtering of farm stock for sale to the public is alleged to take place.

The premises were filthy. Clouds of sandflies hovered in the dust, and flies were everywhere.

Dogs and farmyard birds roamed the area. Prospective animals for slaughter snuffled in drying pools of mud.

John McNab, director of the meat division of the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, told Truth that there was no possibility of the properties visited being licensed to sell meat to the public.

## Own

"They are in an area served by a registered and licensed abattoir," he said.

"The farmers in question can slaughter stock for their own consumption or consumption by their employees.

"But nothing else. It's against the law."

He said the ministry was well aware of what some "unscrupulous" farmers were doing, but it was extremely hard to obtain evidence against them which could be substantiated in court.

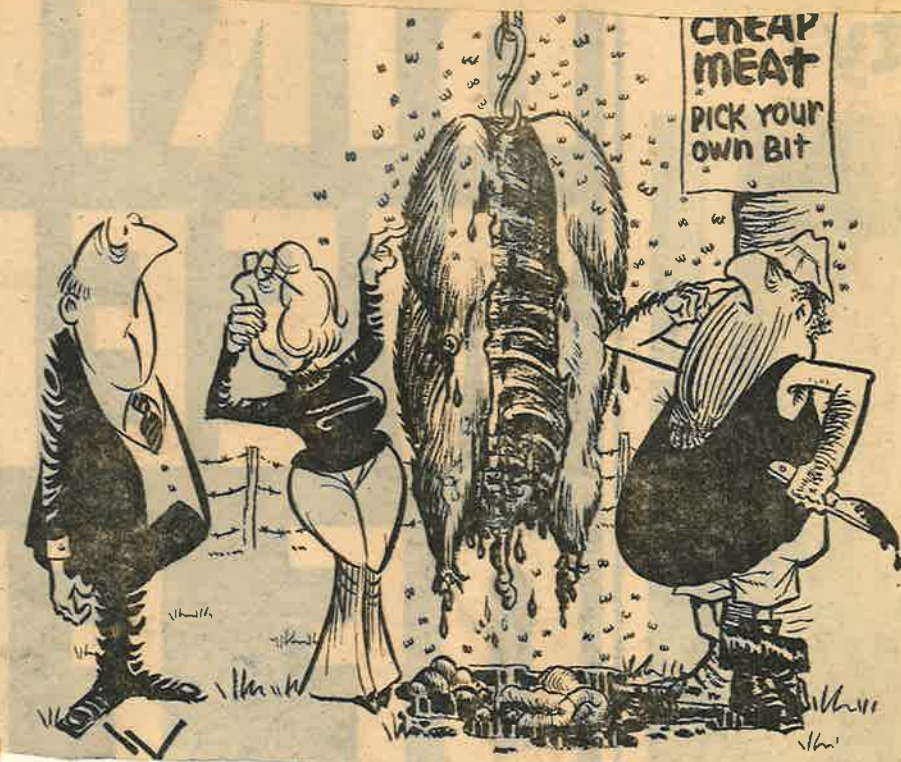
"Apart from the tax aspect, the health risk is appalling," he said.


"The unsuspecting public buying meat from these farmers could contract diseases such as hydatids, tuberculosis, sheep measles and food poisoning."

It was a serious situation if farmers were selling meat to restaurants and hotels, he said.

Mr N. Cook, chief health inspector for the Health Department, told Truth that the authorities were extremely concerned about the illegal sales.

"It's hard to detect. But we propose to make extensive investigations in an effort to stop it," he said.





### POISON NOTICE

Notice is hereby given that 1080 poison (Sodium Fluoroacetate) will be hand laid for the control of goats in the "Neale Burn" valley and for red deer in the mid sector of the transit valley, Fiordland National Park. These operations will continue until March 31, 1978.

R. USMAR,  
Conservator of Forests.





Mr Jim McPhee (left), and Mr John Rutland prepare to give an antidote to a deer which has just had its velvet cut. On the right is another stag with the bloodied stump showing where the velvet was cut.

## Velvet Cutting Demonstrated

A demonstration of velvet cutting on Mr Ray Jennings's deer farm at Awarua yesterday was attended by about 60 Southland farmers.

About 30 deer were involved in the cutting, ranging from two-year-olds upwards, with a sprinkling of yearlings. The cutting of velvet is an annual operation, usually done between November and January.

Before the cut is made, the animals are drugged, with one of three types, which take about 10 minutes to work, depending on the amount used and the state of the animal.

After the cutting, a demonstration of grading was made by Mr C. C. Hartnell, from Dunedin, manager of Wilson Neill Ltd's export division.

Preference is given to species which have a small V-joint, and are short in length. Breakages, bruising or damaged skin downgrades the velvet.

### Korean Visitor

With Mr Hartnell was Mr Kim, a Korean importer, who will be spending a few weeks in New Zealand inspecting the industry.

Last year velvet fetched prices of between \$35 and \$45 per pound, and this year it is expected to rise to about \$70.

Nearly all New Zealand's velvet is exported to the Orient, but this year for the first time the Japanese have also shown an interest. It is used for medicinal purposes.

The quality of velvet increases with age, and is at its best when the animals are about four.

### Deteriorates

After 12 years of age, the quality begins to deteriorate, although it is cut continually until the animal dies, which may be up to 14 years.

The number of deer farmers in Southland has increased remarkably in the past few years. However, there are still a number who are not conversant with velvet cutting, and demonstrations are made when there are sufficient deer from several farmers to warrant them.



# HUNTED — DEER WAR REWARD

## SLAUGHTERED fowls and dead sheep . . .

This was the work of deer hunters on a rampage of destruction, according to farmers in the Wanganui district.

Now there's a \$500 reward on the hunters' heads — if they can be caught doing damage to properties.

And about the only thing that will cool the war that has broken out between the hunters and farmers is for the bottom to drop out of the venison market.

The reward was offered last week by the Wanganui province of Federated Farmers.

It follows shocking incidents on farms, when roving deer hunters, who have had close-to stand-up fights with farmers over access, have come back and left trails of destruction.

They have terrorised the two Kirk families who live at Raorikia inland from Wanganui.

The Kirks have for a long time been fighting a running battle with the poachers.

They've returned to their homes lately to find all their fowls slaughtered and laid out along a driveway.

## Chopped

Their vegetables have also been chopped up and their fruit trees slashed.

On one property, practically every fence was cut and other farmers moved in to help repair the damage, estimated at \$5000.

Sheep were also shot.

There has been talk that somebody will get shot soon. At night, the hunters use powerful spotlights, which can be seen for miles.

Sometimes they can make \$100 in a few hours.

It's a mighty incentive for them to brave the irate farmers,

who have sometimes closed off public roads, in a bid to stop them shooting the deer on their properties.

Farmers around Taihape, have had trouble, too.

Poachers have put water and sawdust in farm machinery petrol tanks and cut fences.

Mr J. H. Roberts, who owns Timahunga Station, says poachers have threatened to burn down his hay barns if he makes it too tough for them.

## Helicopters Most Effective

(P.A.)

WELLINGTON

Helicopter deer shooting killed three times as many animals a year as Forest Service ground-based cullers and recreational hunters, the Minister of Forests, Mr V. S. Young, told the Porirua branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association yesterday.

Outlining the damage done to land by deer and goats, Mr Young told the deerstalkers helicopter operations had proved successful in the Ruahines and elsewhere in New Zealand.

However, the Tararuas, because of the difficulties of climate, terrain and high recreational use, were a separate case, Mr Young said.

The present operation in the Tararuas was much smaller than those in the Ruahines and vast areas covered in the South Island.

The introduction of helicopter hunting would not spoil recreational shooting in the Tararuas, he said.

The Trail commercial operation would provide him with information on the effectiveness of helicopter hunting in controlling deer in country which was too difficult for foot hunters.

Mr Young said poor experiences with helicopter hunting in the south of the South Island

had led to hot debate and bad feeling.

For this reason the Wild Animals Control Bill had laid down "some pretty stringent conditions" for those engaging in helicopter operations.

Mr Young told the deerstalkers of probable recreational hunting areas to be set up in State forest land.

They included areas in the Manawatu and Rotorua regions, Lake Wakatipu, the Kaipara, Wanganui and Blue Mountains regions.

He said other areas would be considered in the future.

## N.Z. Game Hunting And Killing Seasons Proposed For Control

AUCKLAND (PA). — Private hunters and the game industry should be used to control and manage the deer populations in New Zealand, it has been suggested.

In submissions to the Lands and Agriculture Select Committee considering the Noxious Animals Bill, Consolidated Traders Ltd, said such means would be no cost to the taxpayer, and bring huge returns in overseas funds.

The game industry would like to see all hunting stopped, except of opossums, and the establishment of hunting and killing seasons.

Consolidated Traders are exporters of game meat, rock lobsters and eels, and deer, goat, sheep and opossum skins.

"Animal reduction operations should only be carried out by the New Zealand Forest Service when the other two alternatives are unsuccessful," Consolidated Traders said.

### SPELLING TIME

Hunting seasons would ensure a spelling time for the

animals, which would make the game industry more efficient and economic.

The industry would also like to see the responsibility of control of wild animals to lie with land owners, as in other countries which had developed major game industries.

The New Zealand Forest Service should have reasonable right of access to private land so it could assess the level of game, but the decision for killing should lie with land owners.

The industry also had reservations about the prosecution powers that the Bill would introduce which it said was equivalent to the French law "guilty until proven innocent."

The suggestion that hunting seasons should be introduced for the control of wild game has been challenged by the national president of the New

Zealand Big Game Hunters Association, Mr B. Candy of Ashburton.

Mr Candy said it was ironic that a firm that operated helicopters in the pursuit of venison would suggest the introduction of hunting seasons.

"Would they guarantee to keep their quarter of a million dollar machines grounded in the off season periods," Mr Candy said.

He was also dubious about the suggestion that the responsibility for the control of wild animals should lie with land owners.

Mr Candy said that land owners would be able to block the recreational hunter by selling animals on his land to commercial firms.

Deer were becoming extinct in New Zealand and the Government should call a halt to all commercial operations until a full study of deer popu-

lations had been undertaken, he said.

Figures had shown that there had been a 93 percent reduction in deer populations since 1960, Mr Candy said.

The Government has been accused by the chairman of the Aviation Industry Association of drafting a Bill to "stifle complaints over game recovery operations."

Mr E. F. Burrowes in his annual report to the association, released in Wellington yesterday, said the Government action is "to be deplored" and claims that rather than change the law a measure of regulatory control could be introduced . . . at least until submissions have been made.

He was criticising the Government's draft proposals for a review of the Air Services Licensing Act, describing it as "impractical and unrealistic."



# Helicopter Hit By Deer

**A helicopter pilot and his shooter were resting at their Queenstown homes last night after a terrifying ordeal when their aircraft crashed after its skids were hit by a deer in the Lindis Pass area the previous night.**

The accident happened when Mr Dave Saxton and his shooter, Mr Steve Millard, were hunting deer to be brought out alive for deer parks and farms.

One had just been tranquilized when he jumped up and hit the front skid of the helicopter, which hit the ground and rolled down a hill with the two men still inside.

They had difficulty getting out of their safety belts but managed to free themselves before the aircraft rolled over a bluff and "smashed beyond repair."

Neither man was seriously injured and they walked about 10km to a hut, where they were discovered by a searching helicopter yesterday morning.

From his Queenstown home last night, Mr Saxton, still marvelling at his lucky escape, told of events leading up to the accident.

## Five Deer

They had come across five deer on a slope. It was about 9 p.m. and they wanted to get two of the deer before dark, he said.

They flew in below the deer on the slope travelling at about

15 knots, and had to get in close to the deer to make sure the first shot was on target.

When they were about four feet from the deer the dart was fired, the deer jumped in the air, and hit the front skid of the helicopter.

The skids were knocked on an angle and the helicopter went out of control. The rotor blade hit a rock and disintegrated, the copter overbalanced and started rolling down the hill.

It was a 45 to 50-degree slope, Mr Saxton said.

## Five Spins

While the aircraft was rolling down the hill, both men were frantically trying to get out of

their safety belts. After five spinovers they were successful, and leapt clear of the helicopter. It kept rolling and finally went over a bluff.

Mr Saxton said that after the skids were hit and the rotor blade disintegrated he "got all disorientated."

All he could remember about rolling down the hill was, "I've got to get out of here," he said.

The helicopter, valued at \$40,000, was a wreck. Parts of it were scattered as far as 100 yards from where it landed.

Looking at the wreckage, Mr Saxton said he wondered how they had survived.

Such an accident was always on the cards in the deer shooting

business, he said. The deer had a habit of jumping in the air when they were shot.

## Praised

Mr Saxton was full of praise for his rescuers.

A private helicopter from Queenstown went into the area at daylight to look for the two missing men. It was piloted by Mr Mal Kain, of Timaru, who was staying with Mr and Mrs Saxton in Queenstown.

Mr Kain and Mrs Saxton had become concerned the night before when Mr Saxton failed to return.

Once in the area, Mr Kain found the two men in the hut where they had spent the night. He flew them to Twizel, where they were given medical treatment for their minor injuries, and they were flown back to Queenstown later in the day.

## Helicopter Crashes

A helicopter engaged in venison recovery, crashed in the Lilburn Valley in Western Southland, on Friday, and its two occupants were flown to Kew Hospital for observation.

The pilot was Mr James Shewan, and Mr Kim Hollows was the shooter. Both men are from Te Anau.

The helicopter, a Hughes 500, crashed at Dickens Place, about 4.9 kilometres from Alpine Helicopters Ltd base in the Lake Hauroko area.

The two men walked to the base after the crash and raised the alarm. From there, they were flown in another helicopter the 80 kilometres to Kew Hospital.

Mr Hollows was suffering from cuts around the head and was in a fairly comfortable condition last night. Mr Shewan was not admitted.

Extent of damage to the helicopter was not known.

## Deershooting Operation

(P.A.) MASTERTON

The commercial deershooting operation arranged by the Forest Service for the Ruamahanga catchment in the Tararua ranges began yesterday.

First service district ranger in Masterton Mr George Grieg, confirmed that a Hughes 500 of Mountain Helicopters Ltd will be carrying out the operation on a trial basis for the next 30 days.

Mr Grieg said that because the operation started late in the month it may not go for the full time suggested. Also the operation may not be economically viable for long.

The helicopter would carry one hunter and operate from airstrips close to the ranges.

## Deer Stolen And Killed

The Invercargill C.I.B. is investigating the theft and killing of two deer from a deer farm at Orawia.

The incident happened on Friday night, and two carcasses were later found in a meat freezer.

The deer had been shot and then sold.

One person has been arrested in connection with the incident.

## Helicopter Crashes

A privately-owned Hughes 300 helicopter, which crashed in the Big River area of Fiordland at the weekend, is believed to have been lifted out.

Although no official sources had details yesterday, it is believed that neither of the two men in the helicopter was injured in the crash, and that the damaged aircraft and the men have been flown out of the area.



# Clampdown On Poaching

The days when poaching could be regarded a lucrative pastime are over. Poachers on Crown land are now liable to a \$5000 fine, under provisions made in an amendment to the Wild Animal Control Act made public last week.

Loopholes previously exploited by poachers have been tightened.

"We'd prefer to remain an administrative body only, but poachers' actions in the past have left us no choice but to tighten things up," the Southland conservator for the Forest Service, Mr Ross Usmar said, commenting on the new amendments.

Present permits will expire on March 23.

The Forest Service now has sole authority to issue permits for entrance to Crown land, subject to the agreement of the land-controller or owner.

Permits allowing aircraft to enter Crown land for the purpose of killing and recovering any wild animals will also be issued solely by the Forest Service.

## Restricted

One of the Act's new policies is to replace the previous Government or commercial hunting control method with recreational hunting.

Recreational shooting is also restricted by the Forest Service, which will issue permits mainly for restricted periods in areas where wild animals threaten to damage the foliage.

Poachers under the previous Act were liable to a fine of \$100.

However, since any animal they had killed while trespassing remained their property, most were able to pay their fine and make a good profit besides.

Any animal killed by a hunter without a permit now remains the property of the Government.

Clauses discouraging landowners from guiding hunters for commercial gain have also

been added, while the practice of landowners shutting their properties to sportsmen or commercial hunters unless royalties are paid on each beast killed, has also been clamped down on.

The new regulations will be enforced by forest officers, who will be specific officers of the Forest Service, and hold warrants signed by the Director General of Forests.

# Heavy Fines For Deer Theft

QUEENSTOWN

The theft by helicopter of a red deer weaner hind, valued at \$520, from a deer pen in the Pyke river area, South Westland, resulted in heavy fines being incurred by Clement Ogden Goodall, a 31-year-old Te Anau man, and Donald Gene Woodford, a 33-year-old Mossburn man, in the Queenstown Magistrate's Court yesterday.

They were each fined \$800 (costs \$5) and restitution of \$250 each, along with witnesses' expenses of \$130 each.

The charge against Woodford, the shooter, was for stealing the deer hind last August 18, the property of Graeme Bruce Mitchell, of Big Bay. The charge against Goodall, the pilot, was for aiding and abetting in the commission of the offence.

Mr J. Strettell, of Invercargill, acted for both defendants, who pleaded not guilty, and Sergeant W. W. Maloney, of Queenstown, prosecuted.

Mr E. B. Anderson, S.M., of Invercargill, when convicting the men, said the pursuit of deer seemed to bring the worst out of people.

There had been much criticism of the courts for the penalties imposed, and it had been said the fines could quickly be recovered by shooting another deer. An adequate deterrent was essential.

Mr Anderson said he had little sympathy for the defendants because their actions had been blatant, and if he had the power to take away the pilot's

licence and ground the aircraft, he would do so.

The charges arose from an incident on August 18, when Mr Mitchell, a deer trapper, and his assistant, Alvin Cyril Shaw, went from Big Bay into the Pyke River to inspect their deer traps.

They found a live weaner red deer hind in the No 3 trap and two deer in a hidden pen in the bush.

While Mitchell went back to Big Bay to bring a tractor to transport the animals out, Shaw stayed in the area but moved away from the area so as not to frighten the hind.

He ran out when he heard a helicopter descending, but when a shot was fired he hid 30 metres away and watched the shooter get out, hook on the dead weaner hind and hoist it out.

Constable O. G. Pierson, of Wanaka, gave evidence of having flown into the area in a fixed-wing aircraft with Peter Stephen Plew, of Aspiring Air, the next day following advice from Mitchell and Shaw about the matter.

The deer trap had been visible from a height of just over 600 metres.

Constable Pierson interviewed Woodford and Goodall at the Hollyford airstrip, who said they had shot a deer in the Pyke region but when it had run into a trap in an injured condition, they had moved in to kill it before lifting it out.

They claimed they had not seen the pen until after the first shot had wounded the animal.

Mitchell said that on September 19, the men landed their helicopter near his home at Big Bay and said they had not seen the pen, only the animal. They offered to recompense him, but he did not accept the offer, preferring to get legal advice.

Mr Anderson said he had no doubt the men knew they were in a pen for capturing deer, and they made no effort to leave a note or the carcass for the owner. They had made no move to advise anybody until after the police investigation started.

The defendants said they had been staying at Murray Gunn's camp in the Lower Hollyford where they had little opportunity to find out who owned the pen. They had had their permits revoked for three months because of the incident which had resulted in a loss of between \$10,000 and \$15,000.

## Wild life

Sir. — We have had a review on the wapiti herd. More or less, the refusal to change. None of the shots fired at the Park Board hit the target. Bad luck. So, seeing we cannot put any pressure on Mr V. Young, we will have to pressurize the Government.

The parties say not to waste your vote. Who can we vote for? No political party on our side. I think the people could look at it this way. The tourists love wildlife and lots of birds. Three-quarters of the population of New Zealand would like the same. So, if there are 3 million people in New Zealand and say 12 members on the Fiordland Park Board, this would work out around 125,000 people to one park board member. Seems strange, a handful of board members can rule our game animals. Are the national park animals in the hands of the Forest Service? This department wants to play the game, to speak the truth, not blame the poor birch high country and tops, on the opossum and deer. No flora and fauna grows up this far. Hot summers, lack of water, storms and high winds and snow in the winter, stops this growth. So don't tell school children and tramping clubs it's the animals. For instance, the Forest Service pick on the

west and south side of Stewart Island. It gets all the storms, winds, rough seas, and blows inland for a quarter of a mile and does some damage. The opossum and deer get the blame. Look at the east and north side of the island. Beautiful right down to waters edge. Why? No storms.

Who's fooling who? I have had a vast experience with wildlife, and I intend to show it for protection of our game animals and birds. did not the Government, around 1976 sped \$9 million on killing wild life and birds? Why? Making way for huge plantations, logs for Japan throughout New Zealand and the people interested in our animals, for sport and recreation, can go to hell for their playgrounds. So, if the Forestry want to kill for the next five to 10 years, and we want all this slaughter stopped for five to 10 years, what is it going to be?

