

THE DEERSTALKER

February 2014



Newsletter of the NSW Deerstalkers Association

Contents.

Cover photos by Terry Burgess of his Canadian Hunt.

Page 3. President's Report.

Page 4. Canadian Moose Hunt.

Page 6. Mongolian Hunt.

Page 10. What Makes Good Antlers?

Page 12. Why Some Deer Species Can Interbreed, and Others Not.

Page 13. Photographing Deer.

Page 15. Meeting Dates for 2014 & Submission Guidelines.

Page 16. NSWDA Directory.

Page 17. NSWDA Membership Form.

Page 18. Game Council Information.

Please Note;

The last three entries are in the order listed, but page numbers may be different from those shown, due to the method used to compile the newsletter.

Cover photos supplied by Terry Burgess, from his Moose hunting article (inside).

Editor.

Many thanks to Terry and Bob for their hunting articles, included in this issue. As many authors are now selling their work to the many commercial magazines, the contribution of hunting articles in particular have slowed to a trickle.

It has been some time obviously since we have produced an issue of "Deerstalker". I apologise for this, but it has been due to circumstances beyond our control.

If members have anything to contribute to future issues, please send them to me and I shall hopefully be able to include them in future issues this year.

Despite the drought there are still some great trophies wandering around, so don't be discouraged. I look forward to seeing some photos of your successes.

For advise on sending photos and articles, see page 16.

President's Report.

Dear Members,

Best wishes for a safe and healthy 2014 to you and your families.

Next Meeting

Please note that our next meeting is on Thursday, 27 February 2014 at the German Austrian Club at 7:30pm.

Last year we had a social night as a follow up to our successful ARB, Wentworthville night at BCF, Blacktown. This was well attended and we had a presentation on GPS. Food pizzas and great night. We will again look at similar venues and if you have any ideas, please contact me.

With O'Farrell's knee jerk reaction to close Game Council, many of our fellow Hunter Organisations started to lobby their local politicians on the basis that the motivations behind the closure were ill conceived.

The good news is that a Game Licensing Unit has now been established within the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI) with mostly the same Game Council staff.

R-Licence hunters now have to do an on-line training module before they are allowed to hunt on State forests or Crown land. A GPS enabled device will now be mandatory to hunt on nominated lands.

A copy of the DPI letter sent to us is included in the magazine and clarifies the process. Hunting starts in February 2014.

On a sad note Max Kilpatrick, one of our new and keen hunters, passed away suddenly without warning. He was a work colleague and I attended his funeral and met his sons who are both keen hunters.

Also, our condolences to long time member, Ron Thomas, whose wife Helen passed away recently. With the closure of Game Council, our club was offered Gordon Alford's Australian trophies, with the blessing of the family and that they would be held in trust by individual members. At our last meeting, Wayne McPhee brought the trophies to the meeting and they were allocated to those in attendance and a register was created.

Our Christmas Function – Peachtree Hotel

On Saturday, 16 November 2013 we had an enjoyable Christmas function with many trophies on display. It was good to see so many children present and, in some cases, grandchildren in attendance. John Ross (JR) was the winner of the custom knife.

I was invited to the SSAA (Vic) Deerstalkers Christmas function and met up with many other ADF members. They had over 300 in attendance and at least 100 trophies on display.

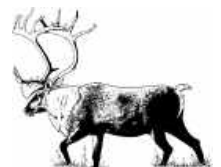
Again, they have offered the Woodspoint Lodge for a club hunt and some of our members are organising a hunt. We should take advantage of the generous offer and organise a couple of hunts this year.

Please note : Your gold membership cards are included for 2014.

Our membership year runs on calendar year basis and some members are due to pay their fees. We will put a reminder notice with this mail out.

Best wishes and good hunting!

Greg Haywood



Canadian Moose Hunt by Terry Burgess

On a recent trip to Canada, where I booked a 14 day horseback hunt for a moose in Yukon, we landed on a lake after a 180 mile flight in a float plane. The base camp was about 150 metres from the lake, with 18 horses grazing nearby. In the early afternoon I was given a Browning Abolt in 300 Winchester Magnum. After 2 sighting shots, which were spot on, it was into the saddle to get acquainted with the horses that were to be my means of transport for the next 2 weeks.

It was about 2 hours before dark so I went fishing in the lake and managed to catch 3 lake trout about 2 lbs which we ate for dinner that night. Day 1 we set off at 8am. The guide, the wrangler and I, after crossing creeks many times which fed into the lake, we rode through pine forests before reaching



open grass for miles in each direction. We spotted 3 caribou but not of the trophy size. Day 2 had similar sightings including 1 small moose.

Day 3 a pack of 4 wolves was sighted on the skyline about 1km away. I dismounted and took the rifle out of the scabbard. From ground level I could not see them. I stalked into about 400 metres and crawled to a small rise. I could see them trotting along. I took off my backpack for a good resting shot and waited for one to stop. BANG and my first wolf was dead, the others took off at 100mph off the skyline never to be seen again. After a few photos it was skinned for a life sized mount. Day 4 after

several sightings of moose cows and 1 small bull, on our return journey back to camp I sighted 2 wolves on the edge of the pine forest, a black one and a grey one. After closing into about 300 metres the black one had vanished into the pines, I managed to put the cross hairs on the grey one and secured my second wolf. That evening in camp it was decided due to the lack of moose sighting we would move to another camp next morning.

