

## **Sharpen your skills and fill your freezer**

**Are your navigation skills a bit rusty, or are you interested in hunting but don't know where to start? We do.**

The New Zealand Deerstalkers Association (NZDA) delivers a Hunter National Training Scheme (HUNTS) through local branches. This course is aimed at hunters who want to refresh their skills or educate newbies on how to enjoy hunting safely and ethically. You must be a club member to enrol; however, you can be a complete novice, with most applicants having little to no firearms experience.

Course costs vary nationwide and include a training manual, Stoney Creek blaze hunting vest and beanie, Go Native meals, and a NZDA chamber indicator. Everyone is welcome, with many women and family groups taking the opportunity to provide food for their families.

Each branch delivers a set syllabus covering the following topics;

- Ethics and game species
- Meat recovery, skins and trophies
- Equipment and food
- Navigation theory and practical using map, compass and GPS
- Bushcraft, including survival shelter construction and fire lighting
- River safety and crossing techniques
- Firearms safety and marksmanship, theory and practical

The NZDA Kapiti branch runs the HUNTS course over six weeks twice a year, with evening classes in the Reikorangi Hall and Otaki Hunting and Fishing. In addition to theory, trainees are taken through practical exercises on private land and a club range, culminating with a hunt at Muddy Waters Hunting near Whanganui. Here, trainees are guaranteed to see animals and gain real-life experience by putting everything they learn to the test. And, if they successfully harvest an animal, the instructors assist with field dressing and skinning, with the option of having meat processed locally at Waikanae Butchery.

Nationally recognised, the HUNTS course has proven popular over the years, and to keep up with demand, the Kapiti branch has focused on upskilling local members. Only after two years of rigorous training and assessments do members become qualified instructors. So, if you are interested in a high-calibre course to learn everything you need to hunt safely and ethically, contact Kapiti NZDA through their Facebook page or email [kapiti@deerstalkers.org.nz](mailto:kapiti@deerstalkers.org.nz).

Additionally, once you are a NZDA member, you can take advantage of their extensive public liability insurance, nationwide discounts, monthly club nights, hunting trips and supervised range access.

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