

Deerstalkers and Park Plan

17/6/80
Sir, — It was interesting to read in your paper, June 10, 1980, the comment made by Mr Wynston Cooper, executive officer of the Fiordland Park Board, in which he stated that "surprisingly there was nothing from the Deerstalker's Association" on the Fiordland national park Board's draft management plan.

As a member of the national executive of N.Z.D.A. I take this opportunity to inform Mr Cooper and the public of Southland why the N.Z.D.A. considered that there were more vital issues to deal with than to make an input to this plan.

To explain. In 1975 the then national president of N.Z.D.A. Mr Allan Evans, made a personal approach to the chairman of the Park Board, Mr Harty, with the intention of arranging for a delegation of two or three members of our national executive to meet with the board to discuss the question of animals in the park, particularly in the Wapiti area. This request was turned down by the board, but they did state "that they are prepared to meet the association in order to explain the board's noxious animals policies" and "that they were not prepared to enter into discussions on game management." About 18 months ago there was further correspondence between the board and the Deerstalkers' Association, with the intention of improving the relationships and striking up some discussion. This approach proved fruitless also.

The Fiordland National Park Board draft management plan in question is the third plan produced under the name

of the board since November, 1979. The previous two, "Report and Plan on Recreational Hunting as it affects the Fiordland National Park" and "Wild Animal Control Plan December 1979", dealt specifically with animals, their habitat and their management, and submissions were made to the Minister, Mr Venn Young, on both these plans. The F.N.P.B. management plan dealt with other aspects of Fiordland, aspects not affecting the hunting fraternity.

The Deerstalkers' Association does not intend to submit suggestions to the board on how to deal with matters which do not affect recreational hunting, and any submissions we could have made would have been interpreted by Mr Cooper as "contrary to the National Parks Act", a 1952 Act we consider outdated legislation.

That should explain my earlier comment "that there were more vital issues to deal with."

John C. Bamford

Balclutha R.D.

Deerstalkers and Park Board

4/6/80
Sir, — In fairness to the members of the Fiordland National Park Board, I am not prepared to allow Mr J. C. Bamford's comments of June 17, 1980, to lead your readers to believe that the board has been neglectful in its responses to, and willingness to deal with, the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association.

The following extracts from correspondence on the board's files clearly set out the true situation:

Letter from N.Z.D.A.'s Executive Officer, November, 1978. —

"As you are aware this association has considerable interest in various activities especially recreational, in national parks throughout New Zealand. Whilst our obvious recreational interest is in the area of sport hunting, many of our members and their families are also active within the parks in other areas of recreation... we would welcome an opportunity to meet with members of your board to discuss attitudes to recreation within your park. If you were agreeable... we would be pleased to prepare a short discussion paper prior to the meeting."

The board's reply stated that. — "Members were uncertain about the reasons for your approach and would be pleased to receive further details as to the precise items you wish to discuss, before making a decision."

To date the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association has failed to respond — a complete negation of the impression that Mr Bamford gives.

Mr Bamford's letter implies that his association is only interested in recreational hunting — an inference that is contradicted by the correspondence referred to above.

Finally, contrary to Mr Bamford's claim, there are many aspects in the board's draft management plan which are directly related to the pursuit of his recreational interest — not least of which is a policy statement that "recreational shooting is encouraged within the park."

W. J. Cooper

Executive Officer

Fiordland National Park Board

Pilot Spends Cold Night

14/6/80 HASTINGS
(P.A.)
Hastings helicopter pilot Mr Ken Kaye spent a cold night huddled inside the cockpit of a Hughes 400D helicopter in the Kaweka Ranges on Tuesday after bad weather forced him to put the aircraft down on a flight from Taupo.

Mr Kaye left Taupo at 4.50 p.m. on what should have been a routine 40-minute flight to the Bridge Pa aerodrome in Hastings.

Within minutes he had run into thick cloud, sleet and snow showers which forced him to take a number of detours.

With time and visibility fast running out, Mr Kaye tried to reach the last telephone on the Taihape road — the Kaweka forest headquarters — but darkness and the weather made it impossible.

Mr Kaye said yesterday he knew where he was, but after realizing he could not reach a phone, he landed the helicopter on the Burns Range up behind the forestry base.

Sleet, Snow

The area at the time was being lashed with sleet and occasional snow. Mr Kaye said he wanted to reach a phone to tell the Napier Airport control tower that he had put down for the night. His helicopter's radio had been removed and a new radio was to have been installed when it was serviced in Hastings.

Its emergency locator transmitter was also missing — it had belonged to a pilot who had been

using the helicopter for deer recovery work near the Fox Glacier and had been removed by him.

Mr Kaye, dressed only in a jersey and jeans, had no protective clothing or gear for his night in the ranges. The cockpit of the aircraft leaked while the temperature outside dropped below zero around midnight.

Although the aircraft was only a relatively short distance from the Taihape road, Mr Kaye said he "didn't think it would be prudent to start wandering around" and stayed out of the freezing wind inside the cockpit. He stayed awake all night and waited until 6.55 this morning before he had enough visibility to fly out to Hastings.

Main Concern

Mr Kaye's main concern was not for his own safety but for the reaction of others when his helicopter failed to reach Hastings.

His flight plan indicated he would reach Hastings about 5.15 on Tuesday, but when he did not appear and no call had been made to the Napier tower, police and search and rescue authorities were alerted.

Staff of Heli Spray (N.Z.) Ltd, the firm which had brought the helicopter to Hastings to fit it out for spraying, rang the control tower at 6.15 p.m. to report that Mr Kaye was overdue. Police later checked the aerodrome in case he had arrived late and the runway lights were left on as a precaution.

An Air New Zealand Friendship flying into Napier checked the emergency frequency to detect any trace of the emergency locator transmitter normally installed.

Search Started

At first light yesterday, a helicopter from Taupo had started making an air search for Mr Kaye when he appeared over Bridge Pa at 7.20 a.m.

His first request was for a cigarette — he had long smoked the two he had with him when he left Taupo.

Mr Kaye was unruffled by his cold night in the ranges and none the worse for the experience. With more than 10 years' flying experience in fixed-wing aircraft and helicopters, he treats his forced landing as all part of the job.

A spokesman for his firm said it was not uncommon for helicopter pilots working on deer recoveries to be forced down by bad weather. Usually, a radio call from the stranded aircraft is made to avoid rescue operations being put into action.

He described Mr Kaye as "a very professional pilot."



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FRIDAY, JULY 4, 1980
COMMENCING AT 12.30 P.M.

- 21/6/80
10—Wapiti Weaner BULLS
5—Wapiti Weaner HINDS
3—2 year old Hybrid Breeding STAGS
6—Hybrid Weaner STAGS
3—Hybrid Weaner HINDS
6—Red Deer Weaner HINDS

AUCTIONEERS NOTE:

On inspection we found the Wapiti Weaners to be exceptionally well grown and could be recommended to intending purchasers with confidence as future Herd Sires. The Wapiti Weaners were weighed at weaning. The bulls average weight was 105 kg and hinds 97.5 kg.

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ON ACCOUNT

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TE ANAU

ON THE PROPERTY

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COMMENCING 12 NOON

INSPECTION AS FROM 9 A.M.