Bluff

D. Hawkless

## Public Notices



NEW ZEALAND FOREST SERVICE

APPLICATIONS for Licences to use Aircraft for Wild Animal Recovery:

1. Under Section 24 of the Wild Animal Control Act 1977, a licence is required by any person who uses aircraft to operate a wild animal recovery service for any purpose.
2. The term aircraft encompasses both helicopter and fixed wing aircraft used in either a principal or a supporting role for the purposes of recovering carcasses or skins or capturing wild animals alive.
3. Persons who use private aircraft on their own land are required to be licensed.
4. Applications for interim licences close on April 10, 1977.
5. Further information and application forms are available from the offices of the Conservators of Forests at Auckland, Rotorua, Palmerston North, Nelson, Hokitika, Christchurch, Invercargill and at the office of the Director-General of Forests, Bowen State Building, Wellington.

M. J. CONWAY  
Director-General of Forests  
76524



# More Comment on Wapiti Herd

Sir, — "Blessed is he that expecteth nothing" should be the reaction of deerstalkers as they see a repeat of the treatment handed out to wapiti from the Park Board in a move that would have remained unpublicized if several people involved had not seen fit to short circuit the convenient red-tape surrounding it. Nevertheless it is surprising to learn that the F.M.C. member did not support the Lincoln conference suggestion, since a similar clause was recently reported as a recommendation to be included in the policy of F.M.C. (to which the Deerstalkers Association is affiliated).

It seems we have become conditioned as Mr W. B. Tayloer said, to the constant attrition of wapiti numbers by commercial culling and the constant cry of "too many animals," till the mounting of a trophy trip is becoming a lost cause. Hence the inference of a lack of interest in wapiti but it is understandable when the hunting advisory sub-committee contains dedicated exterminationists and the only acknowledged value of wapiti is a sought-after source of un-dreamed of profit and an ingredient of burgeoning deer farms, with board ap-proval. Strange how attitudes to a hitherto noxious animal can change depending on which side of the fence it is.

No wonder the June issue of "British Shooting Times and Country Magazine" stated that "so long as official attitudes continue, New Zealand can never hope to realize its large potential for developing big game as a tourist sporting attraction."

One can only trust that the new National Hunting Advisory Committee can help implement the Minister's suggestion of a special area for wapiti and amend the Act accordingly.

Then only will we abolish the force of the present negative control of this exciting big-game animal by a body committed to its elimination.

Wm. A. Bell

Sir, — Through your paper I wish to express some views as a recreational hunter. I note with disgust the Fiordland National Park Board views on the wapiti. Finally someone has spoken up and made it public that wapiti will be removed from the park (dead or alive).

On the surface it would seem that the F.N.P.B. has no room and never has for the recreational hunter within the park. I wonder why, when they are one of the largest users of the park, when you exclude those who travel by car or bus to Milford.

I always thought that the park was for the use of all New Zealanders so maybe we should thank the Park Board for enlightening us.

A recreational hunting committee was set up one would presume to establish the views, management, and interests of recreational hunting within the park and what did we get? — a committee made up of members who appear to have little or no interest in the sport. It would now seem the committee was set up to cover what has now become public and that is to eliminate all deer from the park. If only Jack McKenzie had been allowed to be on that committee at least we would know that our interests and views were being made known.

In the past, and I'm sorry to say he still continues, Mr D. J. Lamont has waged a diligent campaign on New Zealand deer. Is he so narrow minded as to think that only his association has a right to make use of the park's resources? I for one would never try to restrict any user, providing equal opportunity was being given to all. He seems to forget that the park is large enough for all, including hunters, and as for Mr Lamont's definition of a hunter, the word "birdwatcher" conjures up a number of definitions but for those who wish to be enlightened it is a person, young or old, who studies birds (The feathered variety).

I for one will fight to keep what I consider my right and the rights of others to hunt deer in our parks and forests.

Concerned

## New Role For DC3

(P.A.) WELLINGTON  
The last passenger-flying DC3, grounded a year ago, will soon take to the air again, carrying deer.

Queenstown-based Alpine Helicopters has bought the aircraft from Mount Cook Airlines.

The DC3s were the pioneers of commercial flying around the world. Now, ZK-BEU will be stripped of its seats to carry live deer from Fiordland to farms operated by Alpine Helicopters.

## Queenstown Pilot Convicted

(P.A.) ASHBURTON  
The owner of the Hadlow game park in Timaru and a Queenstown pilot have been convicted on several charges brought after an incident of shooting deer from a helicopter.

The charges related to an incident on Barrosa station near Mt Somers, in September last year, and involved the shooting and recovery of deer.

Bryan James Bassett-Smith of Timaru and Frank Robert Wright, aged 34, a helicopter pilot from Arthurs Point, Queenstown pleaded not guilty to the charges in the Ashburton Magistrate's Court.

Bassett-Smith was convicted and fined \$100, costs \$5, on a charge of discharging a firearm from an aircraft while on private property contrary to regulations. He was also ordered to pay witnesses expenses of \$66 and solicitor's fee of \$120.

On a charge of aiding Bassett-Smith to discharge a firearm while over private property, Wright was convicted and fined \$100, with costs \$5 and witnesses' expenses \$22.

He was fined a further \$100 with costs \$5 on a charge of flying an aircraft, a helicopter, in contravention of regulations and recovering deer.

A further \$100 fine was imposed on a charge of using the helicopter against regulations to recover deer carcasses.

Wright was fined \$100, costs \$5, witnesses' expenses \$22 and solicitors' fee \$40 for flying in contravention of the regulations while searching for deer.

On a charge of flying the aircraft over a country area at a height of lower than 500ft and another charge of permitting a deer carcass to be dropped while the aircraft was in flight he was convicted and discharged.

A seventh charge was withdrawn.

Prosecutor was Mr T. Gresson and Mr M. R. D. Guest represented Bassett-Smith and Wright.

The charges were laid under the Trespass and Civil Aviation Acts.

## Wapiti Herd

Sir, — I am rather surprised that the Fiordland National Park Board chairman and some of its members should deny that they are turning a blind eye to the removal of wapiti from the park and should attempt to whitewash the situation after the gaff has been blown on their secret decision to give "no special status to wapiti."

If the wapiti are to get no consideration, then quite obviously they will be receiving the same treatment as the rest of the deer in the park, which will be going out in the slings of licensed (and unlicensed) helicopters just as fast as they can be taken. After all, the fact that no one seems to be able to agree quite what constitutes a wapiti provides a convenient loophole. It would appear that live wapiti are being removed from and held outside the park, a practice which Mr Jack McKenzie did his level best to prevent. Considering that he later lost his seat on the board, one must admire and congratulate Mr Heenan who appears to be one of the few appointees acting in the interests of hunters. He refuses to be a muzzled "yes man" and will exercise his right to say so if he does not like what he sees. I hope Mr Young succeeds in his recommendation, despite the board, as no doubt hunters will be inclined to vote on the issue.

Ex Wapiti Hunter

# Shots Fired At Board Over Wapiti

Membership of the Fiordland National Park recreational hunting advisory committee was a "questionable privilege," a recreational hunting member of the committee, Mr Warren Taylor, said last night.

He was commenting on a report that the board has once again reiterated its February, 1974, decision that there should be no special status for wapiti in the park.

The committee was appointed earlier this year under the Wild Animals Control Act, Mr Taylor said.

"It came as no surprise at the first meeting to hear statements from one board representative that 'the former measure of protection for wapiti did not now apply and little could be done to stop them being shot.'"

"Another said he felt the demand for wapiti exceeded the supply, and that auctioning would be the fairest method of distribution."

"We were, in essence, being asked to participate in the slaughter of the wildlife we were appointed to administer. Little wonder that we sought the guidance and assistance of Members of Parliament," he said.

"Thank God we did, as the letter from the M.P. for Invercargill, Mr N. P. H. Jones, to the Minister of Lands, Mr V. S. Young, prompted a reply which invited the board to re-examine its policy regarding wapiti."

"The Minister's request was prompted by the report he received on the National Parks Authority conference earlier this year at which a working party suggested that introduced flora and fauna could be acceptable in the national parks concept."

"This working party did not comprise of recreational hunters, and I can only presume they were mainly representatives of government departments."

### Changing

"Such being the case, it is obvious to me that departmental attitudes are at last changing to agree with what public opinion has demanded for years. Yet once again, the board has buried its collective head in the sand by reiterating its 1974 stance."

"Various decisions and happenings over the years have led me to this unfortunate conclusion, one of these being the non-appointment of Mr Jack McKenzie, probably because he was inclined to rock the boat when the wapiti issue was discussed by the board," Mr Taylor said.

"It should be remembered that he was the recipient of a Queen's award for his services to wildlife, so someone seems to think his contribution to the board was in question."

"Strangely enough, he was not even appointed to the recreational advisory hunting committee. I wonder why," Mr Taylor said. "I wonder also why I was appointed when obviously his experience and knowledge placed him far ahead of me as an appointee."

### Think Again

"If the board considers it is serving public interest by persisting with this policy, it should think again as it has grossly underestimated public opinion."

Mr Taylor also said he believed the board should fully disclose the extent of commercial operations in the park.

"It is reputed that \$80,000 is paid to the board annually in deer concession fees, this being from a levy of \$4 a head," he said.

"If all the animals are taken alive, then at a market value of \$1000 a head this represents a total of \$20 million."

"If those taken dead are worth \$200, and only half of those taken are taken live, we still have a handsome \$12 million, and with one quarter live and three-quarters dead, we are left with \$8 million."

"What a bonanza, and my estimates of value could be conservative," Mr Taylor said. "I accept deer farming and the venison industry with reservations, but I view with disgust a system which permits the dissipation of a recreational resource in the interests of commercialism without proper regard for the needs of future generations."

### Trout, Too

"Not many years ago, our trout almost went the same way. Short-term commercial gain is wrong, and should not be encouraged to the detriment of recreation."

An admired recreational animal should not be selfishly exploited by a few people "who are interested only in the financial gain they obtain from selling sex stimulants to south-east Asians."

"This is a market which is demeaning to New Zealanders and one we could well do without."

Mr Taylor also questioned what standard value was commonly adopted for deer for taxation purposes.

"It is possible that taxation profits from other enterprises are being reduced by the taxpayer recognizing the benefits of a small deer herd."

"The purchase of 10 deer at \$1000 each would save tax on \$7000 if a standard value of \$300 were adopted. This is food for thought, as it is rumoured that the present high price of deer is associated with this."

"I am sure a vast majority of Southlanders have not yet been conditioned by bureaucracy, and share my concern at the board doggedly refusing to relax its attitude towards introduced wildlife," Mr Taylor said.

It was just as well the moa no longer existed.

"I can imagine the effect on park values of a flock of 20 steadily munching its way up a Fiordland valley," he said.

### Entitled

"We are entitled to insist on full disclosure of the board's proceedings," he said, "except in exceptional, justifiable circumstances. It is spurious for a secretary to the board to say the board's discussion on wapiti was held in committee because we approached Members of Parliament."



## Use of 1080

Sir, — It was with shocked amazement, bordering on disbelief, that I mentally digested the statement by the Forest Service regarding the use of 1080 on the deer population of Stewart Island. Then as the record of the Forest Service in this field came to mind, it became obvious that they would indeed be serious.

I would like to draw the attention of the Forest Service and your readers, to the editorial in the April issue of the N.Z. Outdoor. The editorial quotes from The Press of February 16, 1978.

"Two trampers in the Tararua ranges north of Wellington last October, found a dead kaka, as well as the remains of several other birds. The kaka was given to the Nature Conservation Council. Tests at the Wallaceville Research Station showed that the bird had been poisoned, and by 1080."

The editorial continues with the results of Forest Service trials on non-target species. Of these trials only one result has been published, which confirmed the effectiveness of 1080 in wiping out non-target species. Of the other trials nothing has been published, this would tend to substantiate the belief that the results were also disastrous.

Surely the Forest Service has created enough silent forests without adding Stewart Island to its list. The Southern Ruahines in the North Island are virtually devoid of bird life, since an eradication by all means of the remaining deer by the Forest Service. I cannot speak from personal observation on other areas of silent forests which follow the use of 1080, but it would be a national tragedy if Stewart Island were to join the list, or be put at risk.

Having spent my annual holidays at various areas of the island over several years, including this year, it is with deep concern that I see the now prolific bird life under threat.

If tree dwelling birds such as the kaka are victims of 1080 how much more so will be the ground dwelling kiwis, wekas, possible kakapos? As well, the tree dwelling ground foraging birds and

the nesting penguins, who travel considerable distances inland.

If the deer numbers are as high as the Forest Service would have us believe, then surely ground shooters would be a far more humane and acceptable answer than using a poison which affects all wildlife and is banned in many countries and most states of the U.S. for this reason.

Perhaps, if the proponents of these plans were to depend on being elected to their esteemed positions every three years, some enlightened new life and light may enter a dark area which still appears to be limited in its thinking, as it continues along with its poison fixation.

L.J. Cantwell

## Waitutu Forest

Sir, — As a long standing hunter of the Waitutu State forest, I would like to comment on Mr Usmar's recent statements. I would like to know why the Forest Service have spent thousands of dollars of taxpayers' money on the tracks and huts around the coast, only now to be informed that we are not allowed to step off this access as it is Maori land.

I would also like to know if the Maori representatives at this meeting were speaking for all Maori owners or just the ones involved in commercial deer capture.

It would also be very interesting to see one of the maps Mr Usmar says are issued with every permit, as they have been conspicuous by their absence. On recent inquiries made by myself to the Ministry of Works, I was informed that their department had not, and would not give permission for deer pens to be erected on river reserve. It now appears to me that Mr Usmar has the power to administer the Ministry of Works as well as the Forest Service.

He also states that no trees have recently been felled for deer capture pens. I'm sure that if he personally inspected the area concerned he would find plenty of justification for the complaints that have recently been made. Not only have trees been felled to make way for pens and helicopter landings, long tracks have been cut destroying flora and fauna, to service pens recently erected.

The Forest Service has informed me that these pens must be inspected at regular intervals, presumably at the taxpayers' expense.

As Mr Usmar states this is such an inaccessible area these inspection costs would be very high. Also the \$50 levy that has been mentioned which is supposed to cover the cost of removal and general tidying up that would be required at the conclusion of these operations would be in no way sufficient.

As the general public and other users are under strict laws regarding the use of these areas, it appears to me that if these commercial operations are any indication to the future of our State forests and parks then I would like to suggest to Mr Usmar that this is an ideal time for launching this campaign.

K. Lake

Otatara

[Asked to comment, the conservator of forests, Mr Ross Usmar, said:

1. "The track from Port Craig to Big River was reopened along the telephone line to provide access especially for the increasing number of trampers who enjoy this relatively flat tramp through attractive low level forest with its spectacular fast flowing full rivers and high trestle bridges. The original arrangement was in conjunction with the Fiordland National Park Board to reopen the track from Port Craig to Puysegur.

"2. The Maori representatives at the meeting were the official representatives of the Waitutu Incorporation.

"3. The map supplied to hunting permittees is on the back of the special conditions that apply to this area. I have rechecked the situation and confirm that such maps are issued to all hunters on at least their initial visit to the area. Obviously it is unnecessary for regular hunters in the area to continually be given these details.

"4. The Forest Service has been put

to a great deal of expense with helicopters checking out Mr Lake's previous allegations of continuing cutting in and around deer capture pens. I am satisfied that the practice has stopped, but if Mr Lake likes to produce some evidence that is not long out of date I shall be happy to investigate the matter again.

"5. I find it ironical that Mr Lake should criticize the expense of inspecting these pens, when most of the expenditure has been because of allegations he has made which have not stood up to scrutiny.

"6. The responsibility of capture pen permittees to clean up adequately after pens are dismantled is quite clear. The administration levy charged is not expected to cover our costs should the Forest Service have to undertake the work, but such costs would be recoverable from the permittee.

"7. The delegation of supervision of capture pens which impinge on road reserves along the Waitutu river is quite clear and there is no conflict between the Ministry of Works and the Forest Service on this matter."]

# Poisoned— but deer are safe

**DEERSTALKERS who have taken a 1080 pot shot at the Forest Service are way off target.**

So a forestry chief claims in Palmerston North.

This follows alarm expressed by Manawatu deerstalkers to Truth that deer meat and live game recovery helicopters have been allowed into areas—in the southern Ruahines within three months of aerial drops of 1080 poison.

Several members of the Deerstalkers' Association told Truth they were alarmed at the Forest Service action in allowing this.

"They started laying their 1080 poison air drops on August 28," Mr G. Giddens, a spokesman for the deerstalkers, told Truth.

"We've always been given to understand that meat recovery from such poisoned areas should not begin until three months after the poison is laid.

"But on September 21, the Forest Service called applications from helicopter operators for meat and live animal recovery from the poisoned area."

Other deerstalkers also said they understood that shooting should not be started in an area until three months after 1080 poisoning.

It was also claimed that there had been little rain in the area since the drops, and this would mean the poison in the carrot baits would take longer to leach out.

Truth asked Mr John Rockell, Forest Service chief in Palmerston North, about the claims.

"There is no danger in hunting in the poisoned area," Mr Rockell said.

"In fact there is no three months prohibition on any such hunting after poisoning," Mr Rockell said.

Until 1977, the Forest Service worked under the Deadly Poisons regulations 1960 which made it necessary for persons entering on poisoned areas to be notified of the poisoning for three months after it was laid.

Under the Agricultural Chemical (Vertebrate) Pest Control regulations brought in last year it was required that notices be placed on normal entry places to poisoned areas.

People applying for shooting permits were also advised of the poisoning.

"There is no undue risk to people hunting in the areas," Mr Rockell said.

"If an animal is going to die from the poison it will die promptly — or it hasn't eaten the poison.

"But if the animal had eaten the poison, it would have been absorbed in the body and had an action.

"The poison would be present in such small quantity in the meat that there would be no effect.

"You would have to eat probably about 50 such animals to show any effect.

"I recognise the concern of these shooters, but in fact it is a misplaced one," he said.



# Venison Factory Wins Battle

The determination of a Te Anau man for justice paid off this week.

His venison processing factory, closed four years ago "on a Government whim," will reopen shortly, following a Court of Appeal decision on Wednesday.

"I have learnt a very, very hard lesson," the company's director, Mr Evan Meredith, said yesterday.

"It's amazing that someone can be put out of business overnight at the whim of a Government department."

His business had been flourishing for 15 years before the Government suddenly told him to close up shop. Mr Meredith said.

"It's a lesson to me I'll never forget," he said.

"I used to believe we were a democratic country. Now I realize that New Zealand is not run by the Government — it's run by big business interests, which pressurize the Government."

## Upgraded

The crunch came for the company in 1964, when the Government upgraded venison processing requirements to meet West German demands.

Deer had to be taken with the heart, lungs and liver still attached. Previously, these organs had been taken out with the gut.

The Government further decided that only three factories in the country would be given licences to continue with up-graded equipment.

Each factory required an inspector, and only three inspectors were made available, thus effectively forcing the closure of all other factories in the country.

Outraged at this Government dictate, Mr Meredith, whose company processed 7000 deer a year, pleaded with both the then Labour Government and the 1975 National Government to allow Fiordland Venison to remain open.

But he got no joy from either — only adamant refusals to reconsider the situation.

## Supreme Court

Mr Meredith took his case to the Supreme Court, which heard evidence that Fiordland Venison's output had decreased from 7000 in 1974 to only 575 in 1975.

The reasons, he protested, were obvious — because of the new ruling, the factory had only been able to process deer under the old method, and these had to be exported outside Germany, New Zealand's main buyer.

Mr Meredith lost his case. "The information the Minister of Agriculture was given obviously came straight from the mouths of my competitors," he said yesterday. "He was misled by both them, and his department."

However, Mr Meredith refused to give up. He took his case to the Court of Appeal, and 18 months later, when it was heard, he won it.

The court held that the Minister had given no reason when he declined the company's application for a license.

No packing house in the country could immediately meet the new West German requirements, it said.

The judgment added that the court accepted the contention of the company that there was no evidence on which the Minister could reasonably or properly determine that he was not satisfied of the matters prescribed in the regulations.

## Several Months

However, it will take time to upgrade the company's equipment, and it will probably not resume business for several months.

Mr Meredith is not sure as to the future size of the business, because of the increasing swing towards live deer farming, but expects the annual output to still be "in the thousands."

"I just can't believe what's happened in the last few years," he said.

"I think it's a lesson a lot of people ought to take note of."

## Deer Pens

Sir, — I have been shooting at Monowai for 20 years and have enjoyed the years immensely. Even in the early days of "chopper" recovery, Monowai was left relatively unspoiled. Today it's a different story. Choppers scream round the front country from 5.15 in the morning scaring up all within range. To add insult to injury no shooting on or near the Borland road except for a privileged few, is permitted. And now here's

the big news — deer catching pens strung up the road at various intervals.

Sir, if it is good enough for the Smith boys (and I presume these gentlemen have permission from the Park Board) to place deer traps in the park, what would Mr Harty say to an application by me to put deer traps in the park?

The number of trees sawn down by people making deer traps are there to be counted. I do not mind deer traps in areas inaccessible to the average weekend shooter but am incensed with traps on the Borland Electricity Department road. These capture deer running through Pig creek across to Borland in my shooting area.