Day 4 after packing all the gear into the boxes on the pack horses we headed off for a 5 hour trip, 4 hours of which was in pouring rain at -2 degrees C. We reached the next camp to find the door broken off and everything inside had been thrashed by a grizzly bear. The next 4 days from this camp proved worthless with only 4 caribou spikies and a female grizzly being sighted and no sign of moose in the area, but I did manage to catch some fish in the nearby lake. My hopes of shooting a big bull moose were declining rapidly. The decision was made to move camp again. On day 9 about 11am a large cow moose was sighted we watched it from about 600 metres giving a roar about every half hour or so to see if we get any response from a bull in the area but to no avail. On day 10 we returned to the same spot at about 9:30am. The cow moose was grazing only a few hundred metres from yesterdays sighting. We glassed the long valley for the next few hours then all of a sudden a big bull moose walked out from



the bush towards her. I grabbed the rifle, went down the hill through the scrub across a creek, they were both out of sight. As I crawled up the bank the bull moose came into view about 180 metres away. He was back on to me. I chambered a round and waited for a side on heart lung shot, after a few minutes he provided the opportunity and I squeezed off the shot. He took off one step forward, one step back, turned around and fell over. I chambered another round and approached carefully. The cow saw me and trotted off into the bush. On closer inspection he was stone dead. The 300 Winchester Magnum had done its job. He had 18 points with none broken off. The guide had watched the whole operation from the opposite hill. I signalled him to bring the horses across, after many photos the guide and I caped him out and cut all the meat off the frame ready for retrieval by the pack horses the next morning.* I had finally achieved my lifetime ambition to shoot the biggest animal of the deer species. *It is Canadian government law that all meat must be retrieved from the bush so bear and wolves do not become dependent on hunters' kills for food. The meat is donated to the indigenous people known as First Nation.

Fallow Deer Saved From Extinction in Iran.

Fallow deer is one of rare species of fauna native to Iran. Its habitat is Karkheh and Dez, both in Khuzestan province. The fallow deer suddenly became extinct several decades ago due to a number of reasons including poaching. Fortunately after officials cautioned that the fallow deer was on the verge of extinction, necessary measures were taken to save this rare animal from disappearing altogether.

In 1957, environmental officials and enthusiasts realised that the number of fallow deer had declined sharply in Iran. After many years only six were found. These Fallow deer were transferred to Nazsari plains in Mazandaran province to facilitate breeding. At that time two fallow deer were transferred to Germany but no one knows what became of them. Breeding fallow deer began in 1957 and a total of 400 were raised. Of course, Nazsari was not the only area for breeding fallow deer and a total of 300 are being bred in Ashk Island of Orumieh Lake which has the highest deer population. Now, 50 years since the transfer of fallow deer to Mazandaran province from its original habitat, officials of the Department of Environment are trying to bring them back to its habitat in Khuzestan. This is an important event for the lovers of environment. Director general for Khuzestan Department of Environment said that preparations to return Iranian fallow deer to Karkheh protected zone is in its final stage and the species will be returned to Khuzestan in September. Hormuz Mahmoudi-Rad noted that returning the deer to Dez and Karkheh cost 2.1 billion rials while at least another 700 million rials will be required to complete the project. Of course, the plan to transfer this rare species was first supposed to be implemented over a 300-hectare area, he added. However, Mahmoudi-Rad said that due to high cost in implementing the project and shortage of funds, the plan was executed over a 70-hectare area.

Operations such as fencing the breeding site, preparing the land and clearing the protected zone of natural predators of fallow deer, including foxes and jackal are presently under way. He noted that all these efforts are aimed at transferring fallow deer to its main habitat, Khuzestan and also promoting ecotourism in the region. A tourism site with arbor, camping area and sightseeing center will be built in the protected zone. The Fallow deer was saved, but can other Iranian endangered species also be saved?



Mongolian Hunt by Bob Penfold

Mongolia Maral Stag hunt Hunting deer, especially big deer was my hobby and my passion. After taking most of the big deer in North America, moose, caribou, mule deer and the like, hunting North American elk relentlessly without ever seeing a bull that I might have liked changed my perspective on my deer hunting. A North American Elk seemed beyond my reach. Mongolia was newly opened and they had great Maral stag hunting. The Maral stag of Mongolia was almost exactly the same animal as the North American Elk.

Many of my clients had told me stories of their great and easy hunts for Maral stag in Mongolia. They highly recommended that I take that hunt if I really wanted an elk. Klineburger brothers, the international hunt booking agency in Seattle had pioneered the exploration of Mongolia and had extensive knowledge and contacts in the area. As they were one of my better hunt booking agencies booking hunters for my hunting and guiding business, we knew each other well. Chris became my source for information regarding setting up a hunt for Maral stag in Mongolia. Chris advised me to include other forest game in the hunt and to add on a Gobi Desert hunt for sheep and Ibex. Chris had the personal experience as did many of my hunting clients who had hunted Mongolia. The best time to hunt was during the bugle season, the rut, when the bulls were actively with the cows and when the dominant older bulls were obvious in the herd areas and prone to be making mistakes during that period.

Put your finger on a world map globe, on the border between Canada and USA (where the elk bugle best between 20th and 30th September). Then spin the globe holding your finger on that USA border latitude as the globe spins. You will find that your finger ends up on exactly the same latitude in Mongolia, where the elk are hunted. That they bugle at exactly the same time in both countries is not a coincidence. The landscape is almost exactly the same as upper Idaho and lower British Columbia elk hunting areas. My Maral stag hunt was to be for 10 days between 20 and 30 September adding on a Gobi Desert hunt for Gobi desert sheep and ibex, from 2 October until 12 October. The particular guide and best hunt area that were recommended to me by my clients were booked two years ahead of the hunt date to ensure that I had the best possible hunt opportunity.