The following Deer will be offered: —

- 21/6/80
80—Weaner HINDS
80—Weaner STAGS
40—18 month HINDS
40—18 month STAGS
50—M.A. HINDS
50—M.A. STAGS
5—18 month Hybrid HINDS
5—18 month Hybrid STAGS

AUCTIONEERS NOTE:

All deer being offered have been farmed on the property since prior to Spring 1979. As a result of a good season for grass growth they come forward for Auction well grown and in good condition.

The Hinds have been mated to Top Stags on the property. All Deer T.b. Tested and Vaccinated.

DEER CO-ORDINATOR

BARRY IRVING

PHONE 77-760 INVERCARGILL
COMPANY 4499

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Quality At Sale Of Red Deer

Outstanding quality stock brought a good return at the first annual sale of selected farmed red deer, held at the Rosedale saleyards, Tussock Creek, last Friday.

More than 95 per cent of the 170 deer offered were sold, for a total return exceeding \$200,000.

The large bench of buyers followed the auction in the Southland Farmers Co-operative Association Ltd's recently constructed specialist deer sale complex.

The top 18-month-old hinds were sold on account of Mr Ray Jennings, of Awarua, for \$2050 and \$1975.

The top price for mixed age hinds was \$1900, sold on account of Mr Rob Brookes, of Lilburn Valley.

A range of prices was: 18-month-old hinds, \$2050, down to \$1500; 2½-year-old hinds, \$1525; 3½-year-old hinds, \$1650. Mixed age hinds, \$1900, down to \$1525; weaner hinds, \$1200, down to \$900. Weaner stags, \$310 to \$335, and one weaner hybrid stag realized \$1000.

Blue Mountains First Recreational Area

The Blue Mountains forest will be gazetted as a recreational area on Thursday.

The area of 22,300 hectares takes in the Blue Mountains State forest, Rankleburn and West Tapanui excluding the Dusty block, Tapanui nursery and Conical Hills mill site.

It will form a recreational hunting site where hunting as a means of recreation is being used to control (although not exclusively) the number of wild animals.

It will officially be known as the Blue Mountains Recreational Hunting Area.

The Blue Mountains is the first area in New Zealand to be gazetted recreational since legislation permitting this classification was introduced under the Wild Animal Control Act, 1977.

The senior ranger for the New Zealand Forest Service's Southland conservancy, Mr Kerry Mawhinney, said yesterday that in this incidence no great change will be noticed by members of the public.

Management Plan Signed

The forest management plan for the South-east Otago region has been signed by the Minister of Forests, Mr V. S. Young.

This plan is the first of its kind for the New Zealand Forest Service's Southland conservancy, although one for the Southland region is in the pipeline.

It covers forestry policy in the South-east Otago region not only for State forests but for others as well.

It will be printed and released to the public in due course.

In the past the hunting in this area had been organized very much for the recreational hunter.

However, in gazetted an area the importance of the animals as a recreational resource is recognized, he said.

In some other areas there will be significant changes in the way the hunting is organized.

It opens up the possibility of game animal management and

ensures the future of the wild animal herd for recreational use, Mr Mawhinney said.

Other areas in the Southland conservancy identified by the Forest Service as possibilities for classifications as recreational hunting areas include the Caples-Greenstone area, the Waikaiti State forest, Longwood State forest, Dart State forest and Stewart Island State forest.

Waitutu Forests Healthy

The forests of the Waitutu area are, in the main, healthy.

This is one of the conclusions reached in a survey on the influence of browsing animals in the Waitutu State forest.

It was carried out by New Zealand Forest Service staff in the Southland conservancy, Messrs A. D. Ross and M. J. Cuddihy, and released recently.

About 45,000 hectares of beech and podocarp forest at Waitutu and the grasslands of Mt Aitken range and Hump ridge were surveyed.

The main aim was to estimate deer population and their effect on forest and grassland health.

As well, because both live capture in pens and the commercial helicopter hunting of deer are practised in Waitutu

the survey aimed to provide data to help management decisions in this regard.

Red Deer Source

The survey concluded that deer did not appear to have influenced soil or ground cover to an unacceptable degree, therefore the forest could continue to provide a source of red deer for commercial and recreational hunters.

Any reduction in animal control pressures such as the withdrawal of capture pen operators should be viewed with concern.

The pig population, particularly in the Poteriteri Flat area, has the potential to spread to Fiordland National Park. Reduction of this roving population is necessary for this reason, even though the pigs are not endangering canopy health or upsetting soil and water values unduly.

The present condition of the Waitutu grasslands in their role as a watershed cover is good.

Fewer Deer Taken

Although helicopter operators continue to be the main contributors to the control of deer throughout the Fiordland National Park, deer numbers taken had fallen.

Good prices for live deer during the 1979-1980 year has meant that less than 40 per cent of the total number of deer taken were dead.

In the board's annual report presented yesterday, it said that with the increased machine time per animal recovered, the total number of deer taken by helicopters dropped by 26.4 per cent to 5420.

This compared with 7465 in 1978-1979, and 13,231 in 1977-1978.

This trend to live deer capture is also mirrored in the number of applications received for permits to build deer capture pens in the park.

At the moment there are 25 permitted operators with 160 pens. An annual return of 206 deer was received from these. Another nine applicants have yet to take up their options.

Turning to recreational hunting, the report stated that although there was an increased kill per permit over last year there was a lesser number of permits issued to recreational hunters.

For the 1979-1980 year 1735 permits were issued and there were 3208 shooters. The deer return was 740.

This compared with 1978-1979 when there were 2003 permits and 3612 shooters. The deer return was 515.

Deer Sale Exceeds \$250,000

QUEENSTOWN
Criffel Game Park Ltd's fourth annual deer sale, held on the company's hill block behind Wanaka yesterday, attracted more than 600 people, including a new section of buyers.

Although more than \$250,000 worth of stock changed hands between 12.45 and 3 p.m., prices were slightly lower than last year.

Mr Tim Wallis, managing director of Alpine Helicopters, of which Criffel Game Park is a subsidiary company, said this was the first time wapiti-red hybrid hinds and stags had been offered for sale and they were of good class specially selected from many captured and adapted for farm conditions.

For the small number of wapiti offered, Mr Wallis said the bidding was between the few buyers who wanted them and the prices were very good.

An adult wapiti-red hybrid hind mated on the property to a wapiti bull brought \$4000 and with two rising three-year-old stags hand-reared going for \$3900 each, one to Nelson and the other to Timaru.

Mr Wallis was happy with the sale although prices were lower than expected in the red deer sections, taking into account the fact they were well prepared and well grown.

Giving an example of escalation of costs, Mr Wallis said that after the first sale four years ago proceeds could have bought two new helicopters but this year they would not meet the cost of one helicopter.

More than 380 head of stock

were auctioned, including 370 red deer.

Some of the animals will go as far north as Helensville to the Woodhill deer estate of Mr M. Ross.

Included in stock purchased by Mr Ross were 40 hand-reared hinds to a total value of \$20,200.

Wishart Helicopters 1978 Ltd of Hamilton was also a keen bidder, paying a total of \$31,000 for the 20 mixed-age hinds mated on the property, none of which were over five years of age. This company also bought five yearling hinds at \$1525 a head.

The first group of 50 farm bred weaner hinds sold for a total of \$47,875 while the second group of 60 weaner stags farmed were bought by Southland Farm Produce of Invercargill for \$410 a head.