N.P. Allison

## Browns

[Asked to comment, the chairman of the Fiordland National Park Board, Mr J. P. Harty, said: "The restriction on shooting from or across any road or track is a general safety measure applied to all roads and tracks within the park and no exceptions are made. In the case of the Borland road it must be remembered that New Zealand Electricity workers and tourist parties can be travelling on the road at any time of the day. Approval has been given for the Smith brothers to erect a number of capture pens in this area and to other people in respect of various areas in the park. In view of the very large number of applications being received it has been decided that no further permits will be issued pending the evaluation of pens as an effective means of removing deer from the park. If Mr Allison wishes to lodge an application with the chief ranger this will be held with all others received pending the outcome of the evaluation and, should it be decided that further permits should be issued, it will then be considered on its merits. The sites on which pens have been erected have been inspected and approved by rangers both before and after the pens were erected. In the case of pens in the vicinity of the Borland road the only trees felled have been dead ones on the edge of the cut-over area under the transmission lines which over-hung the pens."]

## Wapiti Issue

Sir, — In a recent radio news broadcast, Mr Harty, chairman of the Fiordland National Park Board, said retention of wapiti as a recreational attraction in the park was not in line with some sections of the public and it was the intention to eliminate them.

This may be Mr Harty's personal views on the subject and such views could well have influenced recent local moves relating to wapiti management.

Through you, Sir, therefore I would request Mr Harty to state publicly what the official conditions governing wapiti management in the park as set down by the National Parks Authority are, and what is the official attitude of the local Park Board as set out by their recent unpublicized deliberations on the matter?

R. H. Richardson

President

Southland Branch

N.Z. Deerstalkers Association

[Asked to comment, the chairman of the Fiordland National Park Board, Mr J. P. Harty, said: "The National Parks Authority's general policy in respect of introduced browsing mammals as published in 1978 is: 'Although ultimate extermination of introduced browsing mammals will be aimed at, the immediate objective shall be the reduction, by all available means, of animal numbers to a level the vegetation can tolerate. Where necessary, the extermination of animals locally will be undertaken if this is possible.' The Fiordland National Park Board agrees with this policy."]

Sir, — I see from Thursday's edition of The Southland Times that the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association is once again pushing its case for the "protection" of that introduced species, the wapiti.

The use of the photograph of a fawn is obviously an attempt to appeal to one's emotions and arouse the latent "Bambi complex" that a number of us possess. However I regard it as an all time low in that neither you nor the association states that the reason that deerstalkers want fawns of this species "protected" is so that when it looks something like the animal in the other photograph they can satisfy their bloodlust by shooting it and hanging its antlers on a wall.

The association's desire in regard to wapiti and other introduced browsing mammals is an entirely selfish one which has no regard for the country's unique native vegetation or the principles on which national parks were founded.

L. M. Cooper



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## More Views on Wapiti Herd

Sir, — I consider that Mr Wilson Campbell, an ex-Fiordland National Park Board member, made fair comment in his feature article. "Should be a Place for Wapiti."

I think he puts his finger accurately on the core of the present controversy regarding the recreational hunting of wapiti when he suggests that the Park Board Act can be interpreted to fit whatever circumstances suit us. The operative word is to suit "us."

As a keen hunter, I believe the views of the average person who uses the park for recreational purposes has never been accurately or to my knowledge even vaguely assessed. In fact, a chosen

few appear to interpret the Act to suit their needs without any meaningful referral to recreational users. Small wonder, then, that whenever a public meeting regarding such a controversial matter is called, feelings run high, since I as a keen hunter have few opportunities to express my views.

If Mr Wilson Campbell is correct in his understanding of the situation, then surely it is important to canvass interested party views. Over recent years there has been increasing emphasis from Government level down, for people to participate in sports of all kinds. To shoot a trophy wapiti is a man-size challenge. However, it seems the recreational hunter has no real say and only the dollar rings.

Mr Wilson Campbell, now a widely

travelled man, who has been deeply committed to the concept of a national park, recognizes the problem of changing circumstances, and that the first consideration is people's wellbeing and not to achieve the unrealistic dream of attempting to re-create the pristine, natural state.

Hugh Rowe

Otatara



# Special Wapiti Area

The New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association has stepped up its campaign to save the Fiordland National Park wapiti herd — the only example in the southern hemisphere — from extinction.

The association wants Government to declare, through an Order-in-Council, a special area under section 12 of the 1952 National Parks Act.

This special area — a triangular shape with sides of roughly 35 miles is proposed — would lie within Fiordland National Park's existing wapiti habitat.

According to the Deerstalkers' Association national secretary, Mr John Murphy, intensive commercial deer recovery operations around the special area's perimeter would confine the wapiti herd.

The association's long term goal would be the establishment of a pure-bred wapiti herd within the special area as a recreational hunting resource.

Mr Murphy pointed out the original force of the 1952 National Parks Act was to provide for recreation and preserve special areas. Thus the creation of a special wapiti area was in keeping with the spirit of the Act.

In November of last year, the Fiordland National Park Board reaffirmed its decision of February, 1974, that there should be no special status for wapiti in the park.

This leaves the wapiti — the largest living deer in the world other than moose — as a noxious animal within the Fiordland National Park and seemingly doomed.

One of the greatest problems faced by Fiordland's wapiti in their search for survival is hybridization. Interbreeding with red deer has greatly undermined the quality of the wapiti herd.

Commercial game recoverers in Fiordland National Park's existing wapiti habitat are supposed to only shoot red and hybrid deer but a Fiordland National Park Board member, Mr D. J. Heenan, stated recently that "open slaughter" of wapiti was taking place.

But if a special area was created for Fiordland's wapiti all shooting within that area would be subject to a management plan which would include elimination of red and hybrid deer.

Just how serious the wapiti situation is can be seen from a report to the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association's 1978 conference.

## Disappearing

Under the heading "the disappearance of a species," the report states: "The wapiti herd in Fiordland is getting very close to a thing of the past, because of the attitude of the Fiordland National Park Board, the National Parks Authority and the Minister of Lands. Unlike the thar in the Canterbury high country, which only have to contend with helicopters, the wapiti have an added disadvantage, hybridization."

"In the past eight to 10 years the area in which wapiti can be found has shrunk by perhaps as much as 80 per cent. In 1967 wapiti could be found in an area from the Transit river in the north, to

# Wanted

*The accompanying article was provided by the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association*

Thompson sound in the south, and the Neale Burn (Milford Track) to the east.

"Today two watersheds, the Irene and the Light river, have been excluded from the wapiti block by the Park Board. In areas like the Doon — Large Burn, Mid Burn, Billy Burn and Lake Shirley, it is doubtful if there are any wapiti left at all. In 1969-70, the trophy party in the Doon reported seeing 181 animals. In 1978 six red deer were sighted during the trophy shoot. Today we have perhaps three watersheds left with any good wapiti."

The trophy shoot referred to in the report is an annual event for the country's deerstalking enthusiasts and is the only opportunity afforded by the Fiordland National Park Board for recreational shooting within the wapiti area.

This year the trophy shoot will take place over a three-week period from April 1 to April 22 with each party allocated a block within a limit of four wapiti trophies per party.

While the Deerstalkers' Association wapiti report criticizes the attitude of the Minister of Lands, Mr Venn Young, towards preservation of the animal, recent publicity indicates a change of thinking on the Minister's part.

## Review of Policy

On November 16, Mr Young was reported as saying he had asked the National Park Authority to review its policy on wapiti, with a view to ensuring a trophy herd continued to exist in the Fiordland area.

"I believe we have reached a stage where the numbers of deer in Fiordland have been satisfactorily reduced and we can seriously consider a policy which makes provision for a wapiti herd," Mr Young said. But only a matter of days later the Fiordland National Park Board reaffirmed its wapiti eradication policy.

The Minister's change in attitude towards wapiti was prompted by a report he received from the National Parks Authority conference last year at which a working party suggested that introduced flora and fauna could be acceptable in the national parks concept.

Commenting on that finding, a member of the Fiordland National Park recreational hunting advisory committee, Mr Warren Taylor said:

"This working party did not comprise recreational hunters and I can only presume they were mainly representatives of government departments."

"Such being the case, it is obvious to me that departmental attitudes are at last changing to agree with what public opinion has demanded for years. Yet once again, the board has buried its collective head in the sand by reiterating its 1974 stance."

One of the arguments advanced against the creation of a special wapiti area is the damage the deer allegedly cause to native vegetation.

However, Mr J. T. Holloway, a retired director of the Forest Service's protection forestry branch, summer up this situation back in 1958.

Referring to the Stillwater valley area of Fiordland National Park he said it was an example that could be compared with many Fiordland valleys.

"In this area, consequent on the nature of the rock, there is not the slightest risk of accelerated erosion on a significant scale. Even had this not been the case, damage of economic consequence would not follow acceleration. Climate and topography, are less favourable to red deer than almost anywhere else in the South Island and impose severe limitations on the wapiti herd's growth."

"The climate, however, favours rapid growth and recovery of the vegetation. A large part of all forest occupies very steep slopes and must remain inaccessible to large animals."

"There have been major changes in the forests and swamps of the valley floors and there has been significant reduction in the proportion of highly palatable species present in the alpine grasslands, but development of a browse resistant vegetation should be rapid."

"All told, assuming that the Stillwater valley is indeed typical, we have in Fiordland an area where sustained production of game animals is a safe and legitimate use of the land. Modification of the vegetation and elimination of some plant species may be regretted by those who regard national parks as areas to be kept inviolate and in their pristine condition for all time; but this is impossible."

"Elimination of wapiti might be possible but there is no chance that red deer could be exterminated or that the spread southwards of chamois through Fiordland could be halted. Any belief to the contrary is not founded on a real knowledge of the country."

## For Recreation

Mr Holloway's remarks are cited by the Deerstalker's Association as further evidence of the desirability of a special wapiti area. National secretary John Murphy says that surely the national parks should be used by the people for the type of recreational pursuit that the area is best suited for.

"Indeed this is already done elsewhere, a prime example would be the skifields of the Tongariro National Park and the facilities provided for this recreational pastime."

"A very similar example is the wapiti area of Fiordland National Park. Wapiti is the sole reason for the intense interest in this area. Why should the area not be developed for the recreational pastime of hunting?" Mr Murphy says.

The wapiti has been a big, if not the main attraction, on the New Zealand hunting scene for many years. The history of the Fiordland herd goes back to 1904 when United States President Theodore Roosevelt presented this country with a gift of 10 wapiti — three males and seven females.

In return New Zealand provided birds and tuatara so the worth of the wapiti was obviously held in high regard at that time.

The 10 animals were liberated in George sound and the herd was strictly protected for some years.

The wapiti was originally found in many areas of the west coast of both Canada and the United States. The famous Yellowstone National Park — the first concept of its type in the world — was largely created to protect wapiti.

A good wapiti bull weighs between 317kg (700lbs) and 408kg (900lbs) can measure 2.7m (9ft) from nose to tail and stands up to 1.72m (5ft 8in) at the shoulder.

All this means the animal is extremely valuable to commercial game recoverers and a fully mature wapiti bull worth up to \$5000 must be a tremendous temptation to commercial hunters in Fiordland.

In fact over recent years the number of applications by game recoverers to take live wapiti out of Fiordland National Park have been increasing rapidly.

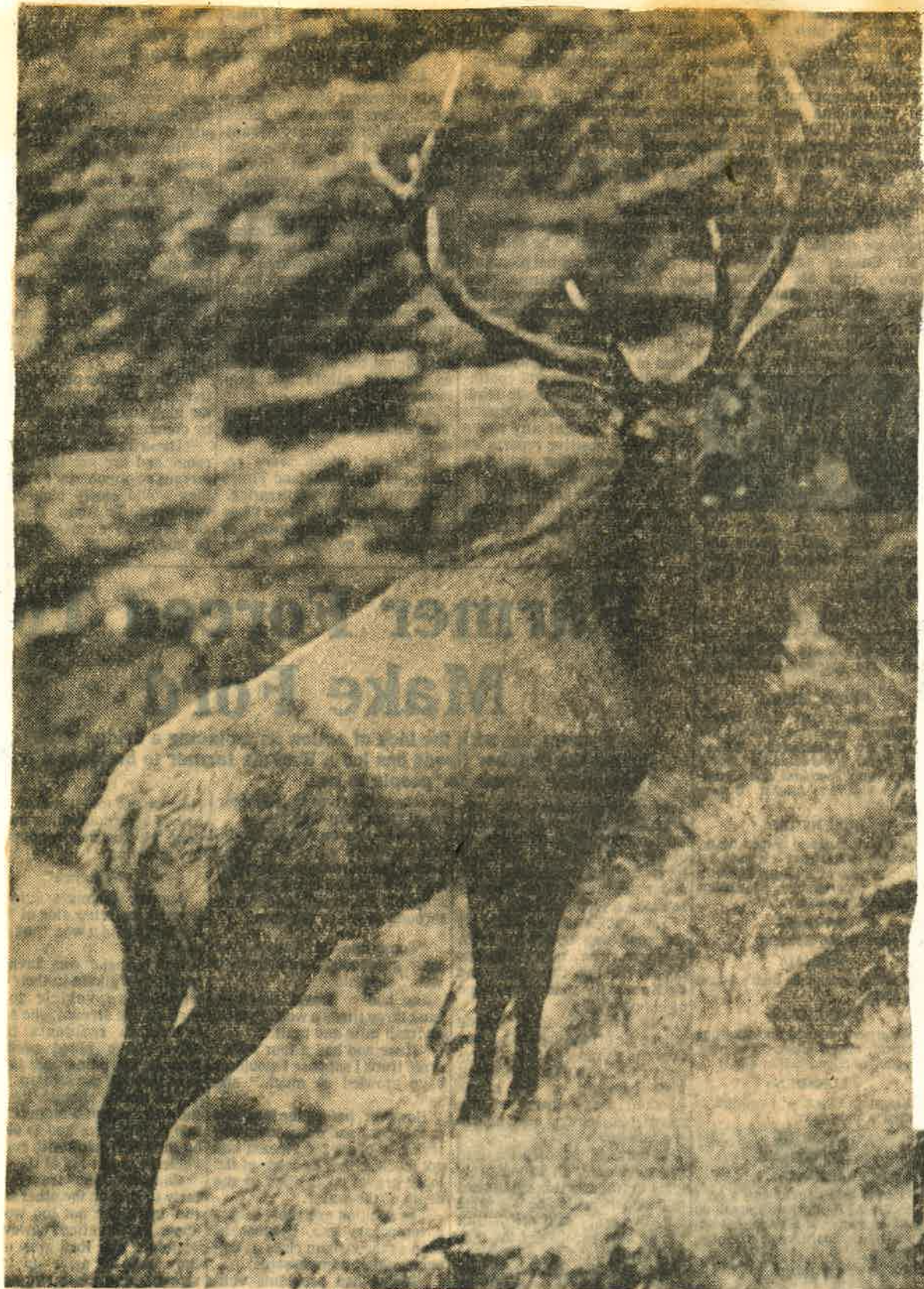
Eighteen months ago the Deerstalkers' Association made special representations to the Minister of Lands, Mr Young on the need for a special wapiti area. The move was unsuccessful.

Last year the National Parks Authority reviewed its policy on wapiti and reinforced its existing stand. Now with the Minister agreed on the need for special consideration and the Federated Mountain Clubs having softened its attitude toward introduced animals in national parks, the Deerstalkers' Association thinks the time is right to declare a special wapiti area.

With roughly 20,000 opossums to every wapiti in Fiordland National Park, Deerstalkers' Association national secretary John Murphy says it's a question of priorities.

"It's also a question of using national parks for one of the reasons they were created — recreation."





A fine study of a relatively young wapiti bull.



This wapiti fawn is as appealing, if not more so, as any young animal. Unless a special area is set aside for wapiti in the Fiordland National Park, the New Zealand Deerstalkers Association believes the chances for future generations of this deer species in New Zealand look grim.



# Park Board

## Replies To

# Deerstalkers

Comment on an article supplied by the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association, published last Thursday, in which the association put its case for an area of the Fiordland National Park to be set aside for wapiti, has been made by the chairman of the Fiordland National Park Board, Mr J. P. Harty, in a letter to the editor of *The Southland Times*.

Mr Harty says:

The article published under the heading "Special Wapiti Area Wanted" contains a number of erroneous statements as well as some other points which require comment. These are as follows:

1. The purpose of the National Parks Act 1952 is not "to provide for recreation and preserve special areas."

The Act states that the main purpose of national parks is to preserve in perpetuity "... areas of New Zealand that contain scenery of such distinctive quality or natural features so beautiful or unique that their preservation is in the national interest." The Act also recognizes that a prime function of national parks is that the public "may receive in full measure the inspiration, enjoyment, recreation and other benefits that may be derived from mountains, forests, sounds, lakes, and rivers." At the same time, it says that freedom of public access shall be subject to "such conditions and restrictions as may be necessary for the preservation of the native flora and fauna or for the welfare in general of the parks."

It is clear, then, that the first requirement is to preserve national parks and then, so far as the principle of preservation allows, to permit the fullest proper use and enjoyment by the public.

2. It is pleasing to see that the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association now acknowledges that hybridization with red deer is a major factor in the decline of the wapiti. For many years it has been obvious that red deer are the more vigorous species and that it would lead to the demise of the wapiti population. In spite of this the association, for a number of years, strongly opposed the board's efforts to reduce the number of red deer in that part of the park in which wapiti are found.

3. Mr Heenan's comments are not accepted by all interested parties.

### Recreational Shooting

4. The trophy shoot is not "the only opportunity afforded by the Fiordland National Park Board for recreational shooting within the wapiti area." The whole of the park is open to recreational hunters, throughout the year. The only exception to this is that the shooting blocks in which wapiti are found are, at the request of recreational hunters, closed to all shooters for a period prior to the commencement of the trophy shoot. (The period this year is three weeks).

I would comment that the then representatives of recreational hunters on the board's recreational hunting advisory committee were opposed to the board opening the blocks containing wapiti outside the period of the trophy shoot.

The only restriction placed on hunters entering the blocks containing wa-

piti is that they may not shoot wapiti-type animals outside the period of the trophy shoot. This restriction was imposed by the board in response to requests from recreational hunters.

5. The working party on Theme 2 at the National Parks Authority's Jubilee Conference did contain representatives of recreational hunters. In fact it was one of them who moved the recommendation that: "If it has been demonstrated that any existing species of introduced fauna or flora has an outstanding aesthetic, scientific, recreational or historical value, and already exists within the confines of a national park, and it can be contained in a specific area under control and without detriment to other park values, consideration should be given to tolerating that species under section 3 (2) (b) or section 28 (1) (a) of the Act."

At no time during the discussion was reference made to any species of deer and from the tenor of the discussion it was clear that its main purpose was directed towards the likes of trout, black-birds and ducks only.

### Holloway Report

6. The New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association habitually misquotes the late Dr J. T. Holloway by omitting the words "disregarding values inherent in the National Park concept" from the quotation.

The second to last paragraph quoted by the association should read:

"All told, assuming that the Stillwater Valley is indeed typical, we have in Fiordland an area where, disregarding values inherent in the national park concept, sustained production of game animals is a safe and legitimate use of the land. Modification of the vegetation and elimination of some plant species may be regretted by those who regard national parks as areas to be kept inviolate and in their pristine condition for all time: but this is impossible."

The fact that the association persists in misquoting Dr Holloway must cast doubt on its integrity and the arguments it presents in its endeavours to justify that a sustained production of game animals is a safe and legitimate use of Fiordland National Park.

Dr Holloway's statement was, I understand, related to observations made of the vegetation in the area occupied by the wapiti herd at the time of Joint American - New Zealand Fiordland Expedition in 1948/49. This expedition took place prior to the population explosion which led to the herd extending its range to other areas of Fiordland where the type of damage was quite different, and almost certainly more severe, from that caused in the former habitat. To state, therefore, that comments based on observations made in 1948/49 is evidence supporting a case for the management of wapiti as a game animal is a gross misrepresentation of the facts.

I would also draw your attention to the 1973 Sanderson Memorial Address - "Deer Extermination, Control or Management" - given to the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of

New Zealand by Dr Holloway. In this address Dr Holloway's conclusions were:

"Extermination is not a practical solution to the deer problem: game management, at least at this juncture, is a pipe dream. The only practical policy is the policy of control as already defined even though this may satisfy no one completely. It will not lead to the restoration of primeval conditions in the forests or for birdlife but it should go a long way towards this end. Nor will it provide for the complete safety of the water-sheds. It will be a never-ending struggle but this is the price we must pay for the introduction of deer in the first place. To my friends the deerstalkers, I would say that, though game management is a pipe dream, there will be deer to be had for as long as can be foreseen. Even helicopters will not eliminate them. They will not be present in such large numbers or in such readily accessible places and more skill will be needed to hunt them, but they will be larger and better animals with a higher trophy value. Hunting under these conditions can remain a popular sport, to be enjoyed by anyone, without the high costs and regimentation implicit in game management."

I believe that this situation still applies.

### Yellowstone Park

7. Yellowstone National Park was not "largely created to protect wapiti." It was born out of a conflict situation; conflict between use of outstanding natural areas for private profit or their reservation for public use and enjoyment.