A new rifle was built for the hunts, a 340 Weatherby magnum, magnaported Mauser 98 with Brown Precision composite stock. I loaded and tested both 210 grain Nosler partition and 250 grain Nosler partition bullets for accuracy and long range capability. Through practise, I familiarised myself with the characteristics and the capabilities of this new rifle. One of my better professional hunting guides, Gary Harvey, who guided hunters for me throughout Australia, New Zealand and New Caledonia asked if he could join me, so I agreed. Gary also had a new 340 built the same as mine. We had to arrange to fly from Sydney Australia to Hong Kong, then stopover for one night before flying on to Beijing and stopover there for a three day sightseeing tour. We were then to fly on to Ulan Bator, the capital city of Mongolia and the jump off city for our hunts. As there were no return flights from Ulan Bator to Beijing after 30 September, we had to take a train to Beijing after our sheep hunt, before returning to Australia via Hong Kong. We booked all of the flights and train seats and paid our deposits for the hunts.

We began accumulating the gear we would need, lots of candy bars, water steriliser etc as we had no idea of what we might encounter. There were stories of discontent coming from international hunters who had frustrating and often unsuccessful hunts in Mongolia. Klineburgers did a great job in putting all of our gun entry permits together for every flight and country transit, however after depositing our rifles with Hong Kong customs on arrival for overnight storage, then recovering them for our Beijing



flight, the flight ticketing attendant stubbornly refused to allow us to book our firearms with our luggage into the aircraft. Gary held up the line of people trying to book onto the flight while I called for first a supervisor then the Qantas terminal manager to sort out the problem. We caused the aircraft to depart 90 minutes late, however our guns were checked in and loaded after creating such a huge ruckus and delay in the airport. Klineburgers had arranged for us to be met by our local guide on arrival in Beijing.

We enjoyed a great 3 days tour of Beijing including the great wall and other major attractions. We had the best Peking duck that I have ever eaten at a downtown restaurant. The flight from Beijing to Ulan Bator was different. It departed two hours late, had no air pressurisation, no carpets or coverings on the aircraft floor and no heating. We wondered why the locals took food and drinks onto the aircraft, however, we were soon to find that there was no catering on the flight. We were very hungry, thirsty and both of us had headaches from flying high without pressurisation or supply of sufficient oxygen when we finally arrived at Ulan Bator. We were met and taken to the Hotel Ulan Bator where we were checked in. The next morning we met all of the other hunters who had arrived from USA and Germany through Moscow and were introduced to our guides. We were shocked to find that because we were unknown Australians, the best guides (including the guide I had booked) selected the richest looking American hunters (some being my friends and clients) leaving us to be picked over by the less experienced guides. Our allocated guides advised us that they were very familiar with the area we were to hunt, experienced at hunting Maral stags and that we would be successful and have great hunts.

When we asked our allocated guides when we were going to the area I had booked he laughed and told me that the best guides already taken that area and we had been allocated an area a long way away from that area. "Take it or do not hunt" we were told. Now I was getting mad. We wasted another day while the guides get ready to depart. Getting ready meant having us buy lots of vodka for them to drink during the hunt. Over dinner that evening we met two hunters who had that day arrived back in Ulan Bator. They had hunted the exact same area to which we were allocated. They had not seen a Maral stag and the Maral stags were not bugling. "Do not go there" was their advice. Gary and I were totally frustrated, however, having no alternative, we decided to go to the camp to take a look for a couple of days.

After yet another late start, (time wasted counting the vodka bottles again) we took the uncomfortable long drive in two Russian Jeeps to the hunting camp. We were astonished to see the guides stop twice to ask directions, however finally arrived in the camp after dark. There was little to eat, so dinner was some cold rice that appeared to have cobwebs in it, followed by a couple of candy bars. Gary and I checking our rifle sights at daybreak woke the camp. We cajoled them into finally getting away hunting around 9.00AM. Gary had a guide and an interpreter while I only had a non English-speaking guide as there were not enough horses for all of the participants who were supposed to go on the hunts. We departed in different directions to hunt all day. My guide led me up the mountain on narrow trails until we reached the mountain top. We hitched the horses and dropped over the top of the mountain to face a huge valley. It was 11.00AM and there were Maral bulls roaring and bugling all over the face of the mountain opposite where we sat. I heard one really big old bull bugling in the trees but never saw him. I mentally marked his location after seeing numerous cows feeding in that side valley in the open glades. My guide had me sit and load my rifle while he drew from his wraparound cloak, a tin whistle, which he began blowing. It emitted a high pitched whistle and he blew on it for over an hour until the bulls on the other side of the valley stopped bugling around midday. As I could speak no Mongolian and he could speak no English, we simply could not converse. After we circled the top of



the mountain a couple of times I asked the guide with hand signals what we were doing. He indicated that we were looking for the horses. After I showed him where we had tied the horses, we looked into some other small valleys on our way back to camp where we arrived well before dark. Gary arrived just after us, however he had only had a scenic horse ride all day and had neither seen nor heard anything. He had seen no sign of deer or Maral. The very hard and physically damaging saddle half crippled me during the first day. While suffering real pain from the day in the saddle we called the camp manager and guides to a conference in our Yurt. We asked them to explain what happened during the day. After some discussion between him and my guide, the manager excitedly explained to me that my guide and I had been very fortunate to find bugling Maral in the morning and that though we had bugled them, they had not run down the mountain leaving their cows, crossed the river and run up our mountain so that I could shoot one. Both Gary and I were astonished. There was not one guide or interpreter in the camp who remotely understood trophy hunting or what we were there for.

We woke the whole camp at 6.00AM next morning and finally got them started up the mountain by 8.00AM amid furious protesting. My interpreter accompanied me during this day and led us into a side valley that we walked and stalked around for an hour or so, circling back to the horses. I asked why we were hunting here and my interpreter advised me that "This is a good easy area to hunt". As we saw no hoof prints or sign of any kind I asked where we were the day before. The guide and interpreter had a discussion then advised me that we were way higher on the mountain yesterday but that it was too far to ride to hunt up there. I forced them to take me up the mountain to where we were the day before and as we crossed the ridgeline we immediately herd the bulls bugling, just as they had the previous day. They quit again at around midday, so I immediately took my guide and interpreter back to camp where we arrived by early afternoon. Gary also had a dead day. We discussed and planned taking over the hunt and doing it the Australian way next morning. We went to great lengths to explain that their hunt was now over and that our hunt was about to begin. We showed my guide how to blow the American bugle that we had brought with us and he practiced for the rest of the night.