The sale was conducted by Messrs Lester Thorn, head auctioneer for Wrightson NMA in Invercargill and D. Dowling of the Alexandra branch of Wrightson NMA.

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Trespass Charge Dismissed

Balclutha (Special) — Two Invercargill-based helicopter hunters who appeared in the Balclutha District Court on charges of hunting without an appropriate licence and trespassing on Beaumont station had the charges dismissed.

John Dodds Ramage and James Daly, of Ace Hunting Services, appeared before Judge W. H. Reid in a defended case.

A witness for the prosecution, Alan Russell Hore, the occupier of Beaumont station, said that on September 7, 1979, he was out inspecting the cows when he heard a noise. He went to the top of a hill and saw a white helicopter.

The helicopter flew up a gully at a low level and was obviously searching for game.

Mr Hore said he telephoned a helicopter pilot, Doug Maxwell, in Alexandra and together they searched the area for the suspect helicopter.

"We eventually found it at the Beaumont hotel and Mr Ramage and Mr Daly were just getting out of it. I told them they had been trespassing on my property and when I showed them a map they admitted that they had, but said they were chasing a pig and had gone over the boundary."

Anthony Victor Fuller, district ranger for the Forest Service, in Tapanui, said that he received a complaint from Mr Hore and the following day went to Beaumont station.

"I took a statement from Mr Daly and he admitted hunting on Beaumont station. The men didn't have a licence to capture and convey game by aircraft, although they did hold a licence to capture and convey by other means. They had

applied for the aircraft licence but had been turned down.

Ramage said that he and Daly had been trying to find a deer they netted the day before and might have strayed 50 metres at the most into Beaumont station. They denied taking the course indicated by Mr Hore.

Questioned by Judge Reid, Ramage said there were other helicopters operating in the area at the same time and as Mr Hore did not get the registration number of the helicopter, it was undoubtedly someone else he saw.

Judge Reid dismissed the charges, saying the case could not be proved beyond reasonable doubt.

shot, exceeding any recorded in Scotland.

Not content with this success, the Acclimatisation zealots imported other kinds of deer — fallow deer in 1864, simba deer in 1875, Japanese deer in 1885. Still later after the red deer had become a nuisance, there were more deer liberated — moose in 1900; Virginia deer in 1901; Wapiti in 1905 and Java rusa deer in 1907.

None of these, however, has succeeded as well as the red deer, and have remained limited to a few localities.



Wapiti from North America mingle with red deer west of Te Anau and may interbreed, producing some very fine heads.

The red deer has colonised all virgin, as well as exotic forests, excepting the subtropical Northland Kauri forest. It has climbed all the higher mountain verges where bush and tussock are found in conjunction. Its success lies in its versatile grazing and browsing habits. It grazes grass in the open, especially on fine days in summer, retiring to the shelter of trees in heavy snow and wintry conditions. When it browses, its favourites are evergreen leaves and foliage. It is not a lover of closed canopy woodland though; it needs grass more than it needs foliage.

Red deer up valley

A red deer was recently seen at the top end of the Tahakopa Valley.

The first liberations of these animals in New Zealand was done by the Acclimatisation Society in the South Island in 1851, at a time when there was still 25 million acres of forest out of New Zealand's land area of 66 million acres.

More releases followed in North, South and Stewart Islands, but the increase seemed slow and little shooting was possible. The Acclimatisation Society carted red deer zealously in all directions, including the almost inaccessible fiord glens, such as the Lillburn Valley and Dusky Sound. By the turn of the century, some spectacular prime heads were

Most of the native trees of New Zealand are evergreen and their leaves providing deer with an unfailing reservoir of palatable browsing throughout the year — very different from the predominantly deciduous woods of Europe in winter. Virtually undisturbed in the mountain forests, red deer have increased to pest proportions. Peak red deer population were widely reported during World War 1 when so many deer hunters were serving in the Army.

Helicopter Deer Recovery Declining

NELSON (PA).—National park boards may one day have to pay for helicopter deer control.

This is the opinion of the national supervising ranger, Mr J. Mazey, of Wellington, who told the Nelson Lakes National Park Board he would be surprised if helicopter recovery of deer has an economic future in New Zealand beyond the next 12 months or so. The board had been discussing helicopter poaching in the park and the possibility of allowing one or more firms to recover deer as an effective means of eliminating poaching.

Mr Mazey said there are about 80,000 deer in captivity in New Zealand and these are enough to meet requirements without the high cost of helicopter live recovery. The boom days for meat recovery are also over, and with substantially increased flying costs and a reduced price for meat, the venture is close to being uneconomic. "My feeling is that it can only get worse," he said. "If you decide in the future you want helicopter control you could well find you will have to pay for it."

The park chief ranger, Mr G. R. Lyon, said he had not received reports of helicopter sightings for at least six weeks.

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21/6/80

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Well Attended Deer Sale At Mararoa

A large crowd attended the Mararoa deer sale yesterday, where 140 mixed-age, mixed-sex deer were on sale.

Values appeared to level out in accordance with recent sales in the southern districts and most of the deer on offer were sold.

Prices were:

Red Deer: Weaner hinds \$575 to \$675; weaner stags \$230 to \$300; 18-month hinds \$1050; 18-month stags \$475 to \$530; adult hinds \$1175 to \$1200; adult stags \$600.

Hybrids: 18-month stags \$475 to \$590; adult stags \$620 to \$1000; adult hinds \$1375 to \$1650.

5/7/80

Carcasses Being Dumped

(P.A.)

About 1000 wild game carcasses, worth up to \$300,000 on the export market, will be dumped from a Dunedin coolstore tomorrow.

The carcasses, which include almost 600 wild pig, 300 whole deer and 100 deer hindquarters, have been in cold storage for between three and five years because they failed to meet new game-meat standards set by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in 1975.

They belong to Consolidated Traders (South Island) Ltd, which says that the regulations were not easy to comply with in the first two years.

The company has failed to obtain export certificates for the carcasses, and attempts to convert them to pet food have also met with official disapproval.

The carcasses were rejected because they did not comply with regulations which stipulated that game had to be delivered with hearts, lungs, livers, and kidneys intact, to a game-

processing plant within 72 hours of the animals being shot.

According to the director of the Ministry's meat division, Mr J. D. McNab, the regulations were introduced in 1975 to retain the West German market.

"The Germans were no longer prepared to accept a product that was not inspected," Mr McNab said.

The carcasses had been accumulated by Consolidated Traders because of a "bloody-minded attitude" on the part of the company, he said.

However, the company's South Island manager, Mr J. A. Robinson, said the regulations could not be enforced "overnight".

It was not always possible to have the game in a processing factory within 72 hours, and the

company had had to buy refrigerated trucks.

Hunters also had to be educated in the new requirements, he said.

"It took time and it took finance, and we were caught," Mr Robinson said from Blenheim.

The company was no longer accepting carcasses which did not comply with the regulations, but Mr Robinson was disappointed that the proposal to use the game for pet food had not even drawn a response from the Ministry.

"We have a pet food plant in Blenheim and we wanted to try it out here to see if it would work economically," Mr Robinson said.

However, Mr McNab said the proposal could not be authorized because the meat could not be inspected.

CHRISTCHURCH

The game would have to be whole — that is, with all the viscera — before it could be inspected.

"This had been during a period when the country's game-packing houses have been desperately short of products, which has led to redundancies at some plants," Mr Robinson said.

