

THE HUNTER'S HUNTER

Australian Deer Association - Hunter Valley Branch

February 2020



50 YEARS • 1969-2019

Australian
Deer
Association

Special points of interest:

Next Meeting:

Wed 12 Feb 2020: 6.30pm

NLMGC,

[Wilton Road, Awaba](#)

Special Guest: Pat Fitzgibbon discussing hunting west coast USA

April Meeting:

Wed 8 Apr 2020: 6.30pm

Special guest: Lindsay Taylor, NSW DPI Compliance Officer

Inside this issue:

Meat Hunt	5
My Big 3	9
Wonnangatta	13
Your Own Place	21
New Property	24
DIY in the USA	26
2019 Presentation	29
Sponsors	35

President Report

Welcome to all of our HV ADA members.

Happy New Year to all of our loyal members. I hope Christmas was good and that everyone has a trip planned this year once it cools down.

It has been a quiet period for the Branch with many planning this year's adventures and some out trying their hand at a bit of fishing. We have a big year ahead and I am really looking forward to what the year will bring.

We have had some great suggestions regarding club hunts and guests already so thank you to the members that took the time to throw their ideas forward. If anyone has anything they would like to see or do as a Branch please sing out.

I was lucky enough this year to get drawn out of the Hog Deer Ballot run by the Blond Bay Hog Deer Advisory Group. I was an emergency for Snake Island

and have since been called up to hunt period 5. The opportunity to hunt Snake Island is something that ADA played a huge part in and thank you to all involved in getting hunting allowed on the Island.

We have 5 years of hunting at this stage and it will take a huge effort to continue this massive opportunity into the future. Last weekend I went to the Hog Deer Education Weekend on Sunday Island and this really was worth the drive. I took my two daughters and they really enjoyed the adventure.

Here we learnt about hunting hog deer and the surrounding waterways. To hunt on Snake Island is a fair challenge and it was really good to meet some of the hunters that I will be sharing the week with.

Early plans are made and bring on April. A huge thank you to Gino and the Melbourne

Branch for their hospitality and efforts in making the weekend happen. Also to all of the team from Para Park on Sunday Island thank you for your efforts and willingness to share knowledge. It was truly a fantastic weekend and the girls and I made some friends that I think will form a big part of my hunting future.

I write this from the shores of Lake Macquarie and am enjoying a week out with the kids and Karen. We got blown off the water this afternoon so will try again tomorrow.

The Committee and I would love to see you at a meeting this year.

Be safe.

Regards,

Matt Grainger
Hunter Valley President

Join our Facebook group to share stories :

ADA Hunter Valley Members

Hunting About



LEFT and BELOW:

Pics taken by Matthew Grainger on his Hog Deer Education Weekend on Sunday Island.



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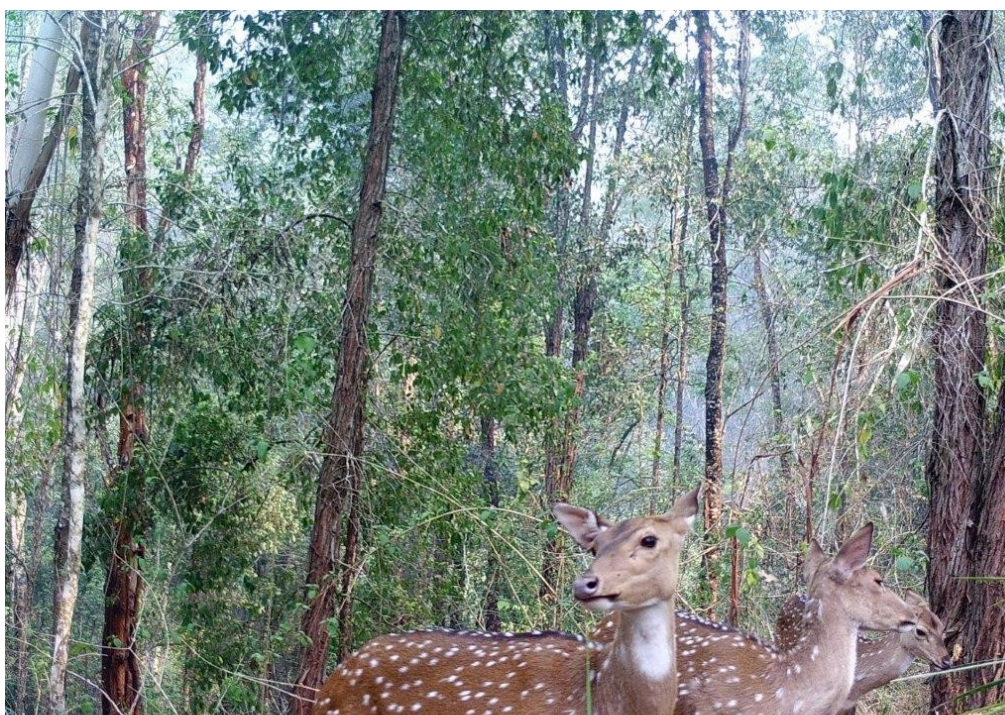
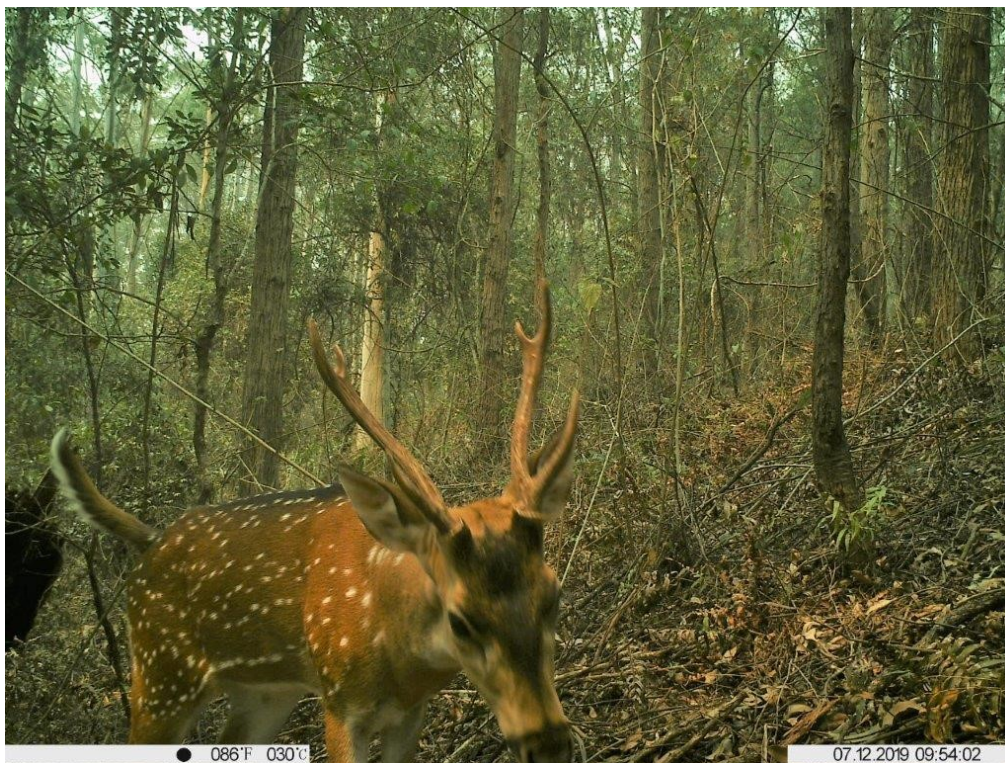
Hunting About