My alarm clock was set for 5.00AM. I took a couple of strong pain killers before crawled across the yurt floor to the centre supporting post and dragged myself up to a standing position. My back was so painful from the saddle crushing my lower spine that I could not stand unsupported until the pain killers kicked in. We kicked the guides out of bed at 5.30AM and had them riding away from camp before daybreak, assuring them that I would handle any marauding grizzly bear that might attack us during the early morning ride. The interpreter, who was not a hunter, complained all of the way up the mountain until we arrived at 8.00AM. Upon tying the horses, I instructed the interpreter to blow the bugle at exactly 8.30 and that if he did not follow my exact instructions I would shoot him. That was the first thing that he seemed to understand since we first met. My guide tried to keep up with me after I started down the mountain, however, when I jumped into the very cold river and began wading over to the far bank, he called to me and indicated that he could not swim. As he was only 5 feet tall, he accepted my help to drag him across the river. He was smiling and accepting that I was now running the hunt. The mountain was steep, however being young and fit, the slope did not slow me down. I reached the position where I wanted to be high on the face, downwind and close to where the big old bull had been bugling and holding his cows over the last two days. The interpreter bugled from the top of the opposite mountain nicely at exactly 8.30. The old bull replied instantly only 100 yards or so in front of me at the same level. As I closed on him as quickly and quietly as possible the interpreter



bugled again from high on his mountain.

As I slipped over the ridge, there he was, standing all black in the shadows. He stretched his head high and gave a long and mournful reply. The steam from his breath added a surreal atmosphere to his ritual calling. After slipping up behind a large pine tree and centring my crosshairs low on his chest and right on the rear edge of his prominent front leg, my shot broke the silence and echoed up and down the valley. The bull jumped forward with a high bounding jump before dashing down the mountainside through the trees. My crosshairs followed him as I tried to get in a second shot, but he was gone, down the mountain through the trees before I could get on him again. There was no sound, the bush was quiet. The way that the bull had reacted to the shot gave me confidence that I had him. I covered the short distance between where he was at the shot and his deep hoof tracks and blood sprayed on the ground were obvious. A simple followup brought me to his side, where he had come to a stop, dead, in a small clearing 100 yards down the mountain. He was huge and beautiful, all yellow with a dark brown neck and legs. I sat down with him and put my arm around his neck. All of the years of hunting hard for an elk were over, he was mine. It was a very emotional moment for me and one that I will never forget. I sat quietly with him for some time, just the two of us on the mountain.

My guide arrived wearing a huge grin, his handshake was warm and strong. By the time the interpreter brought the horses to us we had the bull skinned and quartered, the head caped and ready to be packed back to camp, first down the mountain, across the river, back up the mountain and down the other side to camp. It took much swearing and threatening, however we finally arrived in camp well after dark, all happy to relate the day's adventures and to enjoy some fresh meat for the first time since departing Ulan Bator. This luxury was short lived as unknown to us, the guides sold all of my Maral stag meat to the local tribes for cash the next day when we were hunting again. It was back onto the stale rice, vegetables and Australian candy bars diet the next night.

My successful Maral hunt was followed with another first when a huge Siberian Roe deer made a fatal mistake. A 400 yards cross valley shot just before last light made him the first ever Siberian Roe deer to be harvested by any Australian hunter. I located the dead deer in the dark by flashlight, carried him down the mountain to our horses then gutted him before loading him for return to camp on the back of my horse. We arrived back in camp late. I called for the camp manager, the cook, my guide and my interpreter to where I had hung the Roe deer on a tree branch. They were all excited and indicating to me that they were going to enjoy eating this tasty deer. That was until I had my interpreter translate my instructions clearly, one sentence at a time. In a clear message I advised them that I paid for my travel from Australia. I paid for the hunt and the trophy fee on the Roe deer. I shot it, gutted it, carried it back to camp and hung it on the tree branch to cool overnight. These messages did not phase them, however when I told them that it was my deer and that only I was going to eat it they became very angry. After making sure that they understood that I would shoot anyone who went near the deer I retired for the evening. Gary and I enjoyed the fresh meat for several days while the staff lived on their stale rice and vegetable diet. I did not give them any opportunity to steal or to sell my Roe deer. Unfortunately Gary never saw or heard a Maral bull, however took a huge Siberian moose before we headed back to Ulan Bator.



What Makes a Good Set of Antlers?

Research from all over the world, notable the UK, Germany, the USA & New Zealand, has in recent years provided some clear answers to this question. Because most readers will not have access to printed references I have listed some which are available on the internet at the end of this article. Read them as you like. Some are in plain language but others are quite technical.

Before getting onto what we now know, it is interesting to note that in England, where red deer have existed since the last ice age, and fallow since about the Norman Conquest in 1066 AD, a vast knowledge of deer breeding and management has accumulated since early days. Most of this knowledge was held in men's minds and was not written down. People lived much closer to nature then. Their lives were shaped more by their environment, which they relied on for much of their material & spiritual needs. Those early keepers were able to produce deer heads of exceptional size and quality, quite as good as some of the best we see today. Lately there has been a recognition that much of this detailed knowledge of game is restricted to just a few; largely the keepers and associated estate workers, many of whom are descended from families who have been in this business for generations. "Keeping" is now a degree course in some UK universities, providing the essential knowledge tools for those wanting a career in that field.