Dumping of the carcasses at a private tip in Dunedin will begin tomorrow. The task is expected to take several days, as they will have to be buried as soon as they are dumped.

The field manager of Coolhire Storage Ltd, Mr K. M. Swan, which has stored the meat for the past five years, is not looking forward to dumping the carcasses.

"It seems a dreadful shame to watch this game go down the gut hole," Mr Swan said.

Hunter Found On Island

A hunter who spent two nights in the open on Stewart Island was found, safe and well, by Invercargill Search and Rescue yesterday.

Wayne Raymond Bird, aged 31, of Waimate, went into the Big Glory Bay area on a deer-talking trip with two friends on Sunday, and was last seen walking in an easterly direction.

Mr Bird, who described himself as an experienced hunter, said last night he simply "got lost." To sustain himself, he ate raw deer liver and chewed on a weta.

However, he said he was feeling "very dizzy" by about 1 o'clock yesterday afternoon, and would not have lasted another night out in the open.

"The cold was really getting to me," he said. "I haven't slept a wink since Sunday night."

"I did press-ups every night to keep warm, and built bivouacs to sleep in."

Mr Bird saw several deer, but he "wasn't worrying about them at the time."

Raised Alarmed

His two companions did not start worrying about him until yesterday morning. They then gave the alarm to a fishing boat, which radioed Awarua Radio, which alerted the Invercargill police.

The search and rescue oper-

ation, headed by the relieving policeman at Halfmoon Bay, Constable B. L. Lemm, was mounted at 11 a.m.

Celebrating

Mr Bird was located at the North Arm hut, Port Adventure, from a searching helicopter at 2.30 p.m.

"It was just lucky timing that they saw me. I'd just walked out of the bush," said Mr Bird, who had followed one of the main waterways, the Heron river, out to the coast.

"I knew it had to come out somewhere, but I wasn't exactly sure where," he said.

Mr Bird was out celebrating his return with friends at Halfmoon Bay last night, and will return to Waimate on Saturday. Until then he will "probably go out for a few shots."

Constable Lemm was assisted during the search by the officer usually in charge at Halfmoon Bay, Constable P. Dodds, and Constables P. Wright and J. Harris.

Mr Bird said last night he was still shivering, even after a hot shower, and that he was feeling a bit tired, but otherwise "all right."

Receivership 'Not Justified'

(P.A.)

WELLINGTON

"We will pay them off... no problem," Consolidated Traders chairman, Mr Rex Giles, said yesterday after the A.N.Z. Bank had placed four of the group's main companies into receivership, because they could not repay their overdraft immediately.

"We are in a very strong trading position, we can offer excellent security and I can see no justifiable reason for this extraordinary action."

Total group sales amounted to \$15 million and I confidently estimate our net profit for the year ended March 31, 1981, will be at least \$1.8 million.

The four companies which have been placed in receivership are Consolidated Traders Ltd, Consolidated Traders South Island Ltd, Game Products N.Z. Ltd and Mountain Helicopters Ltd.

The receivers are Messrs M. Downs and N. Francis of Hutchison and Hull and Company (chartered accountants, Wellington).

"It seems to me the companies were in a strong trading position but then the group may have expanded a bit too rapidly," Mr Downs said.

Consolidated Traders who describe themselves as the fish, fur, game, and gold people pioneered deer farming in this country and have built up a nationwide network of storage depots and meat processing operations.

The wild pork, deer, and goat meat industry is an export oriented venture and some apprehension was expressed in traded circles today that the bank's action might damage New Zealand's reputation as a reliable supplier of these products.

Forty companies make up the Consolidated Traders group whose wide-ranging activities include trawling (the group

owns two trawlers) gold mining operation on the West Coast, live deer recovery and opossum skin tanning.

Game Exporter In Receivership

(P.A.)

WELLINGTON

Pioneer game exporter Consolidated Traders has been placed in receivership by the A.N.Z. bank because it cannot immediately repay its overdraft.

However, chairman Rex Giles is confident the company can quickly trade its way back to health.

In receivership are four companies in the Consolidated Group's game operation — Consolidated Traders Ltd, Consolidated Traders South Island Ltd, Game Products N.Z. Ltd and Mountain Helicopters Ltd.

They have a total book value of \$9 million.

The Consolidated Group's activities include the killing and exporting of wild pork, deer and goats, trawling and exporting of fish with two-company-owned trawlers and contracted boats out of Marlborough, Wellington and New Plymouth, a West Coast gold mining operation and an opossum fur tannery at Woodville.

Mr Giles began the group of about 40 companies in the mid-

1950s when he began hunting deer in the central Urewera Ranges and exporting the venison to markets he gradually developed in Germany.

Mr Giles said the receiver was put in by the bank last Wednesday after the group could not repay in full its overdraft when requested to. He wanted to stress that the companies were not in default.

Trading Strongly

All the group's divisions were trading strongly and had an excellent future, especially the opossum fur exporters who had last week signed a \$9.5 million contract to supply the United States, Korea, Malta, Italy and other countries.

He predicted a \$1.8 million after tax profit for the year ended March 31, 1981, on total group sales of \$15 million.

Three Hurt In Crash

(P.A.)

DUNEDIN

A helicopter, engaged in deer recovery operations with three men on board, all of whom were injured, was wrecked when it crashed in rugged country at Waihanakarua, 30km south of Oamaru, yesterday afternoon.

One of the men, James Barry McMillan, of Herbert, who broke a leg, was involved in another helicopter crash in the same region recently.

The names of the pilot, who received injuries to his ribs, and

the other passenger, who received a dislocated shoulder, were not released last night.

A police party, including first aid personnel from Oamaru and Forest Service workers, reached the area in four-wheel drive vehicles, but had to walk some distance to the crash site over steep rugged country three kilometres south of the Red hut, on the Mount Misery road.

Two helicopters, one from Timaru, and the other from Oamaru, lifted the injured out just before dark to ambulances waiting at a nearby farm.

One of the ambulances became bogged down on its way to the pick-up point and had to be pulled out by a tow-truck.

The injured men were treated last night at Oamaru Hospital.

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BLUE MOUNTAINS AREA FORMALLY GAZETTED

Recreational Hunting Area

Wellington Reporter

The Blue Mountains recreational hunting area is now formally gazetted, the Director of Environmental Forestry for the Forest Service, Mr Ken Miers, announced yesterday.

The Blue Mountains area in West Otago is the first area of its type to be formally set aside for recreational hunting.

The 22,300 hectare area has good access relatively easy hunting, and contains one of the oldest fallow deer herds in the country.

"This area, and others in the process of formal gazetting, will ensure that hunters can enjoy their sport without competition from commercial wild animal control operations," Mr Miers said.

No commercial hunting is allowed in

gazetted recreational hunting areas, unless the condition of the vegetation deteriorates to a level where additional control is needed.

The provision to set aside recreational hunting areas was made in the Wild Animal Control Act of 1977.

It was included because commercial operations had, in a comparatively short time, made significant inroads into the deer population in many parts of the country," Mr Miers said.

"But the helicopters themselves had to be more effectively controlled."

At the same time it was recognised a balance is needed with recreational hunting.

It was decided by the Government to set aside special areas where wild animal control is affected by recreational hunting alone.