Game camera pics from Glenn and Ben Schofield on their northern Chital property.



Hunting About

Game camera pics from Glenn and Ben Schofield on their northern Chital property. Continued...



A Quick Meat Hunt and Range Test

- John Rogers

With the weather warming up and my hunting mate Justin running a little low on venison, it was decided we would head up the valley for a meat hunt.

Also, as we were both flying over the ditch to NZ the next year, with the potential for some longer shots than we are used to, we decided we would do some hold-over testing out to 400yds for me and 400 metres for Justin.

All set, we departed home nice and early Friday morning. A good run saw us on the other side of the Murrurundi Range early enough to catch sight of two separate groups of Fallow still grazing near the roadside.

In all the years I have travelled this route that was the first time I had seen the deer that *every-one else* sees all the time.

After a quick chat with the land holder we headed for camp. Within 500 metres of camp Justin spotted a small boar trotting along the gully to our right.

With firearms still secured, the pig was able to give us the slip before we could get sorted. By-passing camp, we attempted to

cut the boar off before he got to heavy cover, but to no avail.

Unperturbed, we geared up and set off for a look-see.

Our first sit-and-wait was unproductive, so we climbed towards the SW corner to check the heavier cover.

After almost reaching our boundary, Justin spotted a small group of Fallow with some nice eaters amongst them, so he lined up with his .270win and the first meat animal was in the bag and backpack.

Back at the vehicle we set up a target with a good backstop.

Justin first checked the .270win at 100m, then we moved back to 300m to further check his Swarovski BC turret ring settings.

The test shots were a little low so we added 3 clicks up to the setting and it was spot on. We did the same for the 400m setting as well plus '1 for the pot'.

Moving closer to 300yds, I tested my 130gr OEP's and 140gr Accubonds against my Boone and Crocket Leupold.

With that testing done we moved off to our campsite and got set up.

When testing the OEP's at 400yds it was obvious these pills 'went to sleep' somewhere after 300yds, attaining about 11 seconds of angle. No prize for guessing which rounds accompanied me to NZ the following year!

On the afternoon hunt I had a spiker come trotting through from behind and 25 yards below me as I sat with my face to the wind. I don't think he had read the script.

Letting him go, I waited to hear a shot from Justin, as he was now heading that way, but no result.

Into bed early and up again at 5am, a quick coffee, get kitted up and.....wait a minute, what's that. A silly spiker wandering past camp at about 80yds.

Justin quickly accessed his .270win, leant on my

A Quick Meat Hunt and Range Test, Continued...

camp chair and took meaty No.2.

While Justin got that sorted, I dropped over into the gully in which we saw the pig come up the day before in the hope he might be returning again after another night spent raiding the cattle feeders.

Selecting a comfortable vantage point with a good view of the gully, I settled in and glassed the lower sections.

Within what seemed like only a few minutes, a spiker Fallow could be seen making its way up towards me.

At about 400yds he veered out of the gully and was eyeing the adjacent paddock and then headed in that direction.

If he kept on this path he would be gone in no time. Waiting until he dropped into a depression, I quickly approached trying to reduce the range before he emerged again.

When he did emerge he was now travelling at an angle back to the gully, so I

let him keep coming until he sensed me and looked my way.

An Accubond put him down on the spot.

Now I had a meaty to process. When Justin had finished his deer, he grabbed his compound bow and headed down the same gully to see if the piggy was still coming.

That didn't produce any results, so we were back at camp with plenty of meat and I also had a very nice, albeit small Fallow skin.

With our eskies full, we decided to pull up stumps early and head home that day, well satisfied with our results.

A Quick Meat Hunt and Range Test, Gallery



BELOW: Justin's Camp Spiker. ABOVE: John's Gully Spiker



A Quick Meat Hunt and Range Test, Gallery



ABOVE: The Gully Spiker pelt tanned with Leder solution. BELOW: The 400yd group of the 130gr OEP's snoring their heads off.



My Big Three

- Glenn Schofield

It was early April and HVADA members Ben Schofield, Ben Kirkman and I were headed up near Barraba for a club hunt chasing Fallow during the rut. This property held a good population of deer pigs and goats so I was hopeful of getting the trifecta of a Buck, Boar and Billy.