The Yellowstone country was explored by the Washburn-Langford-Doane Expedition during the summer, of 1870. After five weeks in a region of geysers, canyons, waterfalls, rivers, and lakes the party sat around a campfire near the junction of the Gibbon and Firehole rivers to talk about what members had seen. Being human in a country where the profit motive had always loomed large, members debated filing personal claims to the land to capitalize on the public interest the region would generate as it became known. Finally, that night, a broader view prevailed. Members agreed that what they had seen should not belong to a few but to the nation, and they charted a campaign to make the region a national park.

Today, a National Park Service sign in Yellowstone records the origin of the "national park idea."

"The idea developed with the new, growing nation. It moved in the minds of the explorers of Yellowstone. On their last night in the Yellowstone country the men of the 1870 expedition camped at the junction of the rivers here. The next day they returned to civilization, spreading the word about this wild, beautiful place. Their enthusiasm stirred Congress to establish Yellowstone National Park on March 1, 1872. Here at last was a park, set aside to be preserved in its natural state for all people to enjoy and appreciate - an

American idea that other nations were to follow."

The fact that elk (as wapiti are called in North America) occurred naturally within the area included in Yellowstone National Park had nothing to do with the decision of Congress.

8. I understand that the recommenda-

tion from the Theme 2 working party at the National Parks Authority's Jubilee Conference quoted in 5 above has been incorporated in the Federated Mountain Club's policy on national parks but that this is not intended to cover wapiti.

9. I would be interested to know where or how Mr Murphy obtained his estimate of the opossum and wapiti populations in Fiordland National Park. This statement is nothing but a "red herring" which ignores the intensive control operations undertaken against opossums throughout the restricted areas it inhabits within the park.



# Wapiti Move Seen As Serious Threat

Immediate assurances, in precise terms, have been sought by the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society that no threat to national parks exists from moves by deerstalkers to have a special area of the Fiordland National Park set aside for wapiti.

In a letter to the Minister of Lands, Mr Venn Young, the society says it cannot believe a report from a meeting of deerstalkers in November, that "the present Government sees a possibility of legislation being brought in next year to give the wapiti special status."

"Such a move would be seen for what it is," the society said in its letter to the Minister, "a serious threat to national parks throughout New Zealand, and would evoke widespread public concern."

The society's letter goes on: "Our society, having fought for the establishment and protection of national parks since 1923 would feel duty bound to organize and articulate opposition to such a threat on a national scale."

"It may be appropriate to recall that public opposition to the proposed raising of Lake Manapouri was a direct response to proposals to breach the terms of the National Parks Act by despoiling the lake shores. The society would see any move to satisfy deerstalkers, either by truncating Fiordland National Park or by protecting a destructive animal within the park as an identical issue."

"In 1958, at the commencement of the Manapouri campaign the membership of our society was about 8000, and the campaign was brought to a successful conclusion. Now in 1978, our membership is over 26,000 and we have 40 branches throughout New Zealand. The

society justifiably feels more confident than ever before that it can competently and effectively support the people of New Zealand, their Government and the National Parks Authority in ensuring that our national parks are not violated.

"It is our view that this wapiti question is, in any case, a dying issue. More and more people realize that these animals are in an alien habitat and that the virgin range available to them on their initial liberation will never be repeated. Concern for the bad state of the vegetation in the Fiordland National Park, to which our society was able to accord widespread irrefutable publicity in 1977, is equally a reflection of the degraded habitat of the animal. Also the wapiti is now seriously hybridized with red deer and, pressure from the more aggressive species mounts continuously.

"Obviously, as has been pointed out on more than one occasion, the only future for the wapiti lies in removing a number of animals showing wapiti characteristics to a more suitable habitat where they could indeed be managed and liberated in a suitable area outside national parks. That this is quite practicable is proved by the fact that now, thousands of deer are captured in the wild and successfully introduced to farm conditions, including handling and breeding.

"It is noted, of course, that at the National Parks Jubilee Conference (under

the workshop report for theme 2—preservation ethic), recommendations have been made for consideration by the National Parks Authority of an expanded formula for toleration of certain species of fauna in national parks by way of rationalization of existing conditions. While this might be useful for rationalizing the presence of unharmed species it is obviously quite inappropriate to even suggest that it might be applicable to an animal such as a deer species, the presence of which involves damage and modification of a degree which is the very antithesis of the concept of preservation of national parks.

"This would also clearly breach the standards and concepts world wide for national parks to which New Zealand subscribes."

## Deer Farming Profitable

A claim that deer farming could become a more profitable industry than the hunting of wild deer was made at the New Zealand Institute of Foresters Conference in Te Anau last week.

Mr W. Size, a member of a deer exporting company told the conference that while the deer industry in New Zealand was developing quickly livestock was needed for farms if the industry was to become revenue earning.

He pointed to the fact that few deer were being exported from deer farms because of the value of velvet. Feral deer were on the decline and eventually deer farming might be the more profitable industry with wild deer hunting becoming more of a recreational pursuit.

Last year \$11.9 million was gained from venison exports, \$2 million from deer by products and \$1 million from wild pork exports. Meanwhile the export of opossum skins had achieved \$6.6 million.

## Animal Surveys Discussed

QUEENSTOWN

Reports on some surveys conducted in respect of wild animal control by the Southland Conservancy of the Forest Service were considered this week by members of the Wild Animals Advisory Committee at its annual three-day meeting and field day held at Makarora.

In the Kaipo-John O'Groats region in Fiordland National Park the highest animal densities were on the coast with mean deer densities about three times as high as generally found in Fiordland today.

Coastal forest had been severely modified and in bad condition with palatable species almost removed from the browse level and with regeneration prevented.

It was recommended that the areas most susceptible to long term damage be given a high priority for animal control.

Because of the highly palatable composition of some trees, it was recommended that all practical steps be taken to prevent the infiltration of opossums.

A survey of Long Sound indicated that helicopter controls at present appeared adequate.

But the remoteness of Long Sound and other distant Fiordland blocks, meant that they would be the first to suffer if operations became uneconomic.

Pellet Survey

A pellet survey in the Greenstone-Caples region, Lake Wakatipu, was instigated this year to gather information on trends of deer populations.

There was not as much regeneration there as desired.

In the Waikaia State Forest,

Southland Forest Service staff this year conducted a forest condition and trend and animal distribution and density survey.

It was apparent that helicopter shooting of the tops, recreational shooting of the forest and bush-edge live capture pens were combining to give adequate deer control.

Opossum populations were low to moderate and were being controlled by private trapping and poisoning.

A wider look was being taken by the Forest Service into the problem of domestic stock trampling some areas of bush edge.

There were no critical wild animal problems in the Catlins Forest Park but a survey to be made next year, should identify any potential problems and form a basis for such management problems as live capture of deer, and opossum trapping and poisoning.

Mr Ross Usmar, conservator of forests, Invercargill and chairman of the Wild Animals Advisory Committee said there was a suggestion that the whole forest be made a recreational area.

There had been some pressure for permits for capture pens but they had been refused.

Future use would depend on the results of the survey, he said.

## Extermination of Goats Continuing

QUEENSTOWN

A comprehensive report about goat control operations in the Queenstown and Lakes district region was presented by Mr R.K. Martin, officer-in-charge of the Forest Service at Queenstown to the Wild Animals Advisory Committee this week at Makarora.

Goat control operational priorities are to exterminate goats in the Mt Aspiring National Park where practical — and where not practical, to apply rigid control to prevent further spread within the park — and to rigidly control goats within the Shotover and adjoining catchment at a level compatible with soil, water and vegetation.

This will be carried out by official ground shooting in the summer, search and destroy operations between May and September, and on more accessible

country co-ordinating drives with the Deerstalker's Association.

Mr Martin said the goat population had been drastically reduced but there would not be any relaxation of control.

In respect of erosion in the Kawarau watershed and the effect on the Clutha hydro scheme of fill entering the Shotover river, Mr Martin said there was not a lot that could be done to stabilize the movement of deposits.

The main cause was climatic at an altitude where introduced stabilization techniques would

mostly be ineffective and costly.

The only means to remedy the situation was to let nature take its course, keep wild animals down to controllable levels; strictly control burning permits; put out wildfires immediately; control domestic stock units and ensure good pasture cover where domestic stock was managed in high country.

Some 1863 goats, were killed in the region between January 7 and the end of October this year, about 100 more than last year's figure.



# T.b. Carried By Cattle

## QUEENSTOWN

When reporting about the tuberculosis control operations in the Hokonui hills, at this week's meeting of the Wild Animals Advisory Committee, at Makarora, Mr Keith Twaddle from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries submitted the idea that T.b. was introduced to the Hokonui by tubercular cattle and the opossums contracted it.

Control measures of opossums carried out in the last three years were completed with few areas having significant numbers of opossums left.

A recent survey revealed no T.b. opossums from about 140 poisoned.

Of what the department considered 11 "hard core" infected herds in April, last year, three were now off movement control, and another four have had

their last test, "clear," Mr Twaddle said.

Only four herds remained on the problem list.

Although the Forest Service also reduced the number of feral pigs in the area, pigs were usually infected with Avian T.b. and were not considered a serious spreader but rather a dead-end animal, he said.

The other areas of concern with this problem are the Lindis Pass and Owaka.

In the Lindis the 1976 survey using cyanide, produced 93 opossums and this year 158 opossums and a cat were examined but none showed any lesions of T.b.

The system of testing all cattle over six weeks old on movement control herds three times this season, is expected to solve the problem as long as the department acts before the T.b. spreads any further from the cattle into the opossums, Mr Twaddle said.

Several attempts had been made in the Owaka area to identify T.b. infected opossums but without success.

Pigs were frequently seen, while wild cattle were said to be the source of the problem.

Mr Twaddle believes the problem to be associated with incomplete musters and this is receiving attention.

## Animals Rigidly Controlled

### QUEENSTOWN

The wild animal population such as deer, thar and chamois in the Lake Hawea, Ohau and Ahuriri watersheds, was rigidly controlled.

This was reported by Mr R. K. Martin, Forest Service officer at Queenstown at the Wild Animals Advisory Committee meeting at Makarora this week.

The area where thar were consistently sighted and shot was the Ben Ohau range, and, to a lesser extent, the dividing range with the Landsborough.

There were still thar on the Westland side of the range, Mr Martin said.

In respect of commercial helicopter recovery in that region, Mr Dave Saxton, of Queenstown, had been the most consistent operator and had produced more than 260 animals for time spent on live capture.

In his Hughes 300c model, he had outflow and outshot machines of far better performance (Hughes 500).

"This reflects his experience on animal habit and habitat, derived from his foot-shooting days with the Forest Service, his skill as a pilot and, probably a complete lack of nerve in tense situations has made him ideal for this type of recovery," Mr Martin said.

Vegetation recovery was good, with the wild animal population at present having little effect on the vegetation.

Future control would aim at encouraging commercial operations while still viable, but maintaining a watching brief on the situation, Mr Martin said.

## More Comment on Wapiti In Park

Sir, — I have been following the correspondence of the Deerstalkers Association with a little interest and a considerable degree of boredom which naturally arises from their once again flogging their favourite dead horse (or should I say wapiti) yet again.

They (this self elected minority who have made a degree of noise far and above that of the majority of national park users and of whom a regrettable and unforgivable amount of notice has been taken) are asking that, notwithstanding some several million years unique evolution of Fiordland's, not to say New Zealand's, unique flora and fauna, we should set aside areas to preserve what is recognized, in law, as a noxious animal so they may have the privilege of blowing its head off in the name of "recreation".

Certainly I would not deny anyone such pleasure as they may get from killing any creature, but for heaven's sake why make such a cult of wapiti? I've discussed this at length with an acquaintance who supports the wapiti preservation concept and an interesting point comes through. We have been told that wapiti have interbred with red deer to the extent that even the so-called wapiti enthusiasts cannot tell the difference.

From a superficial study of the subject it would seem that a variety of the species "Cervus Elephas" have been released in sundry parts of Fiordland — these include variations not only from

England, Scotland and Europe but also the much revered variety from North America. Each variety has its own individual characteristics (and I trust this information will not motivate some individual to suggest that another area of Fiordland be set aside for yet another variety of noxious animal.)

I ask, with all respect to the Deerstalkers Association and their offshoot the Big Game Hunters, what is so special about wapiti as against any one of the many variations of this particular species (disastrously) extinct in Fiordland? And allowing for the now recognized fact of interbreeding of wapiti and red deer I would ask on what basis can wapiti fans tell the difference between the different hybrid variations?

S. N. Lurker

Otatara

## Birdlife Not Affected By Poisoning

### QUEENSTOWN

The birdlife on Secretary Island, Doubtful Sound, was good and did not appear to be affected by the 1080 poisoning methods used to combat the deer on the island.

Mr John von Tunzleman, officer-in-charge of the Forest Service at Te Anau, said this in his report to members of the Wild Animal Advisory Committee at the annual three-day meeting and field day at Makarora this week.

The main hazard for birds from the natural bait technique, came about if the 1080 was washed off the underside of the leaf to which it was applied.

Mr M. Small (Wildlife division, Internal Affairs, Queenstown) said a waterproof spray was now available which would stop poison running off broad leaf.

In a report about deer control operations in the Murchison mountains to protect the habitat for takahē, Mr von Tunzleman said 177 deer had been killed by ground hunters with 24 deer and 1011 opossums accounted for by private hunters.

Helicopter operations in that area destroyed 91 deer.

A strict look out had been maintained for chamois in the Darran mountains to eliminate the southward spread and popu-

lation build-up to the Fiordland National Park, Mr von Tunzleman said.

### Numbers Reduced

Only one chamois was found and destroyed in the Neal Burn which indicated a big reduction in numbers, which could be attributable to the successful efforts of the late Max Evans.

In Transit valley, the home of the kakapo, Mr von Tunzleman said it was doubtful if the Kakapo would survive but that every effort must be undertaken to encourage them back to a safer population.

To achieve that, the wild animal population, which was not high within that area, must be kept in check.

In the Eyre-Takatimu mountains, the present wild animal control was being effectively maintained by commercial helicopter and recreational hunter.

Operational objectives were to maintain present low populations of wild animals so that the revegetation programme on Cheviot Downs (Takitimu) and Mt Bee (Eyre) was not affected by unwanted depletion by an-

imals, domestic or wild.

Private hunter returns in that area are: Eyre, 17 deer and 1004 opossum; Takitimu, two deer, 20 pigs and 591 opossum; Snowdon, nine deer, 19 pigs, 2124 opossum and Pyke, 16 deer.

## Waitutu Forest

Sir, — Having been the first to jet boat the river access into the Waitutu State Forest and having hunted and boated this area for the past 13 years I feel I must comment on Mr Usmar's latest statement concerning Waitutu State Forest.

I would like to ask the Maori representative of the Waitutu Incorporation to look into the possible existence of the lost tribe in this area as many mysterious things happen in the State forest. For example, unexplained fires, strong winds which demolish camp

sites, very high humidity which rots securing lines to boats within hours to name but a few. Seriously though, most recreational shooters and deer capture operators are responsible people who respect the Maori land, artefacts and traditions as they do the State forests and national parks.

About the expense accrued while checking this area, Mr Lake and myself made the allegations of indiscriminate vandalism in our State forest and offered to transport forest representatives completely at our own expense into the areas in question which are not accessible by helicopter. Our offer was turned down. Instead a helicopter was supplied by the Forestry against our judgment as it could not land us or them in the areas we wished to view. I personally feel it was a complete and utter waste of our time and theirs and also public money.

I suggest Mr Usmar looks into this matter with more seriousness. A public apology to Mr Lake is also in order as no debt need have been incurred by the Forest Service other than their time if they had taken our advice and free offer.

G. Walker

[Asked to comment, Mr Ross Usmar, conservator of forests, New Zealand Forest Service, said: "There were several reasons why this helicopter was used in preference to Messrs Walker and Lake's offer of taking my officers in their jet boat to investigate their complaints. These were: 1. The day was arranged to coincide with other work the helicopter was engaged on within this forest thereby saving positioning charges and saving much of the day being taken up on this fruitless investigation. 2. The helicopter was able to land directly at the pen site where Messrs Lake and Walker claimed the alleged indiscriminate felling of native trees, and erection of pens using Forest Service powersaws and labour had recently taken place. All three of these claims were proven false. 3. Where it is apparent that there is some conflict between different parties, it is preferable to arrange official transport for investigation rather than rely on one party's favours."]



An innovation in live deer catching techniques was displayed at the Fiordland Aero Club's air pageant at Te Anau on Saturday. Here, a modified .303 rifle with two barrels pointing in a V shape, propel two heavy rods with a net attached towards the escaping cattle beast. Richard (Hannibal) Hayes, the pilot of the Hughes 500, series C is pictured manoeuvring the machine around so the shooter could obtain a clear shot at the fleeing animal. It could not run as fast as a deer, their usual target, and the net overshot the beast. Hayes astounded the large crowd at the pageant with his antics in the Alpine Helicopters Ltd machine.

## Helicopters Steal Limelight At Air Pageant

The helicopters stole the limelight at the Fiordland Aero Club's first ever air pageant at the Te Anau air strip on Saturday.

Any doubts that the eight-year-old club is still in its formative stages were firmly dispelled for the 2500 or so people who watched the show in glorious weather. The whole afternoon's entertainment was superbly organized and was capped off with a magnificent hangi.

Three men in a helicopter astounded the spectators by giving a demonstration of live deer catching. The "deer" were in fact, young cattle, which were released in the middle of the airfield while the helicopter, a Hughes 500, series C, piloted by Richard ("Hannibal") Hayes, hovered nearby.

The terrified animal took off as the chopper approached it, while "Hannibal's" shooter, Colin Teates, prepared to capture it.

The helicopter careered around the field after it, and just as the machine seemed about to land on the beast, Colin launched himself from it on to the fleeing cattle beast.

It was the original space-age bulldog.

Apart from a demonstration of sheer bravado by Colin, the

capture demonstrated to the enthralled crowd the way these men earn their living.

### Far Cry

What the spectators may not have been aware of, however, was that bull-dogging deer is carried out on terrain which is a far cry from the smoothly cultivated paddocks of the air-drome.

These men catch live deer high in the wilds of rugged Fiordland, leaping from the machine at speeds of up to 50km/h on to ground where they have no idea of what lies beneath the tussock.

The second cattle beast was captured with the aid of an electric stunning device which slowed the animal down sufficiently for it to be caught. Jeff Carter, another helicopter shooter, assisted Colin by flinging himself from the helicopter as well to help tie the animal, attach it beneath the machine and lift it back to the enclosure.

### New System

The third demonstration involved a net which was dragged towards the beast by two heavy metal rods, fired from a modified .303 rifle. The device was fired from inside the helicopter as "Hannibal" manoeuvred the machine around for the shooter to obtain a clear shot at it. The system has only recently been developed and it took two attempts to bag the animal.

The fixed-wing aircraft displays appeared a little tame after the helicopter demonstrations, but about 25 small aeroplanes were present for the day's festivities.

An old Harvard provided a few nostalgic moments for sections of the crowd when it flew past. Most models of aircraft present at the pageant displayed their capabilities at some stage of the afternoon.

In what must have been one of the largest formations of helicopters in the south for a long time, 11 machines, ranging from Hughes 300s and 500s up to

Bell Jet Rangers, flew past the crowd like a swarm of huge insects.

Several other displays of the capabilities of the various helicopters amazed the crowd, many of whom were holiday-makers who had probably not seen helicopters at close range before.

Bill Black, in a Jet Ranger, lifted an old car to about 330 metres before dropping it on to the airfield and putting the resulting fire out with a monsoon

bucket. He created a fantastic effect by unloading the contents of the bucket from a great height on to the runway. The brilliant sun shone through the towering myriad of water droplets which took about 10 seconds to reach the ground, drenching excited children who ran beneath the artificial shower.

The movements of a Jet Ranger helicopter, piloted by Alan Bond, looked for all the world like an airborne mechanical version of a ball-room dancer, as it pranced along the air-strip.

Saturday's airshow was the first the Fiordland Aero Club has organized, but if the success of the day's activities can be an indication of the club's future, it is assured. It is a thriving little organization.

22/1/79



# Shooting deadly game

**Dr Greta Stevenson, a research botanist at Victoria University, member of the New Zealand Alpine Club and several naturalist societies, gives her views on deer in native forests.**

**DURING** the very long geological period New Zealand has been isolated from other land masses, its plant cover has evolved to become a unique entity with a very high proportion of endemics — species found nowhere else in the world. And our high rainfall throughout the year has

led to development of rain forest unlike the forests of the northern temperate regions from which our exotic animals were brought.

Our bush is evergreen and the always-covered, always-sheltered undergrowth is naturally a dense mass of small shrubs, ferns and mosses.

And the flower fields of our alpine regions which excited the enthusiastic admiration of the earliest travellers have given special joy to generations of botanists and mountaineers.

This vegetation developed in harmony with large and small grazing birds most of which are now extinct. It was ill-suited to meet the onslaught of huge numbers of hoofed animals resulting from the introduction of game species. These animals all found New Zealand more favour-

able than their previous environment and, in the absence of predators, increased their numbers enormously. In most parts of the country numbers have reached catastrophic levels resulting in erosion in the mountains and permanent degradation of the plant cover.

Under extreme animal attack, forest undergrowth becomes so eaten out that adult trees linger uneasily in an unnatural footing of running shingle, a death-knell which has been reached in too many

places. Sometimes this destruction has turned the ground into a bare running scree, the kind of permanent damage visible from afar on some of our mountains, glaringly so in the Ruahines and in North Canterbury.