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HUGHES 500's Selection of 9 helicopters available with varying component times From \$135,000
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CESSNA 172's 1978, TT 800 hrs, Nav/Com, digital A.O.F. like new \$34,000
1970 4000 hrs, engine 300 hrs to run, Nav/Com, VHF, new paint \$23,000
1956 8000 hrs, engine 1600 hrs to run, new c of a, King VHF, tidy \$15,500
AUSTER-LYCOMING 150 engine 1000 hrs to run, VHF, all electrics, c of a to 1983 \$15,000

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Deer At Island

Sir, — The use of 1080 poison on Stewart Island should be deplored by everyone interested in the Island in any way. I don't mean so-called conservation groups who visit the Island once every five or 10 years or when they are invited

by the Government departments as a cover for their activities. Practically the whole Island is covered in bush and the interest in so-called dieback to the small coastal area is a waste of time and taxpayer's money. All these areas used to be grassy clearings. It is only since the deer have been shot off that they have become covered in bracken up to two metres tall, which is choking the growth and causing the most damage.

Stewart Island is practically the only place in New Zealand where a whitetail deer can be taken by the recreational hunter, of whom there are hundreds if not thousands.

If someone by the mere signing of a name can change all this and take away from these people the pleasure of hunting on the Island, I think we need to look for a new system. So come on Stewart Islanders and others, speak up and stop this blatant disregard for human rights now.

N. R. Hamilton

Halfmoon Bay

FIORDLAND NATIONAL PARK BOARD

HELICOPTER ANIMAL RECOVERY

THE Fiordland National Park Board is at present undertaking a review of helicopter animal recovery operations within the Park and invites applications and/or submissions from interested helicopter operators based in Southland or Otago. These close with the Secretary Fiordland National Park Board, C/- Lands and Survey, Box 826, Invercargill or 4th Floor, Menzies Building, Esk Street, Invercargill at 1 p.m. on Monday July 21 1980.

B. R. TROTTER
Secretary
19206



Part of the damaged coastal area of Stewart Island, where 1080 gel poison will be used in a trial to eradicate deer and opossums.

Stewart Island Poison Trial For Deer Control

The New Zealand Forest Service will use 1080 poison and traps in the trial to control deer and opossums on part of Stewart Island.

The trial area is over a 2km-wide strip from Port Adventure in the South to Ocean Beach in the north.

Traps will be used to catch opossums and the 1080 gel for deer.

The trial is a further stage of research into the lack of regeneration of forest damaged by salt spray and gales.

Damage to the island's coastal forests has been causing concern for some time and deer appeared to be primarily responsible for the lack of regeneration.

The special 1080 poison gel was developed for Secretary Island in the Fiordland National Park, and the techniques have been used there effectively and without damage to native fauna for several years, according to Mr Kerry Mawhinney, senior environmental ranger with the New Zealand Forest Service in Southland.

The operator ties down or snips and bends the branches of trees and shrubs that deer like best so they can be easily reached. Poison gel is applied to the underside of a few leaves.

There is little threat to bird-life, because few birds have preferences similar to deer, and the baits can be placed out of reach of even the most curious ground birds, Mr Mawhinney said.

The operator wears gloves which are kept buried in the ground when not in use so that the human smell, which frightens deer away, is not left on the

vegetation. They also protect the operator while he handles the poison.

The trial strip will be divided into three sections — one treated with high density poison bait, one with low density bait, and one untreated. The poisoning operations and their short and long term effects on deer numbers will be closely monitored.

The operation will take five or six weeks to complete, and will take place in spring or summer. Pellet surveys to assess the density of the deer population will be done before and after the poisoning. Staff will also try and find deer killed in the operation, and perform autopsies to build up information on the island's deer population.

During the trial signposts will warn the public the poison baits have been laid in the area.

Wildlife Service scientists have been invited to monitor the

effect of the control methods on native fauna, and the Nature Conservation Council has been invited to observe the operation.

If the trial proves successful,

consideration will be given to using these methods over greater areas of Stewart Island's badly damaged coastal forests, Mr Mawhinney said.

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12/7/80

7/7/80

Special Deer Compound Established at Massey

Red Deer from the Tararua ranges, captured by the New Zealand Forest Service in January and February of this year, have been established in a special compound at Massey University, and it is intended that they will become the nucleus of a breeding herd.

The eight hinds and two stags will benefit from new facilities installed in the deer compound, including a circular yard with revolving gates and adjacent dark rooms which will allow intensive handling of the animals.

The special yards and rooms are designed to facilitate instruction and training in deer handling and management. They will also be useful for research programmes on disease control and prevention, parasite control, reproduction, blood and hormone studies, and antler growth investigations according to Dr Peter Wilson of the veterinary clinical sciences department.

But the principal purpose of allowing students to learn practical methods of vaccinating, sampling and restraining deer will be kept to the fore, with safety aspects emphasized, he said. Mr W.S. Morris, of the department of sheep husbandry, will be managing the compound with Mr P.H. Whitehead of the same department, as supervisor.

Less Excitable

According to Dr Wilson, Tararua deer are among the least excitable of red deer captured, and this gives an advantage in handling. All of the hinds are presently assumed to be in calf, and it is hoped that at least six fawns will be born in the herd later in the year. Deer seldom give birth to more than one calf each year. A hind has been offered to the university by a Hawkes Bay deer farmer, and it is hoped that similar donations will occur. Since the project is a non-profit-making venture, it is anticipated that any income from the sales of velvet and other products will be used to cover operating costs (the university funded the initial stages of the project at a cost of \$15,000).

Compound

The compound fencing is 2m high cyclone 6 inch tightlock netting, with external-grade plywood used to wall the yard areas. At present, 2.5 hectares of terrace land furnish grazing for the deer, but there is a possibility of a larger area of land being used for this purpose in the future. The holding pen has been designed to accommodate 30 deer at a time, and the grazing areas are divided into five paddocks.

The compound is located on the university's sheep and beef cattle research and development unit adjacent to the campus, and it is anticipated that it will become a regular point of interest to university visitors. A small, raised "viewing gallery" has been installed along the side of the circular yard to facilitate demonstrations to students, stockmen, and visiting farmers who are interested in deer husbandry.

New Science

Those in charge of the compound emphasize that since deer farming is a comparatively new science, new methods and concepts must be emphasized. The use of practices common to the handling of

sheep or cattle could have disastrous results.

The higher fences to restrain the animals, plywood walls to keep them from being alarmed by movements of stock handlers or machinery, and darkrooms to allow them to be handled at close quarters (they become immobilized when their sight is impaired by the use of darkrooms), all emphasize these differences. Additional methods to enable the efficient handling of deer are likely to be learned as the programme proceeds.

The administration of the deer compound is under the direction of an advisory committee appointed by the university's council, and involves members of the agricultural and horticultural sciences and veterinary sciences faculties.

The administration of the deer compound is under the direction of an advisory com-

mittee appointed by the universities council, and involves members of the agricultural and horticultural sciences and veterinary sciences faculties.

Professor R. D. Anderson, head of the department of sheep husbandry, is the chairperson, and other members are vice-chancellor Dr A. Stewart, Professor A. R. Frampton, Professor E. D. Fielden, Dr C. F. Wilson, Dr P. R. Wilson and Mr P. H. Whitehead.

The committee members have diverse areas of expertise, but all have an interest in deer farming in New Zealand.