We all headed out in different directions that afternoon. My plan was to hunt up below a ridge line then when I reached the desired height cross over into the next gully and hunt into the wind.

All was quiet as I gained height. Reaching the timber line I slowly crossed the ridge into the next gully using the trees not to silhouette myself. I was greeted with three croaking Fallow on the opposite side of the gully.

Settling in next to a shrub, sitting in the shade I started glassing. First spotting the does and shortly after spotted the

Bucks. Rather than hunt straight at them the plan was to contour around the head of the gully which would position me above and upwind of them.

Thirty minutes later saw me in position. There were does all around me, I could hear the Bucks but couldn't locate them. Sitting tight until all the does had moved out of sight, I closed in. Finally locating the loudest, he was good but not a shooter. Passing him up I backed out and headed higher to hunt the next gully.

While sitting and glassing the next gully I could hear so much croaking it sounded like a frog pond.

Hearing the clash the clash of antlers I searched through the binos spotting two Bucks fighting in the open. After watching them for a few minutes I decided to head in for a closer look. I had to drop some height and climb through a few brush filled feeder gullies

to reach them.

When I finally broke out of the dogwood into the clearing there were deer everywhere. A good buck was holding does croaking and chasing off satellite Bucks. I ranged him at 210 metres, I had to get closer. There was no cover between me and him only two-foot-high tussock grass, thistles and stinging nettles. The only approach was on my bum sliding and crawling down to him.

Finally getting into position my fingers were stinging from crawling through the thistles and stinging nettles. I watched him for ten minutes to settle myself down. Positioning myself sitting down leaning back against some tussock grass with my backpack on my knees and the 7mm-08 resting on my pack ready for the shot. The buck was constantly moving so I waited until he was in a good position and gave him a "Hoy", on that he stopped and I fired.

All the deer headed for the tim-

My Big Three, Continued...

ber with the Buck trailing and contouring down into the creek. I was expecting him to drop. This didn't happen so I fired an offhand shot at 130 metres just before he entered the timber.

I waited ten minutes before I headed after him. I entered the timber with the scope dialled down holding the 7mm 08 ready for a snap shot. Slowly following a game trail, I spotted a spot of blood, then another. I heard the rattle of antler on timber up ahead and shouldered my rifle.

I spotted him ahead and below me slowly climbing out of a gully. When he reached the top he paused in a small clearing giving me an offhand shot between his shoulder blades. At the sound of the shot he moved forward and again disappeared from sight. Following the game trail I approached the spot he was standing when the last shot was fired.

First, I smelt him then spotted

him down. What a relief, getting my Buck on the 1st afternoon and not the last morning. It was getting late so after a photo shoot I took the trophy, back straps and back legs. loaded up I headed back to camp.

The next afternoon I went out and deer were croaking all around me as I headed back up the gully I had taken the Buck the previous afternoon.

I had a great afternoon stalking in on a number of bucks but none were better than what I already had. Calling it, I decided to walk back along the edge of the creek flats hoping to ambush a pig coming down out of the blackberries and down for a drink.

About 25 minutes to the car and with barely 15 minutes of shooting light left I was picking my way through blackberry patches when I spotted a good-sized coloured boar heading down off the hill.

Crouching down I quickly stalked to the nearest tree and waited for him to close the distance and then took a standing post shot at him in the fading light. He dropped on the spot.

Two down only one to go.

The last morning I had one last challenge. It had been a long-time goal of mine to harvest a Buck, Boar and Billy in one trip. For various reasons I had plenty of doubles, but the trifecta had always alluded me. With the Buck & Boar down I had one more morning to harvest a Billy.

Although my legs hurt like hell and suffering from a slight hangover I headed up high. I passed up a really good fallow stag as I knew once I pulled the trigger the hunt was over.

My Big Three, Continued...

By 9.00 am I was out of water, hunting across a steep sunny face pushing through more lovely dogwood. By 10.30 I had had enough and was hot, thirsty, bloody from pushing through the dogwood and pretty well spent.

Having a spell in some shade I thought just one more push a bit higher and one more gully and I would admit defeat again. I reached the final ridge and spotted what I first thought was a big black pig on the opposite gully face, up came the binos which revealed two representative Billies.

With a renewed enthusiasm I planned my approach. Only one more descent and climb would put me in position to achieve my goal. I climbed out of the final creek bed dropping my pack and binos for the final approach.

Arriving where I thought the goats would be there was no

sign of them, my heart sank.

Five more steps revealed both within 7 metres. Two quick offhand shots from the 7mm-08 had both billies down.

I had finally achieved my tri-fecta and it only took 55 years. I would like to write I walked back with a spring in my step but after a big weekend the truth is my aching legs would only allow a slow shuffle.

My Big Three, Gallery



Wonnangatta Trip

- Des Buckhurst

Hunting Sambar deer in the Wonnangatta has been on my list of must hunting trips for some time.

Last year we were all set to go and there were fires all around the area and Vic Parks closed all access in. This year both myself and one of my hunting buddies had their sons doing there HSC and we wanted to wait till that was over so we decided to go in the second week of November.

I don't normally hunt this late in the season as it can be difficult keeping meat at the right temperature for a week as well as just the practicality of hunting in the heat with snakes etc.

As it turned out the weather was perfect we had rain two weeks prior and there was plenty of good tucker with sweet grasses and clover all the rivers and streams were flowing and then it stopped raining when we got there and we had sunny days not too hot and mild eve-

nings.

The Wonnangatta was once a cattle station established in 1860 by Oliver Smith. Smith was a North American who came across the valley whilst prospecting for gold Smith's common law wife, Eleanor Nancy and her son Harry, joined him and a homestead was built near the junction of the Wonnangatta River and Conglomerate Creek.

The Bryce family then occupied the station while Ellen's son Harry Smith moved down the valley and established himself at Eagle Vale.