We now have scientific verification for what the best of the old deer managers already knew, and more. Here are some simple guidelines.

1. Genetics sets the upper limit to antler size and quality. Both males and females carry genes for antler development, but of course what the does carry is invisible to all but sophisticated genetic testing.
2. Antler genes affect both right & left antlers equally. Put plainly, genetics does not cause left and right antlers to be different.
3. How close to their potential a set of antlers gets depends on nutrition and injuries.
4. It takes six to eight years for a fallow buck to produce his best head, and ten to twelve years for a red stag.
5. Fallow tend to dense populations before spreading out. Large herds have less available feed, so smaller heads result, (unless supplementary fed). Better trophies come from herds with low population densities, as in Hungary.
6. Deer breeders have worked out what supplementary feed deer need to grow exceptional antlers and are able to produce red stags in particular for the "collectors market" of enormous size. These sell for obscene prices.
7. For an as yet unknown reason, a stag or buck with a properly formed set of antlers developed when his feed was poor, will often drop a tine (or two) when growing the next set on good feed. Dropped tines are usually those that evolved last, the trez tines. They usually grow back on later heads.
8. Antlers are affected by injuries to the growing antler while in velvet (and this is believed to be a very common occurrence). Antlers are frequently found which have been damaged or broken in velvet. Sometimes the break heals & sometimes not. The break might heal "straight" or result in a malformed antler. Snags and small points can be artificially created by deliberately injuring the velvet during antler growth.
9. Damage to a pedicle will always result in a malformed antler on that side. The animal will never be a trophy, but might have good genetics.
10. Body injuries almost always result in poor development of the antler on the opposite side of the body. An injury which can heal fully will usually cause the antler to be affected for two seasons, whereas



one which is permanent (loss of part of a leg for instance) may affect the antlers for life. Chapman suggests that the antler on the side opposite to the injury grows larger in a natural attempt to balance the body. No study has been done to confirm that idea, although it sounds like a reasonable explanation.

11. Antlers grow under the influence of hormones and nervous control. This nerve control over antler growth is almost certainly responsible for slightly uneven normal antler growth, but especially an unbalanced head following a significant body injury.

What can we take from all of this?

1. The old keepers decided centuries ago that faults could not be shot out of the herd. Modern research confirms that belief.
2. In a herd of restricted size, where we are trying to produce good trophy heads, careful removal of permanently damaged animals is desirable. Also in deer parks where the deer get considerable supplementary feed, males which fail to grow good (undamaged) antlers can be identified and removed. In a closed system like a deer park where keepers know every animal, this is possible. It is very difficult (impossible) to do in a wild herd.
3. Unbalanced heads may recover to be good trophies in later years. One can see unbalanced heads in some of the best herds in the UK. This is not because the keepers are slack.
4. Unbalanced heads, not being desirable trophies for most of us or poachers, may actually represent “money in the bank” so to speak. If we let them grow for the two years it will take for them to recover from a temporary injury, they should (on good feed) then be much bigger and better trophy heads.
5. If we kill that unbalanced head now, it can never be a trophy, but if we let it recover & grow it possibly will be. A scum-bag poacher might get it, but the chances are it will be taken by a legitimate hunter. There is no downside to sparing unbalanced heads in a wild herd unless the population is too large or the available area is restricted.
6. For better trophies, keep the population density low, so the deer have plenty of feed.
7. Protect younger stags & bucks; allow them to grow to their maximum size.

Print Reference. “Fallow Deer” Donald and Norma Chapman 1997.

Internet References. To view any of these references, copy the web address into your browser. If you are viewing an on-line copy of this newsletter, simply clicking on the web address should take you to the article. If this fails, copy and paste the address into the address line of your browser, then hit your “enter” or “return” key.

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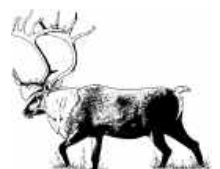
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How is it that Some Deer Species can Interbreed & others Not?

A Zoologist's old definition of a species was that all members could breed together to produce fertile offspring. With today's knowledge of evolution and genetics that definition has become less and less certain.

All deer would have a single common ancestor which developed long ago in one location, in a particular environment. As time passed and their population grew, they spread out into the four corners of the Earth. Deer are found in most of the continents as a part of the indigenous fauna, from the tropics to near the poles. As the deer advanced into new habitats they became adapted to them, sometimes changing habitats over and over, not only their appearance and size to fit in, but also their genes.

Deer became so scattered that large groups became reproductively separated from each other, no longer able to breed & share their genes. This sped up the process of change. Genes are located on chromosomes inside the nucleus of all living cells. They can be seen under a microscope, counted and identified. Many species of modern deer have different numbers of chromosomes. It is thought the ancestral number of chromosomes in old world deer (from Europe & Asia) was 74, & 70 in the new world (the Americas), usually (but not always) made up of a pair of sex chromosomes (X & Y) plus 36/34 pairs of autosomal chromosomes.

Over time some groups gained chromosomes and some lost them (possibly simply by several joining together). Interestingly, cold adapted deer generally have more chromosomes than similar sub-species from warmer climates. For instance cold adapted Hokaido Sika have 68 chromosomes, while southern Sika have 66. An extreme example of changes in chromosome numbers is found in Muntjack. Muntjack are an Asia deer with very ancient origins, now found over large areas of England & Scotland after their liberation from Woburn Abbey & elsewhere. The species found in the UK, Reeves Muntjac has 47/48 chromosomes (no Y chromosome in this sub-species), but other sub-species have 9, 12/14 and 6/7! In fact 6/7 is the smallest number of chromosomes found in any mammal.