Problems of deer handling, breeding, animal health, venison quality and antler velvet production will be studied with a view to helping provide answers to many of the questions that prospective and current deer farmers are presently asking.

1080 Operation On Stewart Island

Sir, — The write-up in the paper on Stewart Island, on July 7, with its one misleading photo, gives the public a false impression of the total Stewart Island forests.

Is the Forest Service going for total eradication of the unique whitetail deer? This area of their poisoning operations is one of the more easily accessible areas on the island. After shooting the island at intervals over the last few years, I have not found that the animals browse much further than a kilometre into the forest, so surely the deer can't be blamed for all the damage.

What happened to the reports of the 1080 trials which were done on other parts of the island?

Is the Forest Service going to pay for the 1080 poisoning operation with the opossum skins which they are going to trap?

Who is doing the trapping?

Why has this heavy trapping not been carried out over the last few years as the opossums have been doing more damage than the deer.

Keen Island Stalker

Mataura

[Asked to comment, the conservator of forests, Mr K. W. Prior, said: "the

photograph in The Southland Times is typical of large areas of coastal forest on Stewart Island. The present trial, in which 1080 will be used, is to try to determine the role played by deer and opossums in preventing the regeneration of this type of forest to its original state. The area was chosen because it has a number of suitable factors which offer the best chance of gaining the information sought. Notably forest die-back is severe over large areas, deer population is high and opossum population is moderate. 1080 was used in the northern portion of the island against opossums in 1976 but the reports do not cover the information sought in this trial. The opossum trapping has been completed by Forest Service staff but no skins were recovered. Operations are not financed by the sale of skins. The question of animal damage to vegetation should be resolved by the trial and it is premature to suggest that one animal does more damage than the other."]



Deer at Massey University

Return To Recovery Of Venison

There appears to be a slow return to venison recovery rather than live deer recovery in the Fiordland National Park.

At a meeting of the board, yesterday, a report from senior ranger, Mr E. Atkinson, said a recent meeting with helicopter company representatives confirmed that the current tightening in the market demand for live deer had reduced cash flow. This meant there was a situation of supply exceeding demand.

By contrast, Mr Atkinson said, the venison recovery market had climbed slightly and some companies were paying more attention to shooting, particularly stags, in order to maintain viability with an assured monthly cash return.

The owners of deer capture pens were also feeling the pinch.

There have been several requests from them for an extension of credit on permit fee payments, Mr Atkinson said.

Two pen owners had their pens for sale.

Protection For Deer Herd

(P.A.) WELLINGTON,

The sambar deer herd in Manawatu is to be protected, the Minister of Forests, Mr Venn Young, announced.

The number of sambar deer in Santoft and Waiterere State forests has dwindled over the last few years, and a study of their numbers and distribution is being made by the Forest Service, he said.

"No commercial or recreational hunting permits will be issued for sambar deer hunting until the study is complete, and it is hoped that sportsmen and landowners will co-operate in protecting any deer on private land."

The survey is expected to take about five years, and will determine whether the sambar herd can be managed for recreational hunting.

If it is found there are insufficient animals, or that hunting directly conflicts with other recreational uses of the forests, the herd may be relocated in some other forest with an existing deer population, the Minister said.

Sambar deer do not interbreed with other deer species, and the only other herd is in the Rotorua lakes region.

Sambar are large deer with distinctive antlers, and are a trophy much sought after by deerstalkers.

DEER FOR SALE

FRESHLY Captured Helicopter Red Deer for sale at back of helicopter prices. Captured by experienced crews using modern captured techniques.

Deer available from depots at Haast, Wanaka, Alexandra and Te Anau.

Prices up till November, 1980; Adult Hinds \$400. Yearling Hinds \$350. Weaner Hinds \$300. Stags \$3.30 per Kg live weight.

Prices from November 2, 1980 will be:

ADULT HINDS \$350.00

YEARLING HINDS \$325.00

WEANER HINDS \$300.00

STAGS \$3.30 per kg live weight

(these reduced prices allow for risks associated with hinds being in fawn)

Terms: Cash on possession from above deposits.

Intending purchasers write stating type of deer required and period wishing to be supplied.

Write to:

"Deer,"
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FALL OF THE WILD: DEER HUNTERS ARE IN THE GUN!

THE bubble has burst for the wild deer meat industry.

Packing houses processing wild deer have closed down, shortened their hours and reduced their staff as shot game being recovered for the export market has diminished.

Relentless shooting and a boom in live deer capture has made previously gilt-edged game companies suffer a severe downturn in profitability.

The contrast between today and the 1960-70 era, when expansion of the industry was incredible, is marked.

Long ago some predicted that meat hunters would shoot themselves out of business. And basically this has happened.

Today a toned-down industry subsists on lean tallies and hope of future support from the in-vogue deer farms once consistent slaughtering begins.

Glamour

The industry will be remembered as a top export enterprise; a commercial scene of impetuous progress, glamour — and often shortsightedness.

Venison was exported as early as the 1920s, but this venture was never expanded. However, in 1959 a West Coaster formed West Coast Natural Foods. He exported a few locally shot deer and the basis of a multi-million-dollar industry was set.

Another firm promptly joined the bandwagon. It hired 10 top guns and supported shooting operations with three jet boats, six Land Rovers and a string of packhorses.

The backbone of the industry was the shooter. He received 9d a pound for clean shot venison. (Now he receives \$1.70 a kg, less 25 per cent tax.)

Early expansion was low key, but hunters and businessmen saw the opportunity to earn grand tax-free money by shooting deer and selling

the carcasses to a meat buyer.

Gun-toting hunters were unique characters from various walks of life. Many were ex-Forestry deer cullers.

Processed venison, hides, antlers and by-products quickly became a substantial earner of overseas funds. West Germany was the prime consumer.

By 1962 the industry had gained improvements resulting from a survey that urged the upgrading of hygiene during

By

KEVIN J. WHITELAW

recovery and processing.

Excellent refrigeration facilities, road transport and light aircraft became essential in the effort to get shot deer to the factories in top condition.

By 1965 pioneer firms like Graham Stewart Ltd and Luggate Game Packers operated their own helicopters for venison recovery. The wild deer meat trade was revolutionised to meet the challenge of extra markets and demand.

Throughout the country, agents commissioned by processing firms set up their "spot cash for deer" businesses, armed with a freezer and a cheque book.

Within two years 150,000 deer were being helicopter-shot and recovered from the back country. Ground hunters also accounted for staggering numbers.

Snags

Briefly, the venture enjoyed a bonanza. The odd snags appeared.

Extra regulations for licensing processing factories which exported venison were instituted. A contaminated shipment of venison was detained in the United States.

Again hygiene methods were criticised, and during summer general game purchasing ceased for the first time.

However, the wild venison industry suffered its hardest blow in 1974.

West Germany, that highly lucrative purchaser, lifted an embargo on imports of European game meat and our days of competition-free trading were over.

West Germany now demanded a comprehensive contract with controversial requirements.

The new regulations caused a recession in an industry now employing a considerable labour force. Game factories actually closed.

A venture which had in 1973 exported to West Germany 3144 tonnes of venison was brought to its knees overnight. One year later, a few major processors were the sole survivors of the economic collapse.