If the damage is not so severe all at once the edible ground cover is gradually replaced by inedible species and the character of the bush is subtly altered. In large areas of beech forest in the Tararua, Ruahine, Kaimanawa and Kawaka mountains, to mention only those places I have visited recently, the earlier undergrowth of beech

seedlings and saplings, the compromas and shield ferns have been replaced by thickets of horopito and swards of crown ferns which the animals do not eat.

Outwardly, to the uninitiated, the forest may look all right. But it has lost its heart. There is no regeneration, no young trees coming on. No beech can rise to fill a windthrow gap. Nothing is left for deer to eat in these places so grazing pressure is all the more severe on surrounding areas. Soil underfoot is trodden hard, the mosses and small ferns trampled out as well as eaten off and the waterholding capacity of the country profoundly changed.

A very recent study by some members of the Wellington Botanical Society has shown that the plant cover of part of Mt Reeves in the southern Tararua, burned in 1890 and surveyed in detail in 1949 by which time the vegetation had partially recovered, has since then not merely ceased to recover but has degenerated. Heavy browsing of the fragile association was reported as well as other changes.

Our natural alpine gardens have suffered even more drastically than the bush. Many of the unique New Zealand mountain flowers and tussocks are highly palatable and greedily consumed by herds of deer, chamois and thar with the same result. Some places are reduced to running shingle. Others are stabilised with a coarse cover of inedibles, spaniards or spear grasses, harsh tussocks, maori onions and tough celmisias.

Almost the only place left to see a good show of our mountain flowers is along the Milford track where the pressure of people through all the post-war years has been strong enough to keep the enemy at bay.

In the wilderness areas the lovely alpine flowers are eaten to the roots and killed out wherever the animals can reach. Rock climbers may still find a few treasures but the great alpine gardens of glorious flowers which used to adorn the slopes of the Southern Alps have disappeared.

Deer stalkers have told me repeatedly that if they see five deer they will never be so silly as to shoot more than the one they want to carry home.

It's only a matter of simple sense for these short-sighted people to want plenty of deer handy. They will never do anything useful to control deer or to reduce their numbers. As recreational hunters out for an occasional weekend or a short summer holiday they have scant understanding of the bush.

What a contrast the helicopter hunter is. A professional out to kill as many animals as possible and not to waste any ammunition, he shoots cleanly through the head. Hundreds of carcasses arrive at the venison recovery centres with the jaws shot through, useless for research measurements but cleanly and certainly killed.

These hunters should be encouraged and helped in every way possible as they are doing the country a very great service. To prevent them getting on with their job is madness. As a backup measure it is urgently necessary for the Forest Service, which is responsible for animal control, to maintain ground hunters to work all the year round in forested regions and shoot animals in places not reached by the commercial hunters.

Much better control of deer numbers is an urgent necessity for the well-being of the country, and the well-being of the remaining animals. Recreational hunters will have to work harder and be more skilled to get what they want.

The rise in numbers of exotic animals has been paralleled by a tragic decline in numbers of native birds.

In the forest parks, overrun by deer, native birds are few because the berrying shrubs which they need and the thick ground cover full of insects on which they feed have been destroyed in so many places by noxious animals.

The vegetation of the country is the mainstay of the scenery and is of enormous importance for our tourist industry as well as for the aesthetic pleasure of local citizens. It is of immense scientific interest and importance for students from all parts of the world.

To large numbers of people who have a declared interest in using the mountains and bush for walking, tramping, camping, climbing, birdwatching and nature-study in all its branches, preservation of the bush is vitally necessary. Besides wanting this for their own pleasant activities they keenly appreciate the importance of maintaining healthy bush for many scientific reasons, and of keeping mountains well covered for protection of water supplies,

and of lowlands from flooding.

The many societies concerned with these aspects of preservation of the environment have banded together under an umbrella organisation called ECO which now covers a membership of approximately 1/4 million people belonging to 60 organisations.

The New Zealand Deerstalkers Association declared membership is just on 2000 though this includes all the members of the family of a financial deerstalker. But

even this inflated number is a tiny proportion of the people concerned with protecting the environment.

The deerstalkers have been vocal out of all proportion to their numbers and they have been listened to out of reason considering the harsh and bitter facts of deer damage and overpopulation, well documented in many scientific papers. Deerstalkers want things far too easy for their own good. Far more control and reduction of deer numbers is absolutely necessary. ●



Beech forest in Caples Valley, Western Otago . . . after the deer.





"A DEERSTALKER'S DREAM" has been caught on a Waikaia sheep station.

The stag was caught on Argyle station, the property of Mr F. R. Andrews. It is estimated to be 350lbs deadweight and equals the best caught in the area, and is certainly the larg-

est ever taken live in the Waikaia district.

It was caught less than a kilometre from the homestead at Argyle, being shot with a tranquillizing dart from a helicopter.

The pilot, Mr Doug Maxwell,

said it was one of the biggest deer he had seen.

The stag yielded an incredible 17lbs of velvet — about twice that of a normal stag. This alone would shoot its worth considerably, as not only will it bring in a large annual income, but also will probably sire off-

spring with similar qualities.

However, Mr Andrews could not say how much the animal would be worth on the market.

"I have seen some stags go at \$3500 and they were not nearly as good as this one. But it is impossible to say," he said.

Mr Andrews has not yet decided whether he will keep the stag for breeding purposes or sell it.

"We'll put him in the paddock and see what happens," he said.

Before that, a special fence will have to be erected because Mr Andrews thinks that he would probably jump the present deer enclosures as soon as he is put out to feed.

The deer is being kept in a shed until he calms down.

One of Mr Andrew's employees, Mr E. G. Ferris, is pictured with the velvet cut from the stag's head. Although it was caught a little late this season to gain top price, the deer will yield the same amount of velvet each year, bringing in about \$1500 annually, on today's prices.

## Deer Farmers' Needs Must Be Met, Hunters Told

(P.A.)

The Government will need to provide deer farmers and those licensed to capture wild animals with a means of meeting the demand for stocking deer farms, the Minister of Forests, Mr Young said yesterday.

WELLINGTON

The industry was rapidly developing but unless the demand for wild deer was met, deer farms would face a serious impediment to their growth and productivity, he told the inaugural meeting of the recreational hunting advisory committee in Wellington yesterday.

He said many people had confidence in the future of deer

farming and more than 660 people had sought licences to capture live deer.

"Of these, more than 300 have been received in the last year."

Mr Young said the committee would have to decide the rights of recreational hunters in the light of demands being made by other groups such as deer farmers and conservationists.

"The sport hunter cannot simply claim that the wild animal resources of the country are his by implied or historic right."

"It is a narrow line we tread between the needs of deer farmers and the just, recreational demands of the hunters whom you represent," he told the meeting.

Mr Young said he envisaged the committee would become

involved in advising on recreational hunting on the national scene, and would also advise him on related matters.

There was a "delicate line" between interests, each competing for a share in the wild animal populations, or promoting a particular view about them.

"In considering suitable hunting areas for setting apart for recreational hunting, you will certainly have to adopt guidelines or specific criteria. Conservation of soils and water and of native flora and fauna must be paramount in all your consideration."

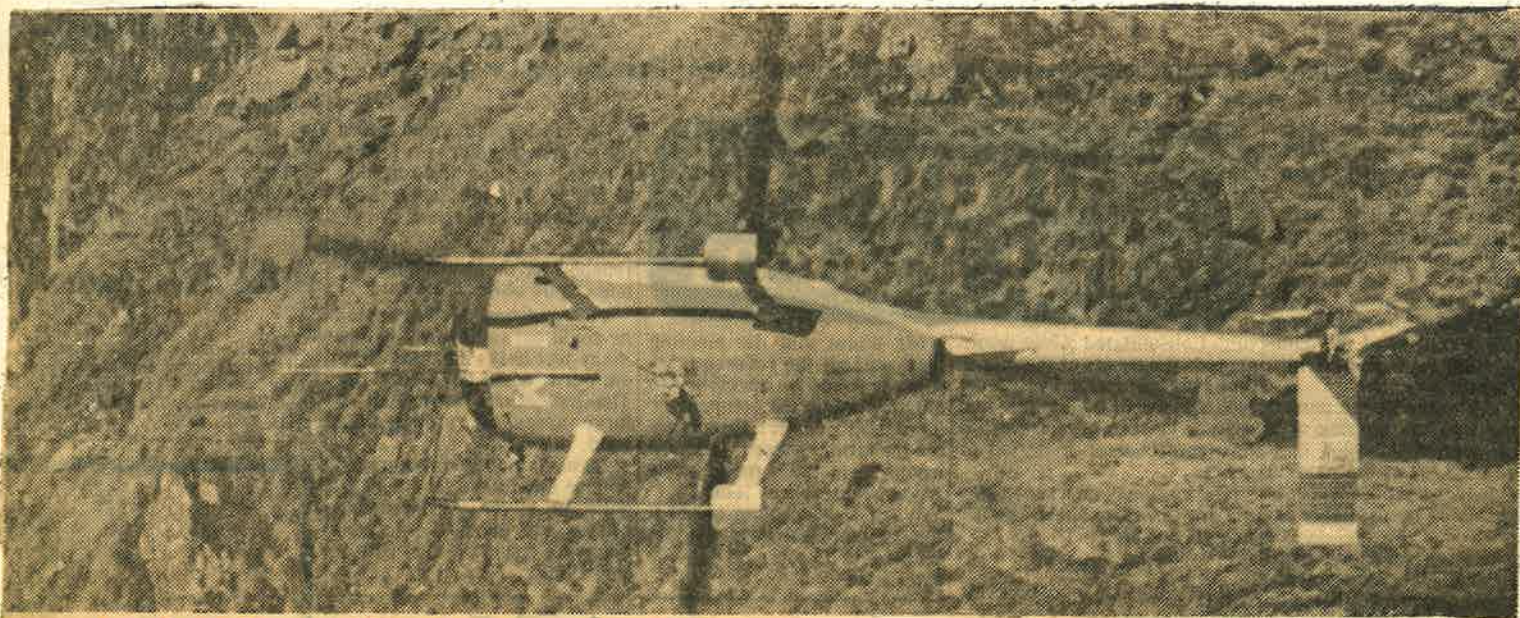
"There is some concern among the conservation and preservation oriented organizations that recreational hunting areas may be managed for the maximum production of trophy

animals, irrespective of the water and soil values. The areas that you recommend ... as recreational hunting areas, should therefore be carefully chosen so as to allay such fears," the Minister said.





A glassy-eyed hind, spent drug dart protruding from her back, unprotestingly allows Jeff to strap her legs together for transportation to a clearing for the antidote to be administered. Speed is the essence in these situations, because the animals quickly die if they remain drugged for more than about 25 minutes.



At right angles to the ground, Richard (Hannibal) Hayes swings his machine hard around a bluff, hoping to surprise a deer grazing around the corner.

26/1/79





Colin Yeates displays the electrical stun gun the first system used in the airborne capture of deer in Fiordland.



Suspended by four thrashing blades, "Hannibal" Hayes and his shooter Colin Yeates pass high over a valley floor en route to Te Anau.

26/1/79



helicopters  
Ltd.

# 'Captain Basil' Ever Ready

Hugh Hefner has nothing on the boys from the Ranganui.

The Ranganui is an aging 105ft former coaster that Alpine Helicopters Ltd has converted into a type of mother-ship for the company choppers that daily forage among the wilds of Fiordland in their quest for live deer.

Two machines can land on the ramp especially built above the vessel's holds and the crews from the choppers are always welcomed by Basil, the ships "captain."

Nestled at the head of George sound and surrounded by towering mountains, it is an idyllic setting for the semi-retired ship that Basil understandably enough, rarely leaves.

She can accommodate more than 20 people in beds with linen and blankets for all. A huge room beneath the landing ramp gives the intermittent visitors plenty of room to relax after their physically and mentally exhausting day's labour.

The pilots and their crews can arrive at any time, but Basil prides himself that he has never been "caught out" and had nothing to feed the men with.

Our evening meal consisted of a bowlful of huge mussels picked from the rocks in the sound an hour beforehand, deliciously thick soup and steak and vegetables.

But Basil has little to worry about, even if he will be one day "caught out."

Blue cod, green bone, tetraki and other fish abound in the sound and can be caught from a small boat within a couple of hundred metres from the Ranganui with ridiculous ease.

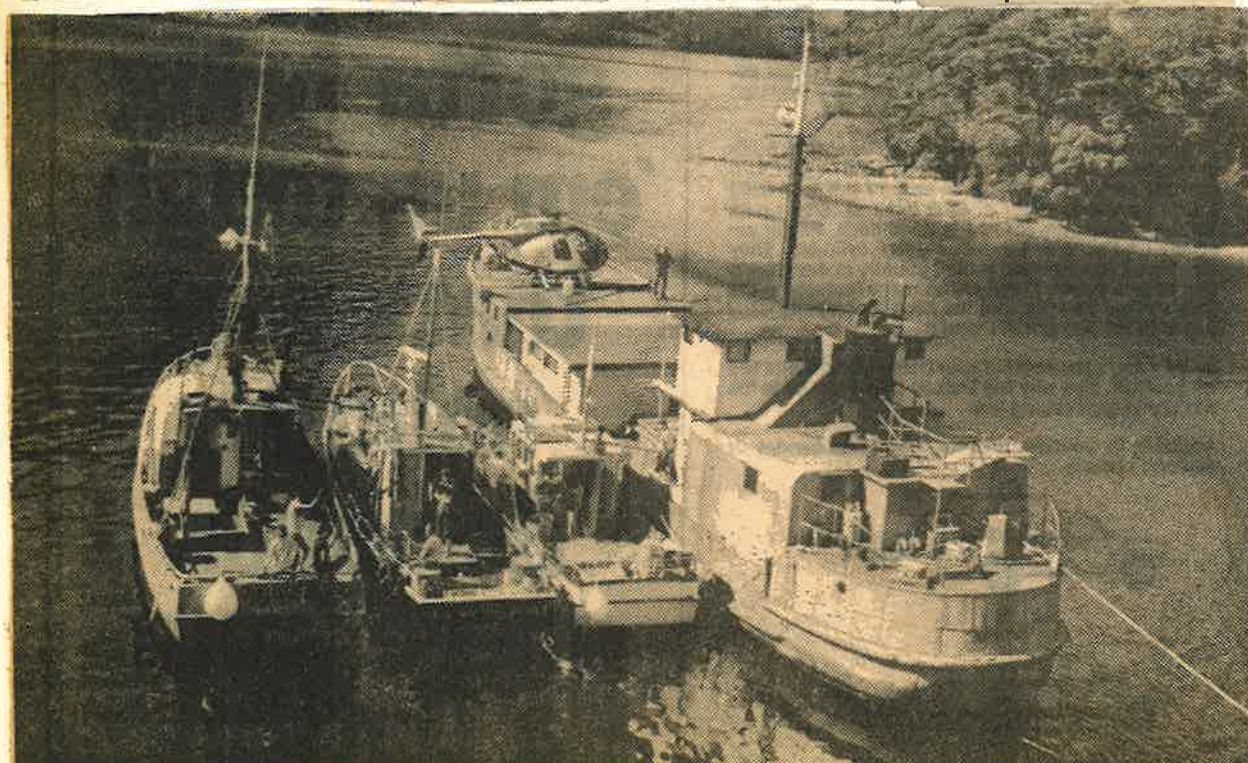
Basil usually hosts between five and 10 "guests," but even if occasionally the helicopter crews decided to

stay overnight at Te Anau, he is kept company by the crews from a couple of fishing boats which usually berth beside the Ranganui.

For fishing crews, the Ranganui provides a relief from the claustrophobic confines of the interior of their own small vessels, as well as an opportunity to catch up on the news from the outside world, usually brought in in the form of a newspaper by one of the chopper crews. It is also an access to other comforts such as fresh bread, cigarettes and other things.

A painstaking but vital chore to be performed before every flight, Jeff begins the task of pressurizing and testing the tranquillizer darts. As is pumped in behind the drug so that when the tip hits the animal, the air pressure forces the tranquillizer through a small hole behind the dart tip and into the deer's system.

26/1/79



Nestled at the head of George sound, the Ranganui often serves as a wharf for fishing boats working the treacherous Fiordland coastline for crayfish. The helicopter crews keep the fishermen in touch with the outside world and often bring them in day to day supplies, such as cigarettes, newspapers and bread.





Leaning precariously from the cockpit, Jeff Carter aims the dart gun at a fleeing hind, while Dick Deaker's skill as a pilot is tested to give him a clear shot as well as keeping the rapidly-moving target within the gun's range.



"Hannibal" Hayes and Colin Feates lift off from the Ranganui, away on another late afternoon flight over the wilds of Fiordland in search of live deer.

26/1/79.



Hannibal Hayes at the helm playing cat and mouse with the machine piloted by Dick Deaker that this photograph was taken from. We were heading for Te Anau, travelling up Charles sound and returning from two unforgettable days when both pilots took part in some light-hearted manoeuvres.



# Cowboys of The Air Lead Exciting Lives

Helicopter pilots and their shooters involved in catching live deer from the Fiordland National Park enjoy one of the most spectacular but dangerous occupations in New Zealand.

They scour the ruggedest, most beautiful wilderness in New Zealand in their search for live deer, which, safely captured and returned to the civilized side of Lake Te Anau, are worth up to \$2000 each for stags and slightly less than half that for hinds.

But safely catching a wild animal that can traverse open ground at speeds of up to 60 km/h, escaping from a deafening machine that has probably never been closer than about 500m to it before, is some feat.

To get a better idea of how these men go about capturing deer on the hoof, we went out for two days in Fiordland with two men employed by Alpine Helicopters Ltd, the Central Otago-based company that mushroomed with the venison boom.

We spent a morning in search of the wily and elusive animals with Dick Deaker, a helicopter pilot in the Fiordland area since the venison boom, and Jeff Carter, Dick's shooter. Such is Dick's love for flying, he owned a small fixed wing aircraft before owning a car. Deaker has been flying for 13 years.

## More Danger

Jeff has shot thousands of deer for their carcass value, but the dart gun system he uses now to tranquilize a fleeing animal is many times more dangerous and difficult to operate, for pilot and shooter alike.

But his .308 is never far from reach in the back of the helicopter, because a condition of helicopter operators gaining permission to capture deer in the park is that any which cannot be captured live must be shot.

In the old days, it was simply a matter of picking off deer with semi-automatic military type rifles, gutting them in the park and transporting them out for processing.

But live deer capture is a whole new ball game. These days, the shooter must be part veterinarian, part scientist, part crackshot, and most importantly, part mad.

The most spectacular, but by far the most dangerous method of capture is bull-dogging. On odd occasions, when the shooter feels it is possible to do this without injuring himself, he abandons the tranquilizer gun and flings himself from the pursuing helicopter on to the back of the terrified beast.

Bingo, a scared, but very much alive deer.

A saner, more common method used to capture the animals is with the aid of a tranquilizer dart fired from a modified .22 rifle. But the drug takes about 15 minutes to take effect, so to prevent losing the beast in the dense bush, another small radio transmitter inside a second dart is fired simultaneously from the double barrelled .22.

If both darts hit the fleeing animal (and they are notoriously inaccurate at distances of more than two metres), it will eventually collapse and the helicopter can then home in on the \$200 transmitter dart embedded in its back.

If the animal has collapsed in dense bush, the shooter often has to alight from the helicopter and climb down a tree to the deer.

The deer is then attached to the chain and lifted up and away to a clearing where an antidote can be injected into the drugged animal to prevent it dying.

It takes only five seconds for the transition from stupified beast to a kicking, struggling terrified deer.

If the drugged animal cannot be reached within about 25 minutes, the tranquilizer will kill it.

Another recently developed method which most hunters are experimenting with is a net system, fired from a modified .303 rifle. The net entangles the animal and it is then a matter of leaping from the chopper and securing it before it escapes.

The method first used to capture live deer involved firing two electric darts attached to the helicopter by long thin wires wound on a reel. When the darts hit the animal, a current is passed through them, momentarily stunning the deer.

While the deer recovers from the shock, the shooter leaps from the machine and captures it before it has a chance to escape.

This method is now somewhat outdated however, and there are hopes that a single barrel, incorporating a transmitter as well as the tranquilizer, will soon be developed.

The whole process of improving the capturing techniques is largely a story of Kiwi ingenuity, although the electrical system was imported from the U.S.

We flew over to George Sound last Friday afternoon to unload supplies and gasoline for the choppers on to the old 105ft former coaster, Ranganui, berthed at the head of the sound to accommodate the choppers and their crews from Alpine Helicopters.

For the rest of the afternoon it was a quiet period of exploration of the sound and a spot of cod fishing to fill in time before hitting one of the 25 odd beds scattered around the old ship.

Dick and Jeff had gone out for a sortie on their own for the evening and managed to bag a hind. They returned just before dark after dropping the animal back at Te Anau.

At 6 a.m. the next day we lifted off and headed north over the mountains towards Milford Sound.

We had been in the air about 30 minutes when Dick spotted a hind and her fawn browsing far below us on a river bank. The helicopter seemed to fall out of the sky and we dropped into the valley at a frightening rate.