The Bryce family remained a presence at Wonnangatta until Mrs Bryce died in 1914 at the age of 78.

Ten Bryce children were brought up at Wonnangatta. As the children grew up they moved away and after Mrs Bryce's death the property was sold to owners from Mansfield in 1916. The new owners in-

stalled a manager to run the station.

There's quite a bit of history with murders etc that took place but that's another story. We decided to drive down to Myrtleford and meet on a private property that we regularly hunt on and the farmer is kind enough to let us stay in a shed.

I drove down to Myrtleford from Nelson Bay it took me about ten hours with a couple of stops where I met my mates Pete and Dave and his son Anthony. We decided to put a quick hunt in on the property at Myrtleford and then leave the next day for the Wonnangatta as it is only a three to four hour drive on the east Branch track down to the valley.

It is quite an easy drive. There are some sections you need to use low range for the most part it is accessible in any four-wheel-drive with a low range gearbox. When you get to the bottom you cross the Wonnangatta River it is an easy river crossing although could

Wonnangatta Trip, Continued...

be tricky if there was heavy rain a day or two before.

Once in the valley there are quite a few tracks leading into other valley systems that offer endless hunting opportunities.

We found a great camp by the side of a small river. It is easy to see why some fantastic heads have come out of this Valley. The soils on the valley floor appear to be deep alluvial soils and this produces excellent tucker, plenty of mountain clovers that are rich in nitrogen and can produce good antler growth and sustain quite a number of deer I imagine.

We found a great camp right next to a river with good cold running water. We set up camp, surprisingly there was only one other group camping as far as we could tell, in the whole of the Wonnangatta area.

The group were hunters and had at least one deer strung up. My plan, because I did not know

the area, was to spend the first few days trying to locate fresh sign and a suitable evening ambush position. I usually make an early start, put in a morning hunt, rest up and then an evening hunt but if I'm hunting for a week or more I find it's better to do one or the other and stay fresh and work harder finding the best and most practical place to hunt.

Dave and his son, put in a backpack fly camp hunt, further up Conglomerate Creek, this would take up four days of their trip. Pete and I set off in my vehicle then split up looking for sign and keeping radio contact where possible.

I had brought my fly fishing gear, thinking if I got a deer, I would then just fish. This turned out to be a good move as I found some potential good areas to look at on the other side of the river that might turn other hunters off as the water was above the knees.

This was no problem to me as I could use my fishing waders and

once across, could put my boots back on. As soon as I crossed, I could see plenty of fresh tracks and sign I called up Pete and told him I was staying till dark and would meet him at the car.

The river curved around for about a kilometre. In the curve there was a large flat area which had some cleared patches with bright green grass and some clover with fresh tracks and scat. There were a number of good bedding areas with blackberry and Dogwood and it was quite easy to move through and glass.

At the end of the flat area there were a couple of gullies it looked like an excellent place to put in a hunt I wanted to be very careful not to screw it up with my scent.

As soon as I left the river bank, I got my wind puffer out. The wind was running from left to right. My plan was to head back down a bit lower to the river bank and skirt my way around to the right side of the flat area so the wind would be in my face and then try and get in a posi-

Wonnangatta Trip, Continued...

tion to glass and take it from there.

Moving slowly, looking for sign and glassing it was quite clear there were several deer bedding and feeding in the area. I found a wallow with muddied up water and fresh tracks all around, the problem was the wind had been swirling around all day.

I did not rate my chances as I was sure any deer would be on to my scent. Nevertheless, I tried to make the best of it and got set up in an ambush position and waited it out till last light.

Sure enough, nothing eventuated. On meeting Pete back at the car, he explained he had the same problem with the wind.

The next couple of days were the same with difficult wind conditions. Friday came around and Dave had returned with his son claiming he had an excellent time but he too had problems

because of the change in wind conditions.

I now decided to spend the day doing some camp admin and generally having an easy day whilst sitting around the fire having a brew. I started looking with my binos at a large feature only a few kilometres from camp.

It got me thinking, that I should just take a walk over there and check it out as it had a semi cleared east to west face which showed some promise.

I grabbed my rifle, binoculars and a light weight belt kit and started to head over there. As I got closer, I picked up an old vehicle track that was in a lot of tree cover and there were still puddles from the rain the week before.

The soil was a dark black clay, which held the moisture so it gave me a good indication of any deer traffic in the area.

After about a k, I picked up some deer tracks, one in particular was quite splayed and large, probably belonging to a stag.

I started following up on the tracks which lead into a swampy area at the base of the large hill the same one that I had been interested in from camp.

Once moving through the swampy ground it was clear there were a lot of well-worn game trails and I found fresh scat that had sticky slime on it and an antler scrape.

Looking from the swampy base of the hill back up, I could see several game trails traversing down to where I was.

There was plenty of good tucker on the side of the hill and lots of streams running through the swampy stretch I was standing in.

Apart from the rain event a couple of weeks ago, it would have

Wonnangatta Trip, Continued...

been extremely dry but I was sure this area would have held plenty of water and with the east to west face of this hill. It would have been a great place to bed up through winter as there was plenty of morning sun, feed and freshwater all within a short distance of each other.

I found some excellent ambush positions looking back up at the hill it was about a 35° angle from my ambush position about 100 metres from the base of the hill. This would help as the air would turn Katabatic and start falling as soon as the sun set.

I pulled some fallen branches together and made a sturdy rifle rest / hide where I could sit with my back against the tree looking straight up at a sizeable clearing on the side of the hill. I then wrapped some floss around a few branches a couple of metres up the hill and halfway between the hill and my hide so I would have better idea of what the wind was doing.

It was still early in the afternoon so I GPS'd the position and headed back to camp to have a feed and then return. As I moved back through the swamp to the track, I marked my way with cut strips of high viz material that had the reflective tape on it. This is a trick I picked up from my mate Pete which is gold when you're heading back at night.