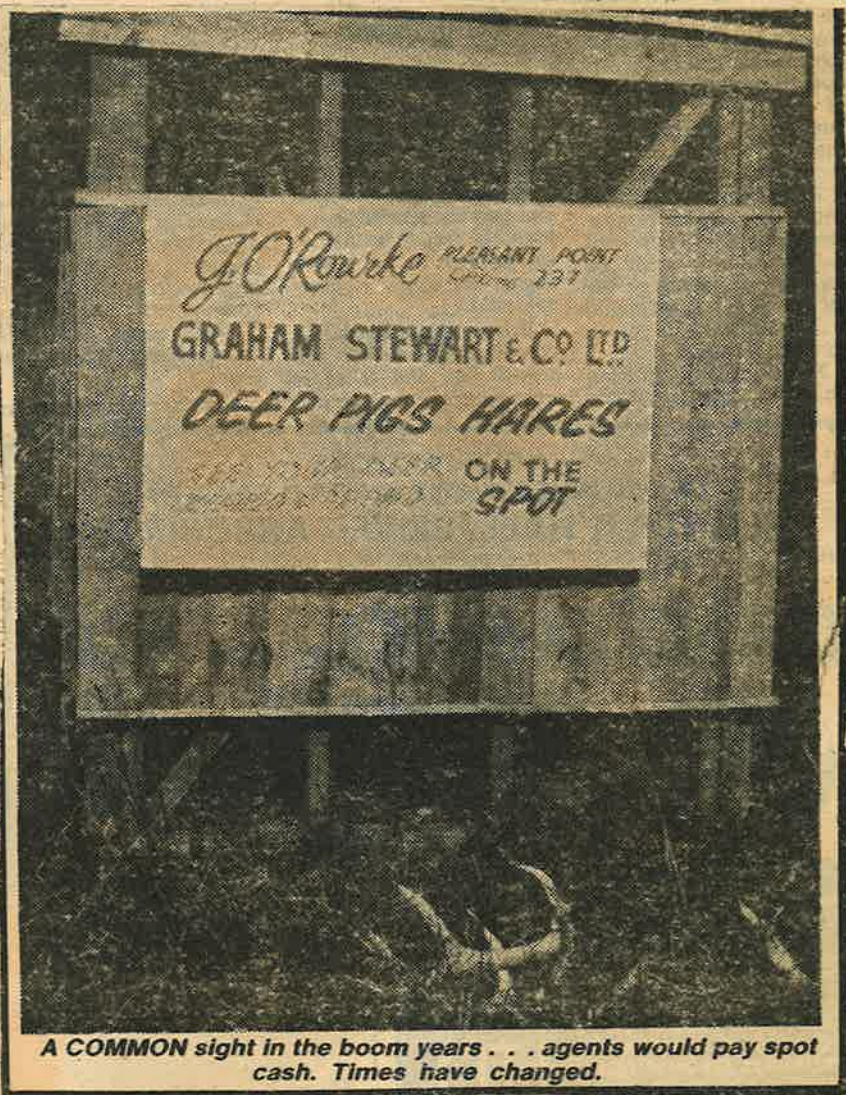
Dumped

The effects of the 1975 regulations were still being felt by Consolidated Traders (South Island) Ltd a few weeks ago. They had to dump and bury \$300,000 worth of stockpiled game meat which had failed to comply with West German requirements.

Meat division and game industry representatives have brought about the forming of the Game Exporters' Association, a vital link for future venison trade deals.

These days the game industry is far from sound, contrary to the suggestion that it is buoyant and ready for a taste of former glory once range-raised stock come to hand.

It's changed scene, dwindling as rapidly as it grew. The only thing really keeping it going again is the faithful ability of the ground hunter.



A COMMON sight in the boom years . . . agents would pay spot cash. Times have changed.

Hunting Permit Changes For Blue Mountains Area

Staff Reporter.

TAPANUI. — With the gazetting of the Blue Mountains as the first recreational hunting area in New Zealand, some changes to permit issue are being introduced.

Permits will now have to be picked up from the point of issue and all permits must be returned with the kill return completed. Suitable boxes will be provided for this purpose.

Blocks will be balloted during April, and will include the roaring season.

It will be illegal to sell wild animals shot in recreational hunting areas, and it will be a legal requirement for each hunter to carry a permit.

Camping and the lighting of fires will be prohibited and no dogs will be allowed for pointing deer.

However, dogs will still be allowed for pig-hunting.

The district ranger, Mr A. V. Fuller says the Blue Mountains is a unique area and the Forest Service has been receiving about 120 requests a month for permission to shoot in the Rankleburn sub-division of the Pomahaka forest.

Comment on Use of 1080 Poison

29/7/80
Sir, — If Patricia Forsman took the time to research 1080 and its effects she would have discovered that 1080 is the most humane, safe poison devised. It is biodegradable, non-cumulative, totally soluble, leaving no residues and has definite, varying effects on target species.

Perhaps if she had examined the environmental reports on the subject — researched the mounds of technical data obtained during the last 30 years on the effects on life and the environment, — she may have been able to discard preconceived and ill-informed ideas regarding this most useful chemical. Sodium monofluoroacetate has rid New Zealand of the rabbit and opossum pest, thus increasing the production of primary exports, the gain from which enables Patricia Forsman and others like her to purchase necessities like food and warmth and, in fact, life itself.

It is appalling to me that in this age of instant communications persons like Patricia Forsman cannot take the time to be informed. A fact is not something which may be discarded because an emotive issue is being debated — I again suggest that she avail herself of some facts before going off the deep end into hysteria.

I too am opposed to the destruction of deer by 1080 poison, but I do know the facts about 1080. Please suggest an alternative: the D.S.I.R., M.A.F. research groups and the Agricultural

Pests Destruction Council would be most interested in sensible suggestions.

Brian Burdon

Gore

Sir, — Regarding the use of 1080 poison on Stewart Island, in the first place, this land is Crown land. It really belongs to New Zealanders. Does this give a Government department the power to destroy all our wildlife against the wishes of the people?

Mr Prior says the 1080 poison in this case is going to be evaluated on a trial basis only. Goodness me, they have held these trials all over the country. It killed nearly all the animals on Secretary Island, around the sounds in no man's land. They know the destruction these trials can do, all right.

I plead with the people not to allow these trials even on the Island. These trials may end up big ones and clean up just about everything. This Government department is well known for its action on our animals. When they're finished, there is nothing left. Just take Martins Bay, the Hokonui. They've both had it.

D. Hawkless

Bluff

DEER FOR SALE

FRESHLY Captured Helicopter Red Deer for sale at back of helicopter prices. Captured by experienced crews using modern captured techniques.

Deer available from depots at Haast, Wanaka, Alexandra and Te Anau.

Prices up till November, 1980; Adult Hinds \$400. Yearling Hinds \$350. Weaner Hinds \$300. Stags \$3.30 per Kg live weight.

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Terms: Cash on possession from above deposits.

Intending purchasers write stating type of deer required and period wishing to be supplied.

Write to:

9/8/80
"Deer,"
ALPINE HELICOPTERS LTD,
R.D. 1, CROMWELL

Emergency Landing

(P.A.) CHRISTCHURCH

Two Hanmer men, who were forced to make an emergency landing in their helicopter, were sitting by a blazing fire when Royal New Zealand Air Force searchers found them yesterday.

They had been out shooting when their Hughes 500 helicopter developed a mechanical fault about 9.30 a.m.