Numbers of chromosomes found in various species include; Tibetan White Lipped deer 66, Sambar 66, European Roe 74, Siberian Roe 80, White tail & Black tail 70, Reindeer 70, American moose 70 & European moose 69, European fallow 68.

Conventional thinking is that species with different numbers of chromosome pairs cannot breed to produce healthy offspring, even when artificial fertilisation is used to overcome obstacles like different breeding seasons. As more is discovered about chromosomes, this might not always prove to be the case. However, it does help to explain why Sika and Reds naturally hybridise where their populations overlap, and likewise Sambar & Rusa. In each of these crosses, both species has the same numbers of chromosomes. How then can we then talk about Sambar & Rusa or Sika & Reds as different species? This just goes to show that the more we delve into and understand nature, the more we need to re-examine older ideas, & in many cases, accept that the truth is rarely simple or easily defined.

Reference; "Deer of the World," Valerius Geist.



Getting good photos of Deer.

Dal Birrell

Good photos need to fill the frame, whether they are portraits, single animals or groups. For deer you need a lens of at least 300mm equivalent (6X magnification) for long shots. On a half frame digital single lens reflex (dslr) this equates to about 450mm. Shorter focal lengths are also needed for group shots & for when a closer approach is possible, as in the rut. A zoom lens of 100 - 400mm or thereabouts is a good choice, as would be a 70 - 200mm f2.8 plus a fixed 300 or 400mm f2.8. My own Nikon 80—400mm has a good zoom range, but its minimum aperture is two stops smaller than the recommended f2.8 lenses. Those extra f stops make a real difference in poor light but they come with a big price tag. Both Canon & Nikon make excellent zoom lenses in the 100/200-400mm f4 range, but they are expensive. The advantage of a dslr over a fixed lens camera is being able to take a shot the instant the shutter button is pressed, & better control over settings.

That said, I have been impressed with the results of some of the better compact fixed lens cameras with zoom ranges similar to my above recommendations. However the lag between pressing the shutter button & the shot can frequently mean that the shot is lost. If you can accept that, these cameras have other advantages. The first of these is their excellent vibration reduction mechanisms, which give sharp pictures even when zoomed well out to the longest magnifications. The second is that they are more compact & much easier to carry than a dslr outfit. The third is cost which is usually at least 1/4 to 1/12 the cost of a good dslr outfit. In anyone's language that's a considerable saving, especially if your wildlife photography is an occasional thing.

The best time to photograph deer is undoubtedly in the rut because it is then possible to get much closer to them. Also, out of the rut you'll mostly just get shots of feeding & resting animals, whereas in the rut the bucks are roaring, challenging, running off rivals & chasing females. They are also easier to find, & are usually close to others all doing their stuff, which means more subjects for less walking.

In the UK there are a number of deer parks which offer wonderful photo opportunities. The British Deer Society's website lists many parks where watching & photography is possible. These range all over the UK, so no matter where you visit there will be one within easy reach. In the South I would not miss Woburn Abbey, Richmond Park in western London & Petworth Park on the South coast. The British weather being what it is, allow enough time to avoid the inevitable wet days. Light overcast days give good photographic light, so don't hang out for bright & shine. You might just miss out! Mid October is the ideal time.

The need to get sharp pictures, sometimes in poor light, means using fast shutter speeds. The greater the lens magnification the faster the shutter speed needed. A rough guide to the minimum speed is 1/ the focal length. For example, a 400mm lens needs a minimum of 1/400th sec. In practice, a 1/750th is more realistic, even with a solid camera support & vibration reduction mechanisms in the lens. In poor light this can be difficult to get. I now have no hesitation in raising the ISO level, sometimes to levels which I know produce grainy images in order to keep the shutter speed high. Sharp grainy pictures can be very acceptable whereas unsharp grain free images always hit the bottom of my trash bin. Experiment with high ISO settings under different light conditions to see what works. It seems that what matters most is the intensity of the light coming onto the sensor. Large apertures will give less grain than small ones. I have taken excellent pictures using ISO speeds as high as 3200, using the largest lens aperture available. Play with whatever gear you have in these conditions to see how your camera can



be set up for best results.

Usually I have my camera set to motor drive so I have a better chance of catching the perfect image by shooting at 5 frames a second at critical moments. You can use this technique also to overcome the problem of shutter lag. Start shooting just before you normally would, & keep shooting until the moment has passed. Chances are, you'll have got the shot.

On my last UK trip I had conditions varying from sunny to light rain (which sometimes passes over in a short time) & heavy overcast. I used a tripod most of the time, just resting the lens hood on it to keep the front of the lens from moving about, while still letting me quickly point & shoot. Trees & tree guards make good supports too. Only when there was no alternative did I shoot unsupported. Unless your tripod is very solid & heavy it will rock excessively when you screw on a camera with a long lens attached. Your pictures will inevitably be spoiled by camera movement.

As it was the Red & Fallow rut, I got close much of the time. The Reds in particular are very tolerant. One morning I spent an hour & a half with one stag which was busy testing his hinds & fending off three other stags all intent on getting a piece of the action.

Many of the Fallow bucks were rutting in the deep shade of old Oaks, on a heavily overcast afternoon, so after doing my best with slow shutter speeds, I went searching for a buck in better light. I ventured into a part of the park I had not been to before & found three magnificent trophy deer, but strangely only one was with does. As all were in their scrapes they were easy to approach. The bonus was a number of great Reds, all also seemingly eager to be photographed.

Any day spent watching deer is a great day! Photographing them is even better.

I will put a few of my better pictures on the covers of upcoming editions of "Deerstalker".