Once you put your head torch on the whole way is lit up like a highway and you just pick up your strips as you go past. I have learnt the hard way, thinking I can find my way back in the dark, but it is very easy to get disorientated and waste a lot of time and effort.

After a quick feed and a 20 minute nap I grabbed my pack and rifle and started my way back to my ambush position, checking the wind as I went. Once I got within 300 m I checked my wind again, it was still warm and as I suspected my scent would still be dragged up the hill.

I decided to just sit and wait before I moved into position.

After a long wait, two hours, with only about 40 minutes of light left, the air temperature started dropping and I slowly moved into my ambush position.

Once there I got myself all set up I could see my floss that I had tied to some branches earlier in the day and they were indicating their temperature was definitely falling.

All was good, now I just had to wait and just keep scanning with my binos. After about fifteen minutes, I noticed with my naked eye, there was a dark patch where there wasn't earlier.

I grabbed my binoculars for a quick check and there was a stag that had just materialised behind a small clump of Dogwood. I could tell he was at

Wonnangatta Trip, Continued...

least 20 inches, but the antlers were obscured. That didn't matter too much to me I was after the meat anyway.

The trophy would just be a bonus! My rangefinder binoculars told me he was only 110m out from my position it was quite a steep angle shot, but this was okay as I had allowed for this with some sturdy branches that I had set up as a rest and there was no adjustment needed at that range.

Keeping an eye on him through the binoculars I was just waiting for him to take a few steps and show me his shoulder.

After what seems like ages, he took a few paces, I lined him up in the crosshairs, steadied my breathing and started building the pressure on the trigger. Bang!

He took four quick steps, and then just fell over sideways. He started to roll down the steep hill towards me it was quite a

show as he built up quite a bit of speed knocking down small trees as he rolled.

At one stage he hit a small bluff and actually got airborne. When he landed he left a large scrape about 5m long down the side of the hill and eventually there was a big thud and he came to rest at the edge of the swamp.

It was quite an awesome show and a shame I was the only one there to witness it.

There was now only minutes of light left so I had to work quickly. I checked he was dead and set to work taking the back straps off and some other cuts, to be put in a bag and stored in a tree so I could pick it up in the morning.

One of his antlers were snapped off but I was sure I would find this in the morning.

Heavily loaded I made my way back with my head torch on and

what looked like 20 lights lit up showing me the way back.

There is no feeling like a successful hunt, no amount of pain carrying all that weight seems to matter I was pumped! It's a great feeling when a plan works because we always need a bit of luck as well.

Once back in camp there was some high-fives and backslapping and we broke out the bourbon. In the morning we all went and retrieved the rest of the animal it was an awesome week.

Pete managed to get a hind as well and we all agreed we will be back.

Wonnangatta Trip, Gallery



Wonnangatta Trip, Gallery



Wonnangatta Trip, Gallery



So You Want Your Own Piece of Paradise?

- Glenn Schofield

Getting access to your own deer property might be daunting but isn't that hard if you do the prep work and put in the effort.

Here is the method Dad and I used and now Ben and I have modified and have used to great success. Due to access to a great property I hadn't needed to door knock for 10 years or so, the helicopter cull changed all that.

So, in May Ben and I set off in search of a chital property we now have 4 adjoining properties and more country than we can hunt in a normal weekend. Out of the last 8 properties we have asked on we have achieved 6 OKs; the two knockbacks gave as leads that led to access.

Pick a species of deer you want to chase, generally but not always head North for Rusa and Chital, West for Fallow and Reds and South for Sambar.

Pick an area within 4/5 hours of Newcastle and head up there with a plan. Do your research and pick some likely areas to start on, get a map and work out the roads you want to target. Buy a copy of the land newspaper, listen to the local radio station it may give you some talking points.

Don't target hot spots as they get the most door knockers and probably have more hunters that they need. The road less travelled generally offer a better chance of gaining access.

Once a target area is identified I usually spend the first night at a local pub prior to heading out. You might be in the right area but not the zone, talking to the locals will help identify where you need to be to start door knocking. It's amazing how a "G'day mate" at the pub will get the conversation rolling and the info will flow. You may even jag a property that night., Service stations are often a local hub

of community information so if your fuelling up ask if they know of any deer in the area they may be able to offer a good lead.

The advantage of staying in local accommodation is that you will be shit, showered and shaved 30 minutes before you start asking and will be nice and fresh, not been up since 3AM driving for 4 hours before you knock on the 1st door, this can make for a really long day.

No more than two on the mission and look like a team, Dress like a farmer i.e. not like city folk, jeans and boots not shorts and thongs and definitely no cammo. Ben and I wear our ADA shirts or game council hats. Take off your sunglasses and look them in the eye.

Farmers rarely get aggressive and they're generally always up for a chat. Sometimes after a knockback it can be difficult to get away from them, use this opportunity to pump them

So You Want Your Own Piece of Paradise? Continued...

for more info of likely places you may be able get on. One of you do the talking the other one remembers the details of any promising leads. The longer you can keep them talking the better your chances of getting on will be.

Have a notebook handy in the car, record any detail of leads such as the names of property owners, their properties as well as road names. I always like to get people's names; I find it heaps better if I can approach them, introduce ourselves and call them by their first name.

Use a one-page colour resume with your details. My resume has my mobile phone number, car rego, driver and firearms licenses. NSW and Vic game and hunting club memberships plus Public Liability certificates of currency. If two of you are asking make it double sided and keep it in your back pocket. If they seem to be on the verge of saying yes hand it over, it works wonders.

When asking for access indicate you only want to shoot pigs and deer, goats are worth money and a no on goats may mean a knockback. If you get a yes then this is the time to ask what other species can be hunted or not, where to camp, can you have a fire etc.