Jeff at this stage, was leaning far out of the machine with the dart gun cocked and ready to fire.

## Crash Tackle

Dick pulled the machine up about two metres above the ground and just as I was expecting Jeff to fire the darts, he suddenly threw the gun back into the chopper and leapt at the two animals. He crash-tackled the fawn, but the mother got away.

However, Jeff's sudden departure from the helicopter momentarily upset Dick's control of his machine and it tilted over towards the trees, the rotors crashing through branches and undergrowth hanging over the river.

It was a terrifying experience for the learner helicopter passengers in the back seat to see branches being smashed to matchwood by the blades which were supposed to be keeping us in the air.

A quick landing and the rotors were checked by Dick. But we were soon back in the air once again, sweeping over some of the most beautiful land in New Zealand.

We left the bound fawn beside the river and picked it up later on our way to the holding pen, near the 26 mile peg by the Milford Road.

The deafening roar of the motor and jets on the Hughes 500, series C made conversation practically impossible, but the two men know each other's thoughts so well it is unnecessary.

As we floated down into another valley after ascending a 4000ft sheer cliff, I was stunned by the awe-inspiring beauty of the panorama.

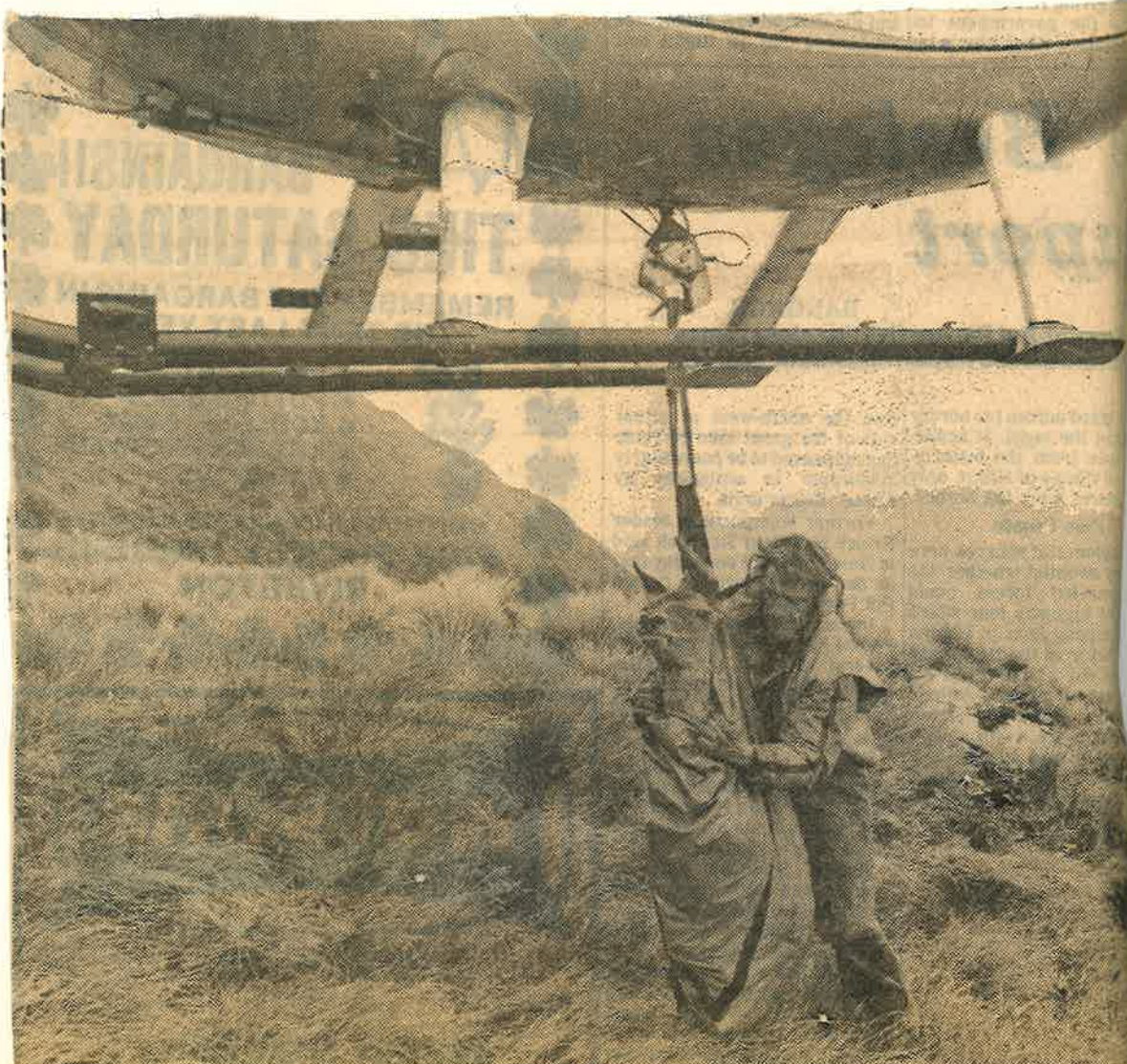
But I was suddenly jolted back to reality and the purpose of the flight when Dick banked sharply. We were off after another hind.

The terrified animal took off for the cover of the bush about 200m away but before the hind could reach it, Dick had manoeuvred the machine to within two metres of it, hovering over it as it dashed for the bush.

Jeff calmly reached over, fired both darts into its back, nodded to the pilot, and we banked up from the tussock-covered ground racing past below us.

While waiting for the tranquilizer drug to take effect, we flop-flopped our way into the neighbouring valley, disturbing a grazing stag.

This time we were not so lucky. In an attempt to evade the screaming machine above it, the stag leapt vainly for a bluff about three metres away, but it landed in a shingle drift and collapsed.



Jeff Carter loads a hind beneath the chopper.

26/1/79



It tumbled down the mountain about 30 metres and plunged to its death over a cliff.

What was potentially \$2000 worth of stag on the hoof had just reduced itself to \$150 worth of venison on the hook.

The stag broke its neck in the fall and shattered both front legs, but was retrieved for the value of the meat. Once an animal has been darted and it dies — and they often do — the meat is inedible, but this stag's hind quarters at least would be processed for the venison.

### Hair-raising

Jeff gutted the animal and attached it below the chopper before we returned to the area where the hind had been darted.

It was a hair-raising descent as the craft lurched from side to side, homing in on the transmitting beacon. Dick's ear-phones were attached to the receiver for the beacon dart and it was a relatively simple task to find the fallen animal in the bush.

It was so stupefied by the effects of the dart, Jeff merely walked it the 15 metres up the hill to the clearing, keeping a steady hand on the hind's back to prevent it toppling sideways.

From there, it was bound and attached beneath the chopper to be transported above the bush-line for the antidote to be administered. It was then placed in a safety bag for transportation beneath the helicopter back to the holding pen near the Milford road.

We bagged another hind under similar circumstances, and with the fawn captured earlier in the back with Barry and I, we headed back over the lake with two live hinds and a dead stag slung beneath us.

We had spent three hours in the air and with the successful capture of two hinds and a fawn, plus a little extra from the dead stag, just under \$2000 had been earned.



Dick quickly jabs the antidote into a drugged hind's foreleg, while Jeff holds its head, anticipating the struggle about to occur in a few seconds.

26/1/79



A fully alert but helpless and terrified hind about to be suspended beneath the Hughes 500 series C helicopter and transported at a dizzying height across Lake Te Anau to captivity. This animal survived the ordeal of capture and will fetch around \$750 from a commercial deer farmer. Jeff prepares to attach the support bag beneath the chopper.





The remains of a burnt-out camp in the Waitutu forest. Who will clean it up?



Deer shooter, Ken Lake, negotiates the rapid Wairaurahiri in the Waitutu state forest.

### Deer in Parks

Sir, — Never have I read such a self-centred letter as the one written by "Veritas" of Halfmoon Bay. The last half of this scribing implies that the recreational hunter would exploit the bushlands of New Zealand, then the correspondent carries on to "hope that the high commercial value of the animal will be maintained."

I ask the question: If the price of deer is high, which of the two types of hunter would best be able to exploit these bushlands? The man who may well only be able to pursue a favourite pastime

maybe once a month or even fortnight? Or the full-time exponents of mass capture and extermination for purely selfish and financial gain?

There are sufficient scenic attractions in the vast forest areas of New Zealand for tourists and others wanting "more intimate interests" without endangering the sporting inclinations of the average New Zealand resident. It is because of attitudes like those of "Veritas" that recreational hunting is getting put down all the time and knocked back the way it is today.

Harold the Happy Hog

Woodlands

10/1/79









Jeff Carter, airborne live deer catcher, with the weapon of his occupation. One barrel of the modified .22 rifle discharges the tranquilizer dart, and the other fires the \$200 radio transmitter dart. When the drug dart takes effect, Dick Deaker, Jeff's pilot, homes in on the transmitter dart. When the drug dart takes effect, Dick Deaker, Jeff's pilot, homes in on the transmitter dart stuck in the collapsed deer.

## Dangerous Hunting Methods

(P.A.) WELLINGTON  
The Mountain Safety Council is concerned that hunters in New Zealand bush are not taking enough care to properly identify their targets.

Two recent accidents in the Taupo area, one fatal, were apparently the result of failure by hunters to identify their targets, according to the council's firearms field officer, Mr Peter Chard.

"At a time when many more people than usual are in the bush, everyone must take extreme care. But the responsibility does not rest entirely with hunters," he said.

"Trampers, hunters and all other users of the bush must be sure to wear distinctive clothing. It is pointless wearing yellows, reds and browns, as these colours blend with the bush at this time of year. The best colour to wear is a patch of bright orange," said Mr Chard.

People entering bush areas should also take the precaution of advising the ranger of the district of where they were going and how long they would be in the bush.

"This allows the ranger to tell trampers and hunters of where the safe areas are and to warn them about the fire risk," said Mr Chard.

"Hunters must also take care to avoid the very dangerous practice of 'sound shooting' — firing at a noise without first identifying what the cause of the noise is," he said.

Another practice concerning the council is that of spotlight shooting.

Mr Chard said spotlighting was very dangerous. People shooting with spotlights, in the bush or in open areas, run the risk of having their vehicles and weapons confiscated.

"The big danger is that shooters often do not consider the firing zone. With a spotlight they can only see their target — they cannot see what is beyond it," he said.

1/78

26/79



25/1/79



Jeff Carter keeps a steady hand on the back of a shaky drugged hind, walking it up to a clearing where it can be given the tranquillizer antidote. The photograph shows the amazing effects of the drug, Fentaz. The deer has probably never smelt, let alone felt the touch of man.

## Deer in Parks

Sir, — I'm encouraged to find that at least some of my letters have had some conviction even to a bored member of the F. and B. Society, in his Stewart Island retreat.

To put Mr MacIntyre's 1972 election remarks in perspective, I must remind "Veritas" that he was facing imminent defeat and was being hounded, particularly in his own electorate, over his attitude on both Manapouri and trout-farming.

Prominent also amongst his critics at that time was the F. and B. Society as "Veritas" may well know, so I am unimpressed now with his lauding of Mr MacIntyre's remarks to score a point for himself.

I repeat that if "Veritas" is to get his "idealistic" message across, he should campaign also against tourism, spelled rotational cropping of shooting and capture blocks (his "exploiting the area for personal gain"), destruction of vegetation for traps and landing pads, fuel dumps and untidy illegal camps or be prepared to concede that controlled recreational hunting has a case.

Then perhaps I'll believe those thousands of tourists driving "the main road a few miles away" will rush over the lake in droves and pack-swig off into the bush to face the rain, sweat and sandflies as generations of wapiti hunters have done.

W. A. Bell

Otatara

[Abridged. — Ed.]

27/1/79



Dick Deaker scans the instrument panel as the chopper strains to lift a heavy load.



### Shooting deadly game

Sir,—Whilst I respect the right of any contributor to hold a point of view I cannot let Dr Greta Stevenson's article ("Shooting Deadly Game", December 9) go unchallenged, for the following reasons.

1. The article contains biased arguments which do not give a true or full story on many of the points raised.

2. It contains an inaccurate statement with regard to the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association membership — an important point because of the thrust of the contributor's argument.

3. It seeks to support an argument by the use of a decades-old photograph which is so dated that it is no longer relevant to today's actualities.

As national secretary of the

Deerstalkers' Association I challenge Dr Stevenson to substantiate her very specific statement that the association's declared membership "is just on 2000 though this includes all the members of the family of a financial deerstalker".

With over 70 branches throughout New Zealand, one of which has over 600 members, our total membership is in the five-figure category. I can assure Dr Stevenson that the ridiculous and inaccurate figure quoted by her was passed in the 1950s. I can also assure her that we do not waste our time by running around checking on how large our members' families are.

Dr Stevenson's argument does not recognise that there are also many other outdoor organisations interested in wild animals. With more than 500,000 firearms owners in New Zealand — a major proportion of whom seek their recreation in our "natural environment" — it is a very substantial number.

If Dr Stevenson wants to play the numbers game, then it is also probably worth mentioning that the Deerstalkers' Association has just established the Federation of Rifle Rod and Gun Sportsmen, which represents more than 300,000 outdoor sportsmen.

It is also ironical to note that Dr Stevenson seeks to compare the Deerstalkers' Association with ECO. Let me remind her that the association was one of the few organisations which established ECO at the time of the Manapouri crisis and is cur-

rently a founder and Class A member of that organisation.

I share her concern at the "tragic decline in numbers of native birds". Whilst she again seeks to blame the deer for this, the Deerstalkers' Association is more realistic, and with the support of much documented evidence attributes the cause directly to the large-scale poisoning operations throughout New Zealand. The Nature Conservation Council and the Deerstalkers' Association have been the only two major organisations to show any concern over this dangerous activity and its effects on our wildlife and indeed whole ecosystem.

There are so many other questionable points raised in the article that it is impossible to raise them all in this letter.

**J. M. Murphy**  
National Secretary  
New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association  
(Wellington)

## \$6000 for Stag

A wapiti stag fetched \$6000 at a Te Anau deer auction on Saturday.

One of 10 offered by Fiordland Wapiti Ltd, it was bought by Mr Bruce Lee, of Little River, Canterbury.

Only two of the 10 lots auctioned by Wrightson-NMA were sold.

The other went to a Kennington farm for \$5500.

A red stag offered by Mr A. J. Carr (Merrivale) was bought for \$1800 by Mr M. L. Stratford (Tokanui).

Another red stag, offered by J. and L. Barker (Winton), was bought by Stirling Brothers (Dunedin) for \$1700.

About 400 people attended the sale.

The Wrightson-NMA company representative at Te Anau, Mr L. L. Pagan, said the wapiti and red stags were of a high quality.

10/2/79.

## Helicopter Pilot Killed

10/2/79.

(P.A.)

NEW PLYMOUTH

**Intense heat and flames beat back a man who attempted to rescue the pilot of a crashed helicopter in the Kaimanawa ranges, south-east of Turangi, yesterday morning.**

The pilot, who died in the crash, was Mr Douglas Ross Fraser, aged 37, married, of Turangi.

The Turangi police said the crash was witnessed by the dead man's companion, Mr Murray Spalding, who was on the ground at the time, tending a live deer the two men had captured.

The helicopter was returning from the top of a nearby hill, where it had gone to fetch chemical supplies, when Mr Spalding heard a loud bang, police said. He turned to see the helicopter cartwheel through the air, hit the ground and then explode.

Mr Spalding rushed to the

machine and tried to get the pilot out but the intensity of the flames stopped him getting close enough to rescue Mr Fraser.

The helicopter, a five-seater Hughes 500, owned by Lakeland Aviation, was understood to be destroyed.

Mr Spalding walked out of the bush to get help. He reached the Desert road about 3 p.m. and hitched a ride to the Turangi police station.

Another helicopter with a police party and a doctor was sent to the crash area from Taupo.

Mr Fraser was an experienced pilot of both rotary and fixed wing aircraft. He had fought many fires by helicopter.

## Deer Farming Boom

(P.A.)

WELLINGTON

**Prospective deer farmers in their hundreds look like giving a hefty boost to overseas venison exports.**

A top-ranking Forest Service official said yesterday a flood of applications had been pouring in from people wanting to start up deer farms.

"We are being swamped with applications," he said. "There have been several hundreds in the past 12 months and there's no sign of slackening."

"It appears anyone holding suitable land is applying — it's general throughout the country."

He believed the sudden explosive interest had been prompted by the lucrative overseas market for venison.

"It's like the crayfish industry where they are all chas-

ing the overseas market," he said.

He expected most of the applicants to get farm licences. Whether they would remain in the industry was another question.

Last year, venison exports brought New Zealand about \$12 million in overseas earnings.

A prime beast can fetch as much as \$1000 here, and a kilogram of venison can bring up to \$5. Antlers are also much in demand for medicinal purposes in the Far East, bringing up to \$70 a kilogram, and there is a substantial overseas leather market for deer skins.





SPOT, Chase and Catch, is the name of the game at the Fiordland Aero pageant. Cowboys of the air introduce an aerial Rodeo with darts, nets, or

just the 'plane' old rugby tackle off the landing skis of the Hughes 500 helicopter. Lucky for some that the calves didn't have a spread of antlers.

8/2/79

## Protesters Try To Save Goats

10/2/79

(P.A.)

WELLINGTON

Protesters on rugged Arapawa Island spent the weekend playing cat and mouse with police-assisted Forest Service shooters.

Police went to the island in the Marlborough Sounds on Saturday in case trouble flared between the protesters and shooters.

The protesters have been trying to muster the island's rare feral goats to save them from the shooters.

But loud gunfire from the three shooters has scattered the wild goats, making mustering impossible.

The shooters tried to stake a new area of the island yesterday, but found a group of protesters had beaten them to the area, making shooting too dangerous.

However, the protesters' actions have failed to stop the shooters from killing about 46

goats since they started culling last Thursday.

Reinforcements are expected by the protest organizers today to assist their attempts to thwart the Forest Service's shooting.

### Difficult

A farmer on the island, Mr Walter Rowe, said last night the protesters were making the shooting very difficult.

"Though the cullers were out today, we didn't hear as much gunfire as we have in the last couple of days," Mr Rowe said.

"The culling group set out in a boat to a different part of the island, but we already had people there to stop them.

"The goats have broken up and are all over the island in little groups now," Mr Rowe said. "I've gathered about a hundred on my property to save the breed from total extinction, but there aren't many others to be seen now."

Mr Rowe declined to say how many protesters were on the island.

"It's very rugged terrain on the island and we are trying to watch over the whole 2500 hectares," he said. "So we have been getting up at 4 o'clock in

the morning and going up on the hill."

Mr Rowe said the protesters — whose ages ranged from teens to more than 50 — would not leave the island until the culling stopped.

### Two Policemen

A Blenheim police spokesman said there were two policemen on the island. They had had no confrontation with the protesters and were camping with the cullers.

The spokesman said the police would remain on the island in case of any trouble.

About 10 protesters arrived on the island on Saturday, but, because of radio difficulties, the police were unsure of the exact number on the island.

The goats — thought to be of the rare Old English breed and descendants of those left on the island by Captain James Cook in 1777 — have had a death sentence passed on them as noxious animals by the Marlborough Maritime Park Board.

The Forest Service claims the feral goats damage rare indigenous forest on the island, while the protesters claim they should be saved because they are the last of their species.

## FIORDLAND AIR PAGEANT ATTRACTS LARGE CROWD

8/2/79

On a day of unprecedented hot sunshine Fiordland Aero club hosted an Air Pageant which attracted thousands of people and cars and a good smattering of visiting aircraft of all types and ages.

Beginning with a massed flypast of fixed wing planes there were demonstrations of skilled flying and landing both fast and slow on one wheel or two with even a 'backyard landing' by a Britten Norman Islander. This was piloted by Stuart Graham who demonstrated the versatility of the 9 seater passenger plane with incredibly tight turns and short takeoffs which should make for much increased confidence by us earthbound mortals as it all adds up to a high degree of safety in small craft in the hands of such experienced pilots.

A hard feat to do was the demonstration of a beginner flyer in takeoff and landing made to look bumpy enough to unsettle the steadiest spectator stomach. Our 'beginner' tried every trick in the book and every flap and wheel and wing on the plane wobbling alarmingly in the still sunny air.

After such fun the real excitement of the day was the incredibly controlled ballet of helicopters as they danced round the sky seeming to go three ways at once at times. It was the nearest thing to skating in the air yet seen. After a flypast of 11 helicopters led by a small 300 and brought up in the rear by the sleek fast jet Rangers framed in

the sky between the Takitimu Mts and Mt Titroa, it was all systems go with a hilarious, heartstopping demonstration of deer catching, modern style.

Instead of an expensive wild deer, calves of different sizes and temperaments were used, providing a more lively scramble and three different methods of live catching were demonstrated ... and nearly the fourth kind ... the one that got away class as one small calf headed straight for the crowd, followed closely by the pursuing chopper.

After this, a Rodeo would be almost tame.

How not to get a lift home after the pub, was demonstrated by a chopper lift and drop off, of an old 'bomb' of a car and its subsequent burning.