Meeting dates for 2014

Thursday 27 February Thursday 22 May
Thursday 17 July (Also AGM) Thursday 16
October Trophy Exhibition & Christmas
Party Saturday 15 November

**NSWDA Hunting Club AHO (for R
licences) is 10111, & the Agent No. is
7185**

Please Note: The N.S.W.D.A. Inc. takes no responsibility for views expressed in "The Deerstalker". All articles submitted are signed by the relevant author. The Editor & Committee do however, take responsibility for views expressed in articles & reports submitted by them!

Guidelines for submissions.

Material which is emailed saves me a lot of work. Writing can be sent as a Word file, or a text file. For those without an expensive word processing program, you can use any writing program included with your operating system, or download "Open Office" free from the internet which is virtually identical to "Microsoft Office" & can exchange files with that famous program.

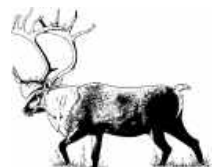
Photographs should NOT be included in the article itself, but sent as separate files (attachments to the email). You can indicate where each photo might be placed by typing its file name in brackets in the text.

Photographs sent by email should be . jpeg files, saved at about 15 cm X 10 cm size at quality 8 (which gives the best quality for the smallest file size).

Photos can also be prints or negatives or slides. These can be returned to you if you include a stamped self addressed envelope. If these photos are valuable, send copies rather than originals.

Printed on paper submissions need to have clear black typed text. Feintly or poorly printed text will not scan & cannot be included. **Very short pieces, such as personal adverts can be hand written.**

Advertisements for hunting related items will be printed at no charge.



web address: www.newsouthdeerstalkers.org.au

NSW Deerstalkers Association

Formed: 7th June 1972

Life Members: the late Gordon Alford
Bob Penfold
Wayne McPhee
Jack Boswell
Paul Wilkes
Steve Isaacs
Greg Haywood
Ron Tinning

Affiliated To:

Australian Deerstalkers Federation
Game Management Council (Australia) Inc.

Contributions:

The editor and editorial committee reserve the right to modify any contributions.

All contributions are to be mailed or emailed to:

Dal Birrell - Editor
14 Blackall Street
Bulli NSW 2516

dbi93465@bigpond.net.au

Advertisements:

Advertisements for products sold by NSWDA Members are accepted and printed free of charge provided a discount is given to club members.

President &

Public Officer:

**Greg Haywood 1 Struan Street
Tahmoor NSW 2573 Ph: 02 4681
8363**

Immediate Past President:

Darren Plumb

Ph: 0248447071; 0412021741

Licence Testing

Co-ordinator: Greg Haywood

All Memberships & General Correspondence to be posted to: PO Box 519 PICTON NSW 2571

Information for NSWDA members wanting to join the Black Fallow Scheme Inc.

The BFS Inc. recently incorporated and is a separate organisation legally from NSWDA. **Applicants MUST however be members of NSWDA, hold both a firearms licence and a Game Council R Licence.**

BFS Inc. members hold two formal meeting per year, at which any NSWDA members who have applied to join the waiting list for the BFS have their applications either approved or rejected by a secret ballot of BFS Inc. members present. Persons on the approved waiting list are invited to join the Scheme as vacancies arise, in the order they appear on the list. Applicants whose licences or membership of the NSWDA lapses, will automatically lose their place on the approved waiting list.

Application letters with photocopies of NSWDA membership card, firearms licence card and R Licence can be sent to the Secretary, Dal Birrell, address as above.



NEW SOUTH WALES DEERSTALKERS ASSOCIATION INC.

Dedicated to the Sound Management and Conservation of Deer in NSW.

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

SURNAME:.....CHRISTIAN.....MIDNAMES.....

DATE OF BIRTH..... SEX: Male/Female

DRIVERS LICENCE NO:..... STATE.....

SHOOTERS LICENCE NO:..... CLASS:.....

POSTAL ADDRESS:.....POST CODE:.....

HOME ADDRESS.....POST CODE.....

HOME PHONE.....BUSINESS.....MOBILE.....

OCCUPATION.....

FEES (Please tick payment being made):

1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION

3 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION

FAMILY: \$55.00

FAMILY: \$150.00 (SAVE \$15.00)

SINGLE: \$50.00

SINGLE: \$145.00 (save \$5.00)

JUNIOR: \$25.00 (Under 18)

JUNIOR: \$70.00 (Save \$5.00)

PLEASE NOTE: By law, to possess a shooters licence you must hold appropriate insurance. This is included in the subscription with the exception of FAMILY MEMBERSHIPS which include only one insurance payment. Insurance must be obtained for each additional family member after the first at the rate of \$10.00.

INSURANCE @ \$10.00 PER FAMILY MEMBER AFTER THE FIRST TOTAL: \$.....

MEMBERSHIP SUBSCRIPTION FEE \$.....

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$.....

I AGREE TO ACCEPT AND PRACTICE THE NSW DEERSTALKER'S CODE OF ETHICS AND TO ABIDE AT ALL TIMES BY THE CONSTITUTION, FEDERAL, STATE AND TERRITORY LAWS.

Signature:

Date:...../...../.....

PLEASE NOTE: This form is an application for renewal of membership only and is subject to Committee Approval. An application will only be considered if accompanied by all the necessary Fees, This form must be completed in full and is due for renewal 1st July of Membership expiry.

PLEASE PAY PROMPTLY.

Return to: The Secretary, NSW Deerstalkers, P.O. Box 519, Picton NSW 2571



Department of Primary Industries

OUT14/1172



NSW Deerstalkers Association Inc
1 Struan St
TAHMOOR NSW 2573

Dear game hunting stakeholder

A number of changes to the way hunting activities are administered and regulated in NSW occurred in 2013. I thank you for your patience during this time.

The *Game and Feral Animal Control Amendment Bill 2013* was recently passed by both houses of the NSW Parliament with a view to better integrating hunting as a game and feral animal management tool whilst also seeking to re-establish hunting as a legitimate recreational activity.