It's easier to gain access using a bow and fishing rod, after a couple of trips and you have built a relationship with the property owner then bring up the possibility of coming back with a firearm.

When you get on, and have been back to the property a few times, spend a couple of hours canvassing the neighbour's properties. You should know their names and drop the name of the property owner you are currently on. It's a quick and easy way to increase your hunting acreage.

Be self-reliant, have all your camping gear and water. Book

into a local State Forest in the area, if you don't get on you can still have a hunt.

You're not on until you're on, if you get a yes don't move on. If you get a knockback ask if they can offer any leads on where you might get on.

If the farmer wants dead deer don't hunt for trophies hunt for tails. The trophies will come later.

When you leave the only trace, you should leave is a small firepit and some tyre tracks, clean up all your rubbish.

If you wish to discuss further, feel free to approach me and have a chat at a club meeting. I will be more than happy to point you in the right direction.

New Property, New Species

- John Rogers

The Door Knock

The combination of drought and Local Land Services (LLS) helicopter culls, has seen deer numbers 'up the valley' diminish to the extent of not seeing any deer on the small parcel Justin Maas and I usually visit.

So, with that in mind I teed up a day of 'door knocking' with Justin to coincide with the week my wife and I were spending in Port Macquarie.

Geared up with our resumes and positive attitude we headed off to execute our door knock plan.

After a number of definite Nos and one maybe/maybe not we continued, finding numerous homes unattended, as the small land parcels are such that work in town is required to supplement the income stream.

A few more Nos and we were a

bit dejected and at our last door for the trip. Perseverance paid off, as we received a warm welcome and a definite YES.

Now we needed to check our rosters and line up our earliest date for a return trip. That coincided only four weeks later.

First Trip

When the date arrived, I was packed and ready to go straight from work to Justin's for the night, with an early start next morning.

At sparrow's we were on our way with a rendezvous time of 7am with the manager.

The property, although a reasonable size, was broken into numerous smaller unlinked parcels, so our hosts suggested we come back for a quick tour after setting camp.

With a heavy fog hanging around, that idea suited us fine. We set camp in quick

time, then caught up with the manager and his wife for a brief tour. The two oat crops seemed our best bet and on our return to camp we spotted three Chital grazing in the bottom far corner of one crop. A stalk yielded a zero result.

Late that afternoon we were sitting over the likely gully that feeds into the crop. This proved to be a no-show. Only days before there had been a deer shot from the road passing the crop and the carcass had been left in the crop, much to the manager's displeasure. Justin and I removed it after our earlier stalk.

We also found out later that a number of people had been trying to keep the deer off the crop.

My First Chital

Before daylight the next morning we were back for another look, as we figured

New Property, New Species, Continued...

the deer would succumb to temptation sooner or later. There was nothing about.

We then quickly made our way to the other crop, which was kilometres away. Viewing the crop from a near hill, Justin spotted several hinds in the back corner.

We hatched a plan and stalked to the trees bordering the crop and found there was a stag amongst the herd. The evidence of well used 'push-throughs' under the fence had us thinking we were in perfect position for when they left the crop.

The deer had other ideas and gradually moved to our left and out of sight due to the undulating ground. Justin stayed in position as lookout as I moved along the fence to try and spot them again. Creeping up to the edge of the crop, with a good view down to where the deer had been, I still could not see them.

As Justin and I were looking at each other and giving the open palm shoulder shrug, the deer, minus the stag decided to pop up on my left, catching me out completely in the open.

I crouched and slowly backed away as they were too far for a freehand shot for me.

This allowed me to sneak back through the fence and take cover in a ditch and then stalk to a range of 125yds. The stag suddenly appeared and stood broad-side.

A 140gr Accubond from the Tikka 7mm-08 put him down on the spot. We dropped the guts out, retaining the liver and kidneys for Justin and headed to camp to finish the harvest and salt the skin.

The wash-up.

Justin was also able to secure his first Chital in the afternoon, but that's his story.

So with plenty of venison and a skin each from our first Chital, we were content to head home the next day without a morning hunt.

Our new hosts were pleased with our results and appreciative of our moving the offending deer carcass.

Another first was being called 'professionals' by our hosts, who were impressed with our initial approach and how we conducted ourselves on our first hunting trip.

With a welcome to come back anytime, we departed for home happy with our results and planning our next visit.

New Property, New Species, Gallery



DIY Hunting in the USA

- Pat Fitzgibbon

I have been lucky enough to be able to hunt in the USA over the last 15 years or so and most of my hunting has been low cost DIY type hunts.

After spending money on a few guided hunts in the USA, budget and lack of interest in guided hunting meant I had to find a better, cheaper and ultimately much more enjoyable way to hunt the states.

I decided early on that I was not that interested in hunting Whitetail or anything in the eastern States so that narrowed my choices down to what they call western hunting, essentially about a dozen states mostly in and around the Rocky Mountains

So a quick list of the hunts I have enjoyed over the years will give you an idea of just how much hunting is there for "non-resident" hunters if you are willing to put some time and re-

search in. Really no different from hunting Australia or NZ just you end up on the wrong side of the world for a bit

My first hunts where "swap hunts" pretty much meeting hunters online and exchanging hunting here and in NZ for hunting with them in the USA

So here is a rough list of "big game hunting" I have done in North America the last 15 years or so

New York State – Whitetail: cold wet and boring describes this particular hunt though I did end up with a Red Squirrel or two

New Hampshire – Black Bear: shot an OK bear but really did not enjoy the hunt, however a bad days hunting is better than pretty much anything else you can do anyway

These two hunts were both stand hunts and really reinforced the fact that sitting still and freezing your arse off in a blind or stand just was not much fun, so these have been the limit of my eastern hunting.

Utah – Mountain Lion: Spent 10 days or so chasing mountain lion with dogs in heavy snow and had a ball, this sort of hunting with dogs is something everyone needs to try. I got to tree and take a 160-pound male in the last few days after being in the right spot at the right time plus we saw an abundance of big Mule Deer and Elk so it was a fun hunt all round.