First the Te Anau Fire Brigade got into the act with fast foam, then the Jet Rangers made a takeover bid at the firefighting with a fire bucket, aiming at the burning car, of course, but coming oddly close to dousing the firefighters too.

A lolly scramble, Fiordland style, followed to the delight of old and young kids topped by spectacular water displays from the bucket carrying Jet Ranger flying in to the sun.

The day came to a close for most of the spectators with a show by the remote controlled model aeroplane club, emulating their big brothers with 'head-ducking' accuracy.

Well don, Fiordland Aero Club, please make it and the sunshine an annual event.





## NEW 'STAGLINER' DEER CARRIER

Latest addition to the Alpine Helicopters fleet is a DC3 "Stagliner" aptly named for the cargo it carries.

The aeroplane is especially fitted out with compartments to hold deer, windows are blacked out and

only soft lighting is used whilst in flight. This, plus gentle ventilation allows animals to travel with the minimum of discomfort.

**ALL BRIGHT** eyes and shiney noses, the deer although curious about what was going on, were easy to handle during the transfer from truck to plane.

Mr Tim Wallace of Alpine Helicopters said that he copied the idea from a similar venture he took part in four years ago when 310 deer were transported by DC8 to Taiwan.

This is only the second air transportation of deer made by his company. A cargo of stags destined for alpine's deer auction at Rotorua was successfully delivered the previous day.

On board this time were 45 thirteen month old farm bred Red Deer yearling hinds also going by direct flight to Rotorua from an airstrip near Mararoa.

The deer are specially prepared for their flight in

**LOADING** deer onto the 'Stagliner' was a relatively simple operation as they stepped directly from the truck into the plane.

that they are accustomed to yards, people handling.

This method of 'farm to market' in the shortest possible time is part of the general concept of deer farming for Mr Wallace. Previously problems have arisen in transporting deer by road. The deer is a highly strung animal but is easily handled in suitable conditions and with the right preparation, said Mr Wallace.

Transporting deer by road to Rotorua would take three days, whereas by air and direct flight the trip only takes four hours, is more economical and easier on the animals who arrive at auction in much better condition.

Alpine Helicopters have six helicopters based in Queenstown and operating in the Southland, Otago, Fiordland area with the emphasis on live capture of deer for their deer farms at Mararoa and Criffel.



15/2/79.

### ATTENTION DEER FARMERS

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TOP three year old Wapiti Stag available for selected Hinds. Take this opportunity to start your own hybrid breed.

Enquiries to Phone 738 or 820 Kennington.

75455

17/2/79



# Farming Deer Popular

(P.A.) HAMILTON  
Everyone wants to go deer farming.

That was the message at a deer farming seminar in Hamilton on Friday, attended by more than 300 people from all walks of life and many parts of the North Island.

Experts spoke of big money to be made from stags' antlers and an exciting meat market potential.

Keith Purdon, of the New Zealand Forest Service in Auckland, said applications for licences to capture and farm deer were coming in so fast it was almost impossible to keep up. Last November more than 2200 applications were being processed by the Forest Service and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, he said.

The seminar was told deer cullers and people who went out with rifles to kill red deer were turning to capturing them alive by all possible means, while the demand for printed material and advice was well ahead of the supply.

The visitors heard from experts of soaring world prices for the antler velvet and growing markets for the meat and by-products, including hides.

They were told of enterprises bringing in more than \$40,000 a year gross income, and high input costs were not deterring applicants.

"Mr Helicopter," Tom Wallis of Alpine Helicopters in Wanaika and the owner of 20 helicopters, held his audience spellbound with stories of methods of capturing feral deer for deer farmers.

He told of various methods including nets shot from a three-barrelled rifle across the bodies of running deer, of drug darts with radio transmitters inside to guide helicopters to the doped deer.

# Hunter Found Safe At Island

The first major search on Stewart Island for 1979 was sparked off when a shooter was reported missing on Saturday morning.

Mr Murray Bendall, of Hamilton, hailed a fishing boat anchored in Port Adventure, and, through Awarua Radio, alerted the Invercargill police that his companion, Mr David Ryan, of Tokoroa, was missing.

A search was under way by about 10.30 a.m.

Mr Bill Black, of Alpine Helicopters, flew three Invercargill policemen to the island, where they joined two parties of four forestry workers.

Mr Black flew one search party over the area, and, when no sign of the missing man was found, landed them near Oyster Cove.

He returned to pick up the second party and was taking them to Tikotataki Bay when a message was received from the first party that the missing man had been found at Oyster Cove.

"Although it was raining, he was wearing warm clothes and appeared none the worse for wear," Constable P. Dodds, of Halfmoon Bay, said yesterday.

Mr Ryan was found about 2.30 p.m.

In fact, it appeared there was some doubt as to whether he was actually "missing."

When a member of the search party asked Mr Ryan why he did not light a fire he replied, "I wasn't lost."

Mr Ryan and Mr Bendall, both experienced trappers and shooters, arrived on Stewart Island at the end of last week.

They left their camp at Abraham's Bosom on Friday, and separated. When Mr Ryan failed to return that evening, Mr Bendall became concerned.

The two men will remain on the island until Thursday and will continue with their expedition, as planned.

Constable Dodds expressed satisfaction at the smoothness of the search, and the fact that local expertise and know-how was used.

LEFT: Mr Ryan (centre) with three of the men who found him, members of a Forest Service party on the island.



## LIVE DEER FOR SALE

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CHRISTCHURCH

## NATIONAL PARKS REVIEW

THE GOVERNMENT has appointed a Special Caucus Committee on National Parks, with the following terms of reference:

To investigate the present Board and Authority based administrative structure for National Parks and Reserves administered by the Department of Lands and Survey, and to recommend any changes considered desirable to meet present day needs.

Persons or groups wishing to make representations to the Committee on any aspect of the inquiry, are requested to forward their written submissions, in 6 copies, to the Secretary, National Parks Caucus Committee, Government Research, Parliament Buildings, no later than April 20.

The Committee does not propose to hold formal hearings. But it may invite any of those making submissions to meet it, and discuss matters arising out of their submissions, and to seek information and comment from others who may be able to assist in its work.

W. R. AUSTIN, M.P.  
Chairman

75400



CONSOLIDATED TRADERS LTD

## Live Deer Auction

Consolidated Traders Limited are proud to announce their first auction of fully domesticated farm-bred red deer from Forest Park Deer Farm (formerly known as Rahana Station).

On the property at Maroa (20 miles from Taupo on the Hamilton Road) 11 a.m.  
19th March, 1979.

The offering comprises (subject to final draft):  
90 Yearling Hinds  
90 Yearling Stags  
60 Mixed-age Hinds  
60 Mixed-age Stags

Interested persons are invited to apply for a catalogue from:

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WELLINGTON

or from the auctioneers

Wrightson NMA  
P.O. Box 77,  
ROTORUA

57309



# Park Control of Dart Forest Called For

(Special)

25/2/79.

DUNEDIN

All of the Dart State forest should be included in Mount Aspiring National Park according to a public meeting on the future management of the area in Dunedin.

It was the second meeting for the public to discuss options for the scenic area situated at the north-west end of Lake Wakatipu, totalling slightly more than 8,600 hectares, following a request for submissions on its future management.

The meeting, arranged by the Otago Tramping and Mountaineering Club to present a wider cross section of public opinion, was attended by about 150 people from the North Island as well as every part of the south.

The majority opposed recommendations which followed the first public meeting at Glenorchy in Otago last year (attended by about 70 people) that the Dart Valley should remain under State forest management.

This was in spite of no assurance that the National park Authority could allow the white tail deer to remain in the area.

The first speaker Dr G. G. Claridge, who is president of Federated Mountain Clubs of New Zealand believed it is "illogical that the whole of the Dart Valley should not become part of the National Park," suggested the white tails could be "tolerated as a recreational resource and perhaps controlled by the Forest Service.

## Recreation

The chairman of the Mount Aspiring National Park Board, Mr C. Costello, strongly advocated that the Dart forest area be included in the national park to maximise its recreational potential as well as preserve its scientific and ecological value.

He believed it was essential to "rationalize the boundaries" of the existing national park to include the State forest.

"The board does not agree that hunting is a dominant use of the park. Local runholders may be concerned that grazing would not be allowed in this area if it became part of a national park. But the board feels this should be allowed in special circumstances though it is not the general policy," he said.

N.Z.F.S. assistant conservator (planning) said there was, "some case for rationalizing park boundaries for the whole area but the Forest Service is uncertain of its responsibility in respect to the Wild Animals Act and the Forest Conservation Act."

As far as the possibility for logging for local timber was concerned he said two areas totalling about 150 hectares near Chinaman's Bluff and an area at Woodbine are suitable for sustained yields.

The chairman of the Lakes County Council, Mr P. J. Thompson, said this should be

allowed for local demand of building, for fence posts, and mining timber. He believed "a sustainable yield of timber under Forest Service control would not impair the scenic beauty of the area — "could even improve it."

## In Interest

Dr J. Child of the Native Forests Action Council believed it was in the country's interest to preserve the area as against local interests for the forest's resources. He said there were rare stands of silver, red mountain beech species with scientific value, "worthy of preservation."

"It might be possible to leave the deer as well as preserve the forest."

Speakers from the floor included representatives of tramping clubs branches of the New Zealand Deer Stalking Association and the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society of New Zealand but the independent chairman of the meeting, Mr M. H. N. Haggitt, would not

allow discussion reiterating comments from the 59 submissions already received by the Forest Service.

From hand shows he ascertained that about two thirds of the meeting were in favour of all Dart State Forest being included in the National Park.

He also found that more than half the crowd present represented conservation or tramping interests rather than hunting and there were about six people from Glenorchy.

The final decision lies with the Minister of Forests Mr V. S. Young who sent an apology for not being able to attend the meeting.

The national Parks Authority has also asked that the decision on whether the Dart Forest State Park should be subjected

to more stringent protection under its control until an inspection of the area is made early next month.

A smell of burning, and smoke beginning to fill the cockpit of the Hughes 500, caused the pilot, Keith Naylor, to put his helicopter in a tight turn over the Fiordland bush yesterday. Then it was a quick drop to Lake Hauruko, banking sharply to land on a thin strip of shoreline at Teal Bay. The doors were thrown open and the passengers got out in a hurry. It was thought the problem could be an over heating battery, which could have been serious, but it turned out to be a cigarette lighter which had failed to switch off. The passengers were Messrs D. Heenan and Alan Dudfield and Mrs M. Blaikie, who had been to Puysegur Point to mark the 100th anniversary of the lighthouse there.

## Helicopter Crashes

(P.A.)

ROTORUA

An emergency bleeper helped searching aircraft find the wreckage of a helicopter which crashed in the Kaimanawa ranges about 7.15 yesterday morning.

The pilot and his passenger were unhurt.

The flight service officer with the Civil Aviation division at Taupo airport, Mr J. Davis, said planes looking for the craft were assisted by the bleeper, which the pilot turned on after the crash.

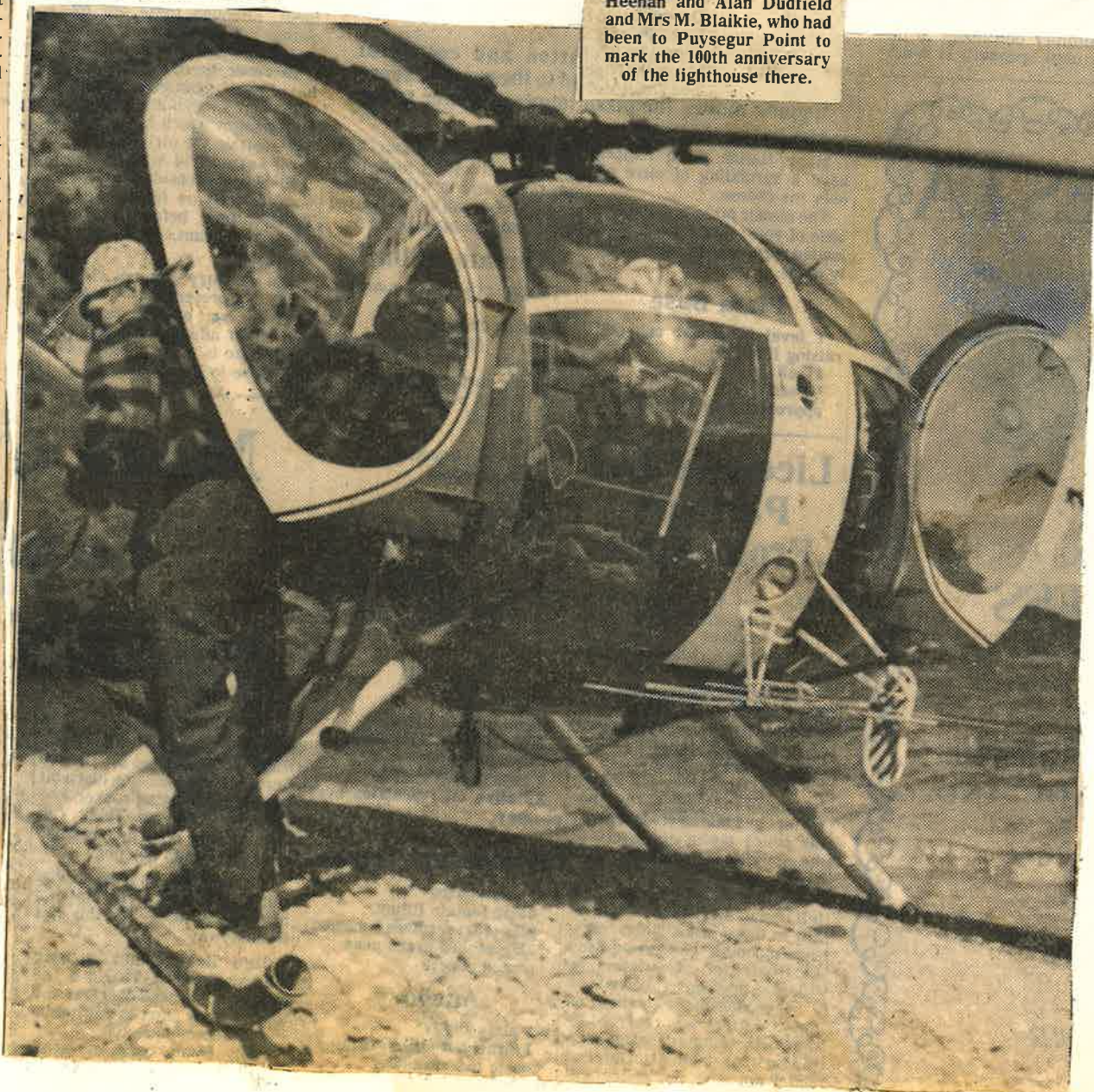
The names of the two men and the firm which owns the aircraft have not been released.

The helicopter was extensively damaged. Mr Davis said he expected the wreckage would be flown out today for investigation by the inspector of air accidents.

The helicopter was on a live deer capture mission.

The wreckage was sighted just before 11 a.m., and a searching aircraft was able to land at an airstrip near the crash site.

The two men had walked to the strip and were flown out.





2/5/79

# Ranger Rubbishes Rat Claims

A claim that rats were over-running hunters' camps on Stewart Island have been strongly denied by the senior protection forestry ranger for the Southland conservancy of the Forest Service, Mr Kerry Mawhinney.

Mr Mawhinney denied allegations that hunters' camps on Stewart Island were being over-run by rats, and were in "a terrible mess."

The allegations were made by Maori land-owners in a television interview, following an ultimatum to the Forest Service that any hunters on their land be taken off within two weeks.

## No Rights

The situation blew open several weeks ago, when the Maori land-owners discovered the Forest Service had no legal right to issue hunting permits for their land, although it had been doing so for some 25 years.

Mr Mawhinney said he did not deny the Forest Service had been issuing hunting permits without legal right.

However, he refuted the land-owners' claims that the hunters' camps had been left in "a terrible mess," drawing hordes of rats.

After recently spending four days on the area in question, Mr Mawhinney said that he had seen only one rat, and no sign at all of rat droppings.

Neither did he consider the camps in a bad state.

"All they need is a good day's work to clear up a bit of rubbish — a few tins, and scrub which has been cut down to make campfires, and left lying around."

"As far as I'm concerned, the problems the Maoris claimed were there have been grossly overstated."

## Many Deer

The land, which stretches from Kellys Beach in Port Adventure to Lords river, has some of the highest deer population on the island, and Mr Mawhinney fears that without hunting numbers will build up to the point where they will jeopardize vegetation values.

"In that case, we'd have to take some sort of action to get deer numbers back down again," he said.

Mr Mawhinney said the issue appeared to have become confused among the Maori land-owners.

Apparently, some wished to

retain the services of the Forest Service, and others did not.

The Maori Lands Trustee, Mr A. Harris, would be coming down within the next couple of weeks "to sort the situation out," Mr Mawhinney said.

## Owners

Mr Harris said yesterday the multiplicity of owners of the land was causing confusion.

"We know so little about the situation," he said.

"What we have to do is to get together the Forest Service and the Maori Land Advisory Committee, and discuss what has been happening."

"It now appears that no one has the authority to issue licences to shoot in the area."

Mr Harris said the advisory committee intended holding a meeting when it arrived in Invercargill to explain its function, and hear submissions.

"We're going to try and explore ways and means of remedying the situation," he said.

"Those people who have had

their licences cancelled are trying to find a legal way to get authority to hunt on the land."

## Meeting

A meeting convened by the court, and attended by shareholders representing 40 per cent of the shares in the land, would have to be held before any sort of licence on Maori land could be considered, Mr Harris said.

Meanwhile, disappointed letters from let-down hunters are still coming in to the Forest Service.

When the situation broke loose, about 20 hunters already on the land were given two weeks to get off, and another 50 hunting permits which had been issued to people all over the country were cancelled.

"Most people appear to have accepted the situation," Mr Mawhinney said, "although they express disappointment, and are asking for alternative hunting blocks."

"We're handling it as best we can."

16/4/79

## 49p.c. Drop In Deer Take

There was a drop of 49 per cent in the number of deer taken from the Fiordland National Park in the six months from August to January, compared with the previous year's tally.

Alpine Helicopters Ltd, with 50 per cent of the park, recovered 1321 deer compared with a previous figure of 3771, a drop of 65 per cent, and the other operators recovered 2634 deer, a drop of 44 per cent on the previous figure of 3961.

There were several factors contributing to the substantial drop in animals recovered, last night's meeting of the Fiordland National Park Board was told.

As the board had predicted, there is probably a drop in the number of animals available to be taken, while the shift to live capture would be contributing as operators learned new techniques.

Because of the emphasis on live capture, more animals were escaping than would if it was a straight shooting operation.

Adverse weather conditions also played a major part in the low numbers caught.

The chief ranger, Mr W. E. Sander, felt the main cause had been the management pre-occupation with live capture.

"This combined with the other operators' growing expertise better and more efficient aircraft, and greater incentives for the shooter pilot to earn, has

brought about the result," Mr Sander said.

With live deer worth up to \$1200 there was a tremendous demand for them and the industry was developing rapidly.

Operators were searching in areas they would not have usually and had developed techniques to get into the bush and capture live deer.

If the live capture industry falls, the methods operators are now learning could also be used for shooting.

The board was told that Alpine's methods would be of benefit in time, but operators must remain flexible in a situation that could easily fluctuate.

The chairman, Mr J. Harty, said such a situation could be corrected by live capture with tranquiliser darts.

As the overall efficiency of the operators improves, the recovery numbers of live deer will increase," Mr Sander said.

25/3/79

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25/3/79

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## WAITUTU STATE FOREST S.F. 19 MANAGEMENT PLAN

WAITUTU STATE FOREST is situated in the South Coast between Big River and Te Wae Wae Bay. Copies of this Management Plan (1978-1988) are available for public inspection at the New Zealand Forest Service Offices in Invercargill (State Insurance Building, 5th Floor) and at Tuatapere, at the Public Libraries in Invercargill and Dunedin and at the office of the Wallace County Council, Otautau.

Copies are available from the Conservator of forests, New Zealand Forest Service, Private Bag, Invercargill, at \$2.00 each.

R. USMAR  
Conservator of Forests  
75399

10/3/79

## RENEWAL OF WILD ANIMAL RECOVERY SERVICE LICENCES

APPLICATIONS for renewal of Wild Animal Recovery Service Licences close on April 15, 1979.

Renewal applications along with applications for first licences should be sent to:

Director-General of  
Forests,  
NEW ZEALAND FOREST SERVICE  
Private Bag,  
WELLINGTON

58804

10/4/79

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83252

## \$2000 Worth Of Gear Stolen

More than \$2000 worth of equipment was taken from a New Zealand Forest Service hut in the Beaumont forest over the Easter holidays.

Two \$700 chainsaws and a number of tools were taken.

Entrance was gained by breaking a window and opening the door from the inside of the hut.

Tapanui police are investigating.

19/4/79



# WAPITI DECREASE 1/5/79 DISCUSSED

Concern was expressed over the decreasing number of wapiti in the Fiordland National Park by members of the Park Board's Recreational Hunting Advisory Committee at a meeting last night.

The comments arose from party leader reports of the annual wapiti trophy shoot last month.