The passing of the Bill heralds the move of former Game Council staff and functions to a new Game Licensing Unit within the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI). Under the new legislation, a Game and Pest Management Advisory Board will also be established.

How will the changes affect me?

Core functions delivered by the former Game Council - such as licensing, booking, compliance and providing advice and information on game and feral animal hunting in NSW – will be maintained by the DPI Game Licensing Unit. These functions will be largely administered by former Game Council staff now situated within this Unit. All former Game Council Offices have now been closed and you should direct all inquiries to the Game Licensing Unit on (02) 6391 3750 or game.licensing@dpi.nsw.gov.au or you can go to the DPI game licensing webpage at www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting for further information.

Hunting in State forests

The NSW Government suspended hunting in State forests and on Crown Lands pending the transfer of Game Council functions to the NSW DPI and the outcome of a review of the current risk assessment for hunting on State forests. The transfer of former Game Council functions and staff into the DPI is now complete and recommendations have been received from the hunting in State forests risk assessment review.

The risk assessment was reviewed by a stakeholder working group including representatives from Forestry Corporation of NSW (FCNSW), the former Game Council, Unions, Contractors Association, WorkCover, the Crown Solicitor's Office, Crown Lands and the NSW Department of Primary Industries (DPI).

The following recommendations from the risk assessment review have been endorsed by the stakeholder working group, Minister for Primary Industries, Forestry Corporation of NSW and DPI, and will be implemented:

- R-licence hunters will be required to successfully complete two online training modules on outdoor navigation and knowledge of requirements of a written permission to hunt before they can book a hunt on a State forest. A multiple choice competency assessment with a pass mark will be applied to each module. The assessment will be open book with test material supplied as part of the online delivery of each module. Each module will need to be successfully completed once by each R-licence hunter. The online training modules can be accessed through the Game Licensing Booking System on the DPI game licensing webpage www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting.
- R-licence hunters will be required to read, understand and acknowledge a safety advisory for hunting on State forests. The advisory will appear the first time you attempt to book a hunt and must be acknowledged by each hunter. Once acknowledged, the advisory will no longer appear or restrict access to the booking system.
- R-licence hunters will be required to carry a Global Positioning System (GPS) enabled device when hunting on State forests. The device must be capable of locating the hunter's position at any time when hunting on a State forest and it must contain up to date GPS data on State forest boundaries and exclusion zones. GPS data downloads can be accessed on the Game Licensing Booking System and they will also appear for download each time you book a hunt and attempt to print a written permission. More information about suitable GPS devices (including smartphones) is available from the DPI game licensing webpage www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting.
- Each time an R-licence hunter books a written permission to hunt a one (1) day clear provision will be applied to the day immediately preceding the booking. For example if an R-licence hunter books a written permission at any time on a Thursday the written permission allowing them to hunt will be issued from Saturday. Friday will be a day clear to allow Forestry Corporation of NSW staff additional flexibility to plan and complete forestry operations. R-licence hunters will continue to be able to access a forest on the day before their written permission commences and the day after for the purposes of familiarising themselves with the area and setting up or packing up any camping arrangements.
- Forests open to hunting will now be categorised into five distinct categories to allow greater flexibility and integration of hunting activities with both Forestry Corporation of NSW operations and the activities of other recreational users. Forests will be categorised into the following categories:
 1. Opened to online bookings 7 days per week.
 2. Opened to online bookings 7 days per week with a possible peak hunting period where the public is excluded from the forest.
 3. Opened to online bookings **weekends only**. If a Public Holiday falls immediately before or after a weekend it is classified as a weekend also.
 4. Opened to online bookings 7 days per week **bow hunting** only.
 5. Closed to hunting.

The categorisation of each forest will be subject to change. R-licence hunters will be notified of any changes on the game licensing webpage. For information on forests currently listed in each category please visit the DPI game licensing webpage www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting.

R-licence hunters will be able to access the DPI Game Licensing webpage from 20 January 2014 to familiarise themselves with and complete these additional requirements. R-licence hunters will

be able to access the online hunt booking system from 20 January 2014 to book hunts commencing from 3 February 2014. More information can be obtained by accessing the DPI game licensing webpage www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting or by contacting the DPI Game Licensing Unit on (02) 6391 3750 or game.licensing@dpi.nsw.gov.au.

Next steps

Action	Key date
DPI Game Licensing webpage open	20 January 2014
R-Licence hunters to complete additional education modules and familiarise themselves with new provisions	From 20 January 2014
Game Licensing Booking System open	20 January 2014
Hunting recommences in selected State forests	3 February 2014

Compliance

The provisions of the *Game and Feral Animal Control Act 2002* remain in force. All regulations regarding licensing and compliance remain the same. The new legislation has not altered the laws regarding how you legally hunt in NSW and penalties continue to apply for non-compliance.

A NSW game hunting licence is still required to hunt game animals, including deer, on private land. Written permissions from land owners are still required. For further information about the game and feral animal species you can hunt, please visit the DPI game licensing webpage www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/hunting.

Forest surveillance, including cameras, remains in place, and NSW authorities will continue to detect and deter illegal hunting. NSW Police Officers are authorised Inspectors under the Act and DPI staff will continue to work with the NSW Police and other land managers to ensure compliance with the law.

The Supplementary Pest Control on Parks Program

This program seeks assistance from volunteers and is separate to State forest hunting. For further information, please contact the Office of Environment and Heritage (NPWS) on 1300 361 967, info@environment.nsw.gov.au or visit <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/pestsweeds/spc.htm>.

It is illegal to hunt on National Park estate in NSW unless you are a volunteer under the Supplementary Pest Control on Parks Program.

Yours sincerely



Dr Andrew Moriarty

Acting Director
DPI Game Licensing Unit

20 January 2014