Arizona - Mule Deer in the Kaibab: I drew this tag first time which was like winning lotto, but lack of experience and some bad weather meant the hunt was not successful even though the chance to hunt in the Kaibab meant the trip was worth it no matter what else went wrong

DIY Hunting in the USA , Continued...

Arizona - Coues Whitetail: I passed up a 90 -95 point buck on the first day and hunted a 110- 120pt buck for several days who was just too smart to step over the reservation fence.

I also had the chance to chase some Javelina during this hunt with a bow, but they are sneaky little things and I spent more time pulling cactus spines out of my knees than slinging arrows at Javelina

Colorado – Mule Deer Muzzle-loader Hunt: This was at between 10,000 and 12,000ft and was a fantastic hunt even though I missed a really nice deer on the second day and never got a decent chance again.

We also managed to hunt a few marmots and if we had of been organised could have taken a nice black bear (we did not purchase the tag so could not take the bear – lesson learnt buy tags when available)

Arizona – Black Bear: this was another favourite hunt despite the Rattlesnakes and the heat (rattlesnake is a lot like calamari in texture at least and it was worth the effort to cook it up).

I managed a nice Black Bear from this hunt, and we saw several really large bears' we just could not get to. Also discovered the local store had Corona at \$18 a case so that made the heat a lot easier to deal with

Arizona – Javelina: Just for fun but I was lucky enough to shoot a Mountain Lion we stumbled across while getting into a good spot to try and glass up some of the little pigs

Arizona – Elk: this tag took me 8 or 9 years to draw and was for a late season rifle hunt that has a great success rate and is also a great hunt.

It starts the day after thanksgiving and is a really social thing until you go hunting

where it is everyman for himself.

I ended up taking a nice Bull and had plenty of help packing it out. We also meet a guy from California with his 10-year-old son in camp and helped him pack out a 360 odd Bull the next day. This hunt was well and truly worth the wait and actually most years I simply bought a point because I could not have gone even if I was drawn

Idaho – This was a drop camp hunt so was slightly different in that we paid for an outfitter to pack us in and out on horseback and also for all the equipment but after that the hunt was DIY in the Frank Church Wilderness area.

The weather was extremely hot, and we did not get many chances taking a female Mule Deer on the last day, but we learnt lots and

DIY Hunting in the USA , Continued...

the drop camp style of hunt is well worth the extra dollars in many ways

All of these places offer plenty of small game and predator hunting which really is just a bonus plus I have helped friends and friends of friends on their hunts and enjoyed myself just as much as I did when hunting for myself

This just goes to show what you can do with a little bit of time and the willingness to hop on a plane and try something different, hunting in the USA is not that hard nor is it that expensive for a lot of these more easily available animals.

I have decided to get serious about hunting the USA the next 10 years and have invested in a service called Go-Hunt which essentially compiles all the western states draw information and lets you work out easily where and when and what units to apply for.

Up till now I really only bought points and hunted in Arizona, everything else has just been taking an opportunity when it came up, so I am looking forward to the challenge of managing points and hunting in the USA as often as possible.

If you want to take up the USA challenge, I will be doing a quick talk on the how, when and why at the branch meeting on Wednesday 8 February and would be more than happy to help out anyone who is interested.

If you can make the meeting great if not just us the clubs Facebook page to ask any questions.

2019 Christmas and Presentation Night



Congratulations to all winners from the presentation night.

SAMBAR: 1st Terry Wilson, 2nd Matthew Grainger

FALLOW: 1st Ben Schofield, 2nd Glenn Schofield, 3rd Ben Schofield

BEST GOAT: John Kirkman

CHITAL: 1st Justin Maas, 2nd John Rogers, 3rd Ben Schofield

RUSA: 1st John Rogers, 2nd Matthew Grainger

HOG: 1st Martin Thann

RED: There were no reds this year

FIRST DEER: Harrison Law

THE ELUSIVE HIGH COUNTRY HOG: Derek Buckhurst

BEST OVERSEAS: John Rogers, Chamois

HUNTER OF THE YEAR: John Rogers.

Finally congratulations to Glen, who was acknowledge as an Honored Member, for his efforts and time he has given the club over many years.

PHOTO GALLERY: <https://myalbum.com/album/7r4dQjWXDKUC>

ADA Hunter Valley Branch Meeting Agenda

12 February 2020

BBQ and Social Gathering: From 6.30pm

Meeting Open:

Welcome

Apologies:

Des Buckhurst, Mike Patterson, James Barden

Minutes from October 2019

President Report

Secretary Report

Treasurer Report

General Business

2020 planning meeting outcomes

Discussion on clubs judgement criteria for presentation awards

Madeline Fogarty, journalist with Deer Australia Magazine.

Looking for news to be published in magazine

Hunting About

Meeting close

Special guest presentation

Pat Fitz-Gibbon will discuss hunting the West Coast of USA.

ADA Hunter Valley Branch Meeting Minutes

10 October 2019

Meeting opened 8-00pm

Aaron Henry chaired the meeting.

Apologies: Matt Grainger

Attendance: 15 members in attendance

Secretary and Treasurer reports delivered verbally.

Members Hunting about: Bennies Victoria Sambar Hunt: Aaron Henry discussed the club hunt to Bennies, 6 members attended. Most saw deer and Matt took a stag. See magazine for story.

Nundle/Hanging Rock Hunt: I discussed the club hunt to Nundle. 3 club members and 2 Sydney branch members attended. Des took a pig and fallow. See magazine for story.

Shelley Forest, ADA 50 anniversary hunt organised by Adelaide branch: Des attended the hunt and spoke quite favourable of the accommodation and hunting. He took a fallow.

Czech Republic: Peter Sweetman was travelling around Europe on holidays and had the opportunity to hunt Roe deer in Czech Republic.