The chairman of the committee, Mr J. Heenan, said all reports seemed to indicate few wapiti were seen and even fewer shot. Mr J. Murray, a recreational hunter, said this appeared to be the trend over the past three years and that wapiti were being taken out of the area illegally.

The chairman of the park board, Mr J. P. Harty, suggested the decrease in wapiti numbers was due to the increase of red deer.

The chief ranger, Mr W. Sanders, said rangers had checked farms and freezers and to his knowledge the wapiti were not being taken out illegally.

However, Mr Murray disagreed and said when wapiti were young they were difficult to recognize. This was endorsed

by Mr Heenan who said hunters of many years' experience had expressed difficulty in recognizing young wapiti.

Mr Harty suggested wapiti be removed and reestablished elsewhere. This suggestion caused considerable disagreement among the committee members, many of whom said the wapiti problem could not be disposed of like that.

Mr Sanders said the problem was there 10 years ago and the situation had been reached where it is almost too late.

"There are more reds than wapiti, there are more hybrids than wapiti. This has to be accepted. Something should have been done about it at least 10 years ago," he said.

Mr R. Usmar, conservator for the New Zealand Forest Service in Southland, moved that the committee note vegetation regrowth and recommend a policy that everything be done

to purify the herd rather than concentrate on deer numbers.

"I'm not trying to get into an argument as to whether there should be deer in the national park," he said.

"Let's concentrate on reducing hybridization and get a pure herd and see whether their effect on the vegetation is contrary to the values of the National Park Board," he said.

Mr W. Taylor, a recreational hunter, said the committee had to be positive and honest in working towards a recreational area.

A motion by Mr Taylor was finally accepted, that on a 12-month experimental basis all calves running with wapiti cows not be taken. An amendment was added to this by Mr Murray, that as well, yearling males showing obvious wapiti characteristics should also be left.

The motion will be recommended to the park board.



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THURSDAY, MAY 10  
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80-Yearling HINDS  
40-Weaner Hind FAWNS  
40-Weaner Stag FAWNS

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## Park Board Concern Over Delay

The Fiordland National Park Board last night agreed to write to the Forest Service expressing its concern about a park boundary change agreement, referred for approval in April 1976.

The boundary adjustments, between Fiordland National Park and the Waitutu State Forest, have been under discussion since 1971.

Following a number of queries from the National Parks Authority being answered, there was a recommendation for the creation of a wilderness area in the south-west corner of the park in 1972.

Alternative proposals had been submitted by the Forest Service for boundary adjustments based on ridgelines where possible, and it finally proposed that the area around the West and Beatrice Peaks area should be released from the park.

The board considered it imperative to have a reasonable buffer zone to adequately safeguard the area from the effects of any future development on the State forest land.

The authority visited the peak in February, 1976 and some authority members, including the then Director-General of Forests and the board's then planning officer flew over the area.

Following the inspection, the then Director-General of Forests indicated verbally that he could see no objection to a readjustment of the park boundary along the entire flank of Lake Poteriteri being implemented in accordance with the board's wishes.

The authority referred the matter to the Forest Service for formal approval on April 30, 1976 and has had no reply, in spite of a number of reminders, except that in January 1977 it advised that the matter was still under investigation.

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## Three Charges

Howard Joseph Harris, aged 37, from Invercargill, faced three charges under the Wild Animal Control Act 1977. They included entering the Longwood State Forest with a firearm without a permit, entering the forest without authority, and hunting animals without authority.

The offences took place on a weekday during hours when hunting in that particular area was prohibited.

For having no permit to carry a firearm, he was fined \$100, for entering the forest without authority he was fined \$60, and for hunting without a permit the fine was \$400.

## Dismissed

David Michael Roff and Mervyn Douglas Paulin, both from Otatau, were charged with poaching on private land at a Pourakino Valley farm. The alleged offence took place on June 10 1978.

However, Mr Reid dismissed the charge because the prosecution had not proven that the deer the defendants were allegedly shooting were in fact, wild animals.

# From Small Beginnings

By ROBYN HUNN

The last five years have seen the deer farming industry in New Zealand develop from a base of a handful of the most innovative and adventurous farmers to its strong position today with an association numbering some 850 members, and the Forest Service receiving more than 2000 applications for licences over the last few months.

Since its inception the association has made strong representation to Government on a number of matters. Efforts in this direction and liaison with government departments have helped to create a consolidated approach on the part of all deer farmers to such major matters as trespass, live deer capture, licensing, slaughter facilities, advisory services, and marketing.

The association organises field days and meetings and these are proving very valuable for both established and potential deer farmers. The support of its members gives the association strength in dealing with Government, government departments, game packing houses and marketing firms, and others whose actions affect the industry.

If growth of the deer farming industry means greater number of members fully backing the association, the future of the industry will be determined by those members, and not by other interests, either commercial or political. These then are the benefits of membership: Access to information of practical value to anyone in deer farming or contemplating it. Opportunity to attend field days and national conference; A central office to which enquiries may be directed; Concerted support from the association in the event of disputes; Involvement in marketing through the association to protect producers' interests; Contact with other deer farmers with common interests and problems; Access to information on availability of breeding stock, farm requisites, prices offered for venison and deer by-products.

7/5/79





# THE HELI-HUNTERS

5/5/79

Dead or alive, deer are big business these days, and helicopter companies in Fiordland have not been slow to cash

in on a liberalised law and rising market prices. But the work has its ups and downs, as staff writer Vernon Wright discovered when he went along for the ride.

Bruce Connew shot the pictures.



After the kill, the shooter leaps from the helicopter (top of page), slices a hole in the deer's lower hind leg, threads a rope through it and waits for the 'copter to come in. Then he hooks the rope to a safety catch (above), jumps back in, and they're away.

end up bending the machine. You can go out, you can run the safety line, you can be sitting on the red line all the time, on the safety margin. Next day you won't make it . . ."

Back in the Grubstake — maybe they've called home first, maybe they haven't — that sort of helicopter talk merges with sexual banter and tales of the ones (human and animal) that got away into a kind of homogeneous badinage, so that in the end it doesn't matter who's sitting at which table, because work is the only topic of conversation, and everyone does the same work.

The last of the tourists slides out as a noisy squabble develops over the relative merits in bed of New Zealand and Australian girls. No one wins the argument, because there is a lack of authoritative experience. So the talk suddenly switches to the two deer that Morrie Kane bulldogged at the same time, the three of them rolling arse over kite and over each other down a steep hill. The two conversations flow into each other.

WHILE THE BEER and the badinage flow in the Grubstake, the quarry huddles on the sides of the fiords, awaiting the next round, bunkered down in forest cover from the wind, the rain and the mist.

THE ONLY PUBLIC BAR in Te Anau is called the Grubstake. Around its periphery float a few tourists temporarily stranded on the Mt Cook-Queenstown-Te Anau-Milford tourist trek. But they disappear fairly early on in the evenings and retreat to the seclusion of their house bars — with names like the Ranch House Bar and with toy saddles to sit on. Perhaps the Savloned skull of a cow to gaze at.

In huts scattered throughout the Fiordland National Park, helicopter pilots and their shooters watch the clouds banking up from the southwest, watch the wind as it keens down from the tops and ruffles the sheltered pastureland. If they went out into that, up and over the tops, they'd be hitting 45 to 60-knot winds. A good way to bend a helicopter. So they scrape the congealed fat and smelly bones from their dixies, wipe down the greasy knives and forks between thumb and finger, dry their hands and anything else on the backsides of their denims, throw the stag carcass belching blood, liver and spleen into the boot of their car, and head into town, 100 kilometres away.

"Jeezuz, what a piss-off," mutters pilot Gordon Kane. "But it'd be stupid eh, going out and sitting on the margin all the time. Because it's only a matter of time you're going to



tions for the major new industry of deer farming.

The first was drastic alterations to the feral ranges as defined by the then Wild Animals Act. Under the old Act a feral range might have had only a 32km radius, for example, and deer, designated noxious animals, could not be moved out of that radius. Under the new Act, however, most varieties of deer were lumped together and the feral range was extended to cover anywhere deer were found. Now deer can be captured and taken anywhere

for farming, and permits are issued for their transport from one end of the country to the other.

This has resulted in a dramatic increase in deer farms, or in areas of their properties that farmers have set aside for deer farming. Some helicopter companies in Fiordland have established their own deer farms, though generally they use them as holding farms to acclimatise the deer to captivity. That way, their value increases. Nelson Thompson points out that a wild deer suddenly penned in



A pause for poker on the bloodstained car bonnet. From left, Maurice Kane, Stuart Feaver and (inside) Gordon Kane.



open pasture will panic, perhaps tear itself to death on fences.

The other factor to alter the pattern of decline was a sharp rise in the price of live animals — from, according to Sander, about \$250 to \$800 off the back of a helicopter. Acclimatised, the deer are worth about twice as much. Thus the operators can now spend up to four hours' flying time to recover just one animal, and they can recover from areas that once they would have had to bypass. Animals taken straight off the hill to a farm frequently die from stress — an estimated eight to 10 per cent of them in fact, says Sander. The neurosis caused by capture.

THE WEATHER is still doubtful but it might clear, so the pilots and shooters cram into a utility and head off to their designated hunting block, about 100km south of Te Anau. There are two helicopters in this company, Southland Helicopters, and the two teams, pilots and shooters, are competing to see who ends the month with the biggest tally. It's the last day of the month; the teams are equal with 30 "livies" each, but the team of brothers Gordon and Maurice Kane are ahead with 25 "deadies".

The weather is fine and mild at the helicopter base, but the pilots look at the wisps of cloud humping over the tops. Marginal at best, maybe worse; but it has to be tried.

The little Hughes 300 lifts off, hovers for a second, then trails away towards the fiords, rises over the power lines, drops down to scan the extreme rims of the pasture. You never know. A disgustingly fat sheep gazes at the approaching gunship in palpitating degrees of alarm, horror and blind panic. As it approaches faster the sheep's head lifts, its forelegs come up, and finally it topples over on to its back in an undignified wobble of wool and fat.

As it reaches the top the chopper is pushed about like a helium balloon on a string. The darkness creeps in from the east. Through the bubble the hills yawn black purple to the fiords a thousand metres below. See-sawing along the top bush fringe, a flip over the top and a sickening plunge to the head basin below. Beyond the noise of motor, rotor blades and icy wind whistling through the open door in which the shooter crouches peering for movement, the silence is palpable. Hands turn blue and faces become immobile.

The helicopter stops, starts, goes sideways, backwards and very nearly upside down. Nothing here. Up and over another ridge and the 'copter is caught in a downdraught. Full power, and full speed ahead is virtually dead stop. The manifold pressure is at maximum.



Kane bites his bottom lip, takes a quick look at the rocky outcrops below, turns the helicopter on its side and plunges towards the valley floor. The absurd machine shakes free of the down-draught and swoops up the other side of the valley. Kane's eyes swivel sideways and he says cheerfully, "Didn't think we were going to come out of that one."

Then a noise like half a dozen pneumatic drills. No one knows what it is, but whatever it is, it's not good.

Kane puts the machine gently down on a ridge and a

check is made. A few metres to either side of the machine, the hills plummet to the black sea far below. The exhaust system has come adrift. The shrinking twilight is subjected to some of the choicer expletives of Western civilisation, and the sun vanishes. But a well-aimed boot and a bit of No 8 fencing wire give an illusion of repair. The chopper raises itself up off the ridge, pauses cautiously, then heads tentatively for home. Mission aborted.

"You do sometimes have second thoughts when you go out to the machine in the morning," says Gordon

Kane. "But you don't admit it to yourself."

FOR THE PURPOSES of deer recovery by helicopter, Fiordland is divided into 12 blocks, and the five registered recovery companies rotate the work on those blocks. Recovery is still a highly economic business, but it may not always be so, since helicopter hunting has significantly altered the ecological balance of the Fiordland National Park and the shape and nature of deer farming.

To Wally Sander, who talks of the park in terms of its development over millions

of years, total eradication of the deer is the only answer to restoring the area's natural progression.

However, although deer numbers have been drastically reduced, total eradication is probably impossible. Helicopters can capture deer only in reasonably open areas, and once the remaining deer population retreats to denser cover the number of flying hours needed to recover deer will gradually make the operation uneconomic. Already, some operators do not work for periods during the winter months, and others are considering the possibility of

moving, perhaps to the North Island, where helicopter recovery is in its infancy.

The other factor is the deer farm market. At present, applications to start deer farming are pouring into the Government so quickly that difficulty is being experienced in processing them all. There have been something like 2000 applications in the past 12 months. At present, such farming can be a bonanza, and not just from venison. Sander points out that a good stag will give three or four crops of velvet a year, and at \$90 a pound the farmer can look forward to receiving anything from \$2000 to \$3000 a year from one stag's antlers alone.

According to one of the park rangers, a farmer acquaintance of his found he could make more from 100 deer than he could from 500 ewes, with their clip and lambs. His income from deer is estimated at \$180,000 a year.

The risks for the helicopter operators, however, are twofold. First, as the farms become self-perpetuating, the need for wild deer recovery will diminish. Second, the export market for venison is not a large one — at present we sell mainly to West Germany — and even there, there is stiff competition, principally from Scotland and Scandinavia.

Sander says that if the overseas market for venison collapsed now, for whatever reason, the deer farming industry would be hard pressed to maintain its viability.

There is another, curious, sting in the tail of the story of helicopter deer recovery. It is that areas of the Fiordland forest, relieved of deer, are beginning to regenerate. Plants and shrubs that had to cling for their survival on precipitous cliff faces are beginning to re-establish themselves in more open country — where helicopter hunting keeps the deer numbers down.

That could be regarded as an ecological triumph, but Sander says that the regeneration is creating optimum conditions for an explosion in the deer population. If, added to that, the by now domestic deer farming industry becomes self-sustaining, and export and domestic quotas for meat and byproducts are filled, there will be little incentive for a renewed effort by the helicopter companies.



Once in the telescopic sights of this Swiss-made Sig 308, the deer have no chance. Soft-nosed bullets are used.



Ready for gutting, a process that includes severing the head and hooves.



Gordon Kane, a former Hell's Angel, following his afternoon kill to the cooler.

That could see a return to the good-keen-man type of operation, though it wouldn't be very effective, because of the massive numbers of deer involved and the precipitous terrain; and it might be welcomed, too, by amateur deerstalkers who have grizzled loud and long about the devastation that helicopter hunting has had on their "sport".

### Antler Velvet Theft

(P.A.) AUCKLAND  
Auckland customs officials have warned transport companies not to accept export consignments of deer antler velvet.

This follows the theft of velvet worth a reported \$38,000 from a Taupo house recently. Working with local police, customs officers have advised shipping and airline firms not to accept velvet until it has been checked and cleared.

10/5/79



# Future Indicative

By DAVID YEREX

There are perhaps 600 practising deer farmers in this country: perhaps 60,000 deer on their farms. That makes deer farming a very small operation compared with our sheep and cattle industries. No one can anyone say with any sort of certainty how large the deer industry will become. Even the most ardent enthusiasts recognise that although the outlook is excellent, many unknown factors exist which could influence deer farming's future.

The present situation within the industry is confusing because rapid development is still taking place. Interest in the industry is so keen that there is an unsatisfied demand for live-stock with which to establish a herd or increase present breeding potential. This demand is being met by sale of deer from the large established farms. Hinds from this source are selling at around the \$2000 mark.

## Feral

Live capture of feral deer is also helping to meet the demand, with the estimate on numbers likely to be captured this year varying between 10,000 and 15,000. Until recently such deer sold at much the same price as farmed deer, but the latter are now beginning to bring a premium and it is possible that the gap between farmed and feral stock will widen further. Some capture operators will undoubtedly respond by keeping captured deer long enough to provide fence and yard training so that they can be sold as farmed stock.

## Value

But these values do not represent the true future of the industry. In any meat industry one must make financial assessments on the basis of the value of the product. Unfortunately for those who like a simple explanation, the situation is complicated by the recent

boom in price for antler velvet. Competition from overseas buyers for this product has been so intense that last season buyers flocked to New Zealand from Korea, the previous buyers, and from Hong Kong, Japan and Taiwan. And the price per pound for velvet went from \$50 in the 1977-78 season to over \$100 this season past.

## Venison

These prices are so good that any thought of killing deer for venison has been erased from deer farmers' minds. Hinds are kept for breeding and stags for cropping velvet. Since a single mature stag can yield anywhere between \$300 and \$1000 annually in velvet, most deer farmers are content to breed up as rapidly as possible; the economics of the operation are covered by the returns for velvet.

But if that situation remained unchanged — and there is nothing known which would suggest that the velvet market is going to collapse spectacularly in the near future — numbers of deer on farms must reach the point where New Zealand would threaten to over-supply the lucrative velvet market. Many farms would have reached stocking limit and would be selling off surplus stock, so the price of live deer would undoubtedly have declined dramatically.

However, long before that situation arose there would be a strong move to divert some stock into the venison market waiting to be exploited. It is likely that the adjustment will be made slowly: stags may be retained for several years for velvet production and then slaughtered at an age which will ensure top quality venison. Even hinds may be slaughtered before they reach an age at which their fertility is reduced.

## Exports

At present New Zealand exports substantial, but declining, quantities of venison to West Germany, that market imports "game" and wants only deer shot in the wild. But there are many other markets which it is fairly certain will accept farmed venison because it will be possible for deer farmers to meet hygiene standards that are not possible with wild deer. Already the New Zealand Deer Farmers Association, in collaboration with the meat division of the M.A.F. are testing out the various procedures required for ante- and post-mortem inspection and slaughter of farmed deer. The Game Industry Association which comprises those firms with game packing houses or which operate in the export of game meats, has considerable knowledge of market opportunities for the new product.

It is therefore possible that within the next year the industry will perfect inspection and slaughter techniques and

that trials may be carried out which will provide test quantities of farmed venison for market trials. Such trials will have only limited significance, however, so long as they preclude a continuing supply of the product and evidence that the industry can supply useful quantities, properly packaged, meeting all export and import requirements etc.

But while velvet continues to fetch present prices this whole exercise must remain theoretical and it leaves unanswered the very major question facing the industry. How can it control production of velvet if the quantity available for export shows signs of reaching a level which will bring about a drastic reduction in the price? There are only two solutions — control, or market balance.

## Controls

Controls are not popular and invariably create anomalies. Quotas, licensing and such methods go against the grain, particularly with strongly individualistic people such as farmers. The alternative is to let market forces bring about balance. In other words production of velvet would continue to climb until the point was reached that the present sellers' market would change over to a buyers' market, at which time the price would start to drop. It would eventually reach a point where farmers would find it economic to slaughter some stock.

Slaughter of deer does not imply total diversion from one trade to another. However, valuable by-products become available only at time of slaughter. Improved returns for skins, pizzles, tails and sinews could result in slaughter becoming more attractive than it is at present. One might think in terms of a 3-year-old stag bringing the farmer at least \$350 at farm gate.

From this it will be evident that whatever solution the industry finds to its problems of deciding between control and allowing market forces to have full influence, the profitability of deer farming remains far better than other traditional farm livestock. This is particularly pertinent when one considers that in terms of stocking rate, meat yield per hectare, pasture yield under deer grazing, labour requirements, health, management requirements etc., deer have been shown by research scientists to have a distinct advantage over other stock.

## Realities

It is common for traditional farmers to argue that the deer boom won't last, they look on it as a flash in the pan. This ignores some of the realities. The velvet trade is age-old and there's no reason to believe it is going to wither and die just because we have arrived on the

scene. It is also pertinent to recall that the heart disease panic has placed a considerable premium on a non-fat meat such as venison, especially in the wealthier countries to which New Zealand, because of its cost structure, is forced to sell.

Any glib assurance that the future of deer farming is safe is meaningless. All one can say is that all the signs indicate a continuing market for as much venison or deer by-products as New Zealand can produce within the next five years, with little prospect of a major growth in production in other countries which might cause New Zealand exports to be barred, and with these products selling at prices which even with inflation in costs will bring farmers a good return and surplus for investment.

It is more than can be said for our traditional farming systems.

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16-Red Deer adult HINDS  
(mated with hybrid stags)  
4-Red Deer adult STAGS  
4-Red Deer SPIKERS

## Reward Offered For Deer Velvet Recovery

(P.A.) ROTORUA  
Two Taupo brothers, dissatisfied with police inquiries into the theft of \$32,500 worth of deer velvet, have started their own investigation.

The brothers, Colin and Barry Flight, the directors of Barcolite Industries Ltd, claimed yesterday the police had not given the investigations the required urgency. Leads given to the police did not appear to have been followed through, they said.

The Flights have now increased the reward for information leading to the recovery of the velvet from \$2000 to \$10,000.

The Flights have told the office of the Commissioner of Police in Wellington of their disappointment with Taupo police inquiries and are taking advice from a private detective, a solicitor, and an insurance company.

Their claims that police had not proceeded with urgency have been denied by the officer in charge of the Taupo police, Senior Sergeant J. H. Stebbings, who said the investigation had been "thorough and adequate."

The velvet, for which the company had paid an estimated \$32,500 was stolen from a basement freezer in a Taupo home overnight on April 25/26.

As part of their own investigation, the Flights are circulating 15 photographs of the velvet to buyers in New Zealand and Asian countries in an attempt to ensure the velvet cannot be sold.

19/5/79  
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