General Business

1. Martin discuss the Deer Management program. Bob Gough's email with application forms has been emailed to all members.
2. Xmas party/presentation night. Date has been set for 22nd November at gun club. Generally, as previous nights. Full details to be sent to members.
3. Aaron Henry discussed news at National level

Club Presentation/Discussion.

Patrick Fitz-Gibbon a past branch member (now transferred back) gave a great talk on hunting in the USA, generally talked about the how's and why on hunting in the states.

Meeting closed 9-00pm.

ADA Hunter Valley Branch

Proposed Judgement Criteria Awards

6 Species of Deer

Sambar, Rusa, Red, Chital, Fallow, Hog

Best species

To be eligible for this award the animal must score 80% of the score for entry into the ADA National Trophy Registry. A Red Deer must be 80% of 250 DS example 200 points.

Best Australian

Must qualify for Best Species. The best animal will be one scoring the highest ratio of DS divided by entry point for trophy register for that species. Eg A red Deer of DS 257 has a ratio of 257 divided by 200 equals 1.028.

Best Overseas Trophy

Will be given to the most significant animal taken, judged by its trophy value within that species.

Grand Slam

Open to members of the Hunter Valley Branch only and who were/are members of the Hunter Valley Branch when all six species were taken.

Five of the species must score at least 85% of the ADA trophy register entry point for that species.

Eg a Fallow Deer, the score must be at least 85% of 225DS equals 191.25 DS.

One animal can be as low as 75% (168.75 DS for Fallow) providing one other animal is 95% eg 213.75 (Fallow)

Photographic

Prints only. Best Scenic. Best wild life (live)

Hunter of the Year

This award should recognise individual and consistent and quality results. Nominations can come from any member and the award will be decided by the executive (President, VP, Secretary and Treasurer)

Honorary Membership

This award is for long and distinguished service to the ADA at Branch, State or National level.

This is the highest award that the branch can give to one of its members and should only be given after careful judgement. Nominations can come from any member and the award will be decided by the executive (President, VP, Secretary and Treasurer)

Merit award

To be given to a member who has made a substantial contribution to the running of the branch over a period of the year. Nominations can come from any member and the winner will be decided by the executive (President, VP, Secretary and Treasurer)

First Deer

Any member who takes their first deer of any species (hinds included). Does not need to be of trophy value.

Other Australian Trophy Animals

Goat (best head presented by a member), Pig (best jaw presented by a member), Buffalo (best head presented by a member)

High Country Hoggie

Novelty award for a sambar head that just didn't quite make the cut.

2020 Branch Calendar



Australian
Deer
Association

<p>January</p> <p>Branch Executive Planning</p>	<p>July</p> <p>Saturday 11: Sausage making with Martin Thann</p> <p>TBA: SSAA Range Day, Seaham, 1pm</p>
<p>February</p> <p>Wednesday 12: Branch Meeting, Awaba, 6.30pm</p> <p>TBA: Range sight in day (Deer Season preparation)</p>	<p>August</p> <p>Wednesday 12: Branch Meeting, Awaba, 6.30pm</p> <p>Saturday 20-21: Branch Hunt, Location TBC, NSW</p> <p>TBA: SSAA Range Day, Seaham, 1pm</p>
<p>March</p> <p>TBA: SSAA Range Day, Seaham, 1pm</p>	<p>September</p> <p>Saturday 12-19: Branch Sambar Hunt, Bennies, Alpine National Park, Victoria</p> <p>TBA: SSAA Range Day, Seaham, 1pm</p>
<p>April</p> <p>Wednesday 8: Branch Meeting, Awaba, 6.30pm</p> <p>Saturday 18-19: Branch Hunt, Nundle, NSW</p> <p>TBA: SSAA Range Day, Seaham, 1pm</p>	<p>October</p> <p>Wednesday 14: Branch Meeting, Awaba, 6.30pm</p> <p>Saturday 24-25: Branch Hunt, Location TBC, NSW</p> <p>TBA: SSAA Range Day, Seaham, 1pm</p>
<p>May</p> <p>TBA: SSAA Range Day, Seaham, 1pm</p>	<p>November</p> <p>Friday 20: Christmas Party, Awaba, 6.00pm</p> <p>TBA: SSAA Range Day, Seaham, 1pm</p>
<p>June</p> <p>Wednesday 10: Branch Meeting, Awaba, 6.30pm</p> <p>Saturday 20-21: Branch Hunt, Bago/Nth Maragle, NSW</p>	<p>December</p> <p>DATE TBC: Branch Christmas Party</p> <p>TBA: SSAA Range Day, Seaham, 1pm</p>

Supporters and Events



Thornton

Hunting & Outdoors

Shop 1 No 13 Hartley Drive, THORNTON NSW 2322
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Australian Deer Association - Hunter Valley Branch



Newcastle Lake Macquarie
Clay Target Club
468 Wilton Road
Awaba NSW 2283

President: Matt Grainger
hunterv.pres@austdeer.asn.au
Mobile: 0417 231 760

Please send newsletter content
to Aaron Henry:
aaronmyleshenry@gmail.com

The Hunter's Pledge

The hunter should conserve wildlife resources and not exploit them.

The hunter's behaviour should be guided by respect -

For the deer and all wildlife

For the land, forest and crops

For the landowner and his property

For everyone who enjoys the bush

Licensing

Everything Deer in NSW
Hunter Valley

For Firearms Licensing –
Martin Thann (0428 497 921).

Cost:
\$100 for non ADA members,
\$50 for ADA Members

Shooters License Renewal –
ADA Club Approval Number:
407 832 036.

R-Licence Renewal – Approval
number 3113

Members are reminded that
by law to use ADA as your
genuine reason to own a fire-
arm you must attend a mini-
mum of 2 club meetings per
year to meet qualification
requirements.

ADA Website –
www.austdeer.asn.au