The pilot, Mr George Claxton, noticed the fault and landed at Shale Creek, about 25 kilometres west of Hanmer.

"We weren't really worried. We switched on the emergency beacon and sat down and waited," the passenger in the helicopter, Mr William Hales, said last night.

The pair were spotted by the Iroquois crew about 4 p.m. and arrived back in Hanmer by 4.30.

Shooting Permit Suspended

(P.A.) WELLINGTON

The Forest Service has suspended the deer shooting permit of a helicopter company which raised the ire of a group of Wairarapa farmers.

About 70 farmers at Makuri, 36km southeast of Pahiatua, have signed a petition condemning the shooting in the Puketoi Ranges.

Puketoi forest, 1.5km wide and 15km long, borders many farms and their owners said the helicopters were scaring stock during the lambing and calving season.

Many of the farmers are amateur deerstalkers and said the aerial slaughter for venison would wipe out Puketoi's deer population for good.

The Forest Service in Palmerston North has suspended the Taumarunui company's three-month permit at least until it can speak to some of the farmers next week.

A Wanganui helicopter company was also issued a permit last month, though it had not started working in the forest. Its permit has been suspended too.

Question Locals

"We want to question the locals on their hunting interests and the helicopter interference with stock," said forest ranger Mr Bill Simmons.

He said the Forest Service considered a forest's size, location, type of vegetation and suitability for recreational hunting before issuing commercial permits.

He said the decision on Puketoi would not be made easier by the fact that some local farmers had been deerstalking without permits.

HELICOPTER PILOT

VENISON Recovery 300c prefer 1000 hour experience.
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Buoyant Sale For Deer

(P.A.)

AUCKLAND

Fresh confidence in the export market for venison and antler velvet was shown yesterday at a buoyant, trend-setting Auckland deer auction.

Firming prices at the first major sale in the South Head region fringing Kaipara Harbour were judged to have stabilized at realistic levels, following the boom a year ago.

At that time speculators were recklessly paying \$3000 and more for a mature hind.

Yesterday the same animal was worth \$1075 to \$1250, with younger hinds at \$950 to \$1000 and weaners at anything from \$350 to \$425.

The sale at Red Hill deer park attracted more than 150 prospective buyers including farmers from Whangarei and Te

Puke and a number of keen-eyed Auckland businessmen with their sights still set on profits in an expanding industry.

An offering of 160 head was dominated by red deer from the Red Hill property and from the big Haldon Station in South Canterbury, but it included some fallow deer from other local farms.

Well pleased at having sold all the 60 hinds he trucked up from the South Island, the owner of Haldon Station, Mr James Innes, described the sale as the most buoyant he had seen this season.

"A year ago in Hamilton," said Mr Innes, "we averaged \$3600 for hinds, but today, with realistic prices, was an indication of confidence in the industry."

From Mr Innes' comments and those of Mr David Paykell, the managing partner in Red Hill Deer Park, it was apparent that while the deer industry has lost some of its early steam it has settled down to a sensible level, following an overseas market change and the adjustment by the Inland Revenue Department to standard values for stock.

While antler velvet was all the go in Hong Kong, Taiwan and Korea, a good market exists now for velvet in those quarters and venison in West Germany.

Licences Approved

Animal recovery licences have been granted to seven helicopter operators working in the Fiordland area by the Fiordland National Park Board.

At the board's meeting last night it was decided to grant licences to Alpine Helicopters (four and a-half units), Thompsons (two units), Kane (one unit), C.R. Deaker (one unit), Hayes (one unit) Takahē Helicopters (one and a-half units) — to be shared with Alpine) and the group Munro and Stewart, Egertons and S. Deaker (two units).

During the 12-month period of the licences the two units covering the area containing wapiti be allocated on the basis of: Alpine (four months), Thompsons (four months), Kane (two months), C. R. Deaker (two months).

The executive committee's recommendation "that the turnover periods be monthly for the units containing wapiti and two-monthly for the others" was adopted.

The licence fees are: Five per cent of the current buying price of a dead 40kg animal, reducible to 4 per cent if paid by the 30th of the month following recovery; 4.5 per cent of the current buying price of a live animal reducible to 3.5 per cent if paid by the 30th of the month following recovery.

In the event of fees not being paid on or before the 30th of the month following recovery the payment will be the full rate.

Any money outstanding after the 30th of the second month following recovery would bear an interest rate on par with the current Bank of New Zealand interest rate, the meeting decided.

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Shooting Angers Farmers

(P.A.)

WELLINGTON

A company shooting deer from helicopters in the Puketoi Ranges has angered a group of Wairarapa farmers.

About 70 farmers in Makuri, 35 kilometres south-east of Pahiatua, have signed a petition condemning the shooting, and plan to send it to the M.P. for Pahiatua, Mr John Falloon.

They said the company should never have been given a permit to use helicopters during the lambing and calving season. Petition organizer, Mr Bob Wallace, said the aircraft frightened the animals at a critical time of the year, running some into fences or away from their offspring.

Puketoi forest, about 1.5 kilometres wide and 15 kilometres long, bordered many farms and it was impossible to fly over it without nearing paddocks, he said.

Inquiries by Mr Wallace and Makuri woodturner, Mr Mark Wahlberg, have revealed a Taumarunui company was operating the helicopters.

Not Warned

Farmers were not warned of the shooting but their inquiries led to a letter from the Masterton Forest Service.

It said the company had a permit for live capture or killing off deer from August 12 to November 12 and was allowed an extension.

Mr Wallace said the hunters seemed interested in venison only, and no live capture was being done.

"A lot of the farmers around like deer hunting — including me — so there's an emotional issue involved too," he said.

"It's only a small forest and it'll be cleaned out of deer in a few months at this rate."

"Low Population"

Mr Wahlberg said the last Forest Service survey of the forest, in 1976, revealed "a low population of red deer."

"Recreational hunting has been able to keep the deer population in check."

Three months of aerial slaughter will annihilate the Puketoi's deer.

"The hunters are taking everything, caring for nothing but the cash value of venison," Mr Wahlberg said.



NIGHT SHOOTING PROHIBITION

Formal notice is hereby given that spotlighting is prohibited within West Tapanui, Rankleburn, Beaumont, and Conical Hill State Forests (comprising the Blue Mountains Recreation Hunting Area) and also Dusky and Pukerau Forest Blocks.

Offenders are liable to prosecution.

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District Ranger
Tapanui
39423

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41221

Fortunes of Deer Farmers Plummeting

28/8/80

(P.A.)

The fortunes of deer farmers are plummeting, according to the director-general of forests, Mr G. M. O'Neill.

Antler velvet — considered a tonic in Asian societies, has fallen from a top price of around \$286 a kilo to about \$170.

And the antlers are not the only part of the deer to depreciate. The live animal price has also taken a tumble. In December last year a yearling hind fetched about \$2400 at sale, but by March this year a farmer could expect only \$1400 for the same

animal. One unlucky farmer sold 120 animals in March fetching an average price of \$825 an animal.

In addition, the Inland Revenue Department has introduced a standard value for live deer for taxation purposes of \$700 for adult hinds.

The director-general's report, tabled in Parliament yesterday, estimated that as many

as 100,000 deer may be held in captivity on New Zealand farms.

Venison Market

And with velvet prices dropping they might look to the export venison market. Deer meat, he says, has risen to about \$5 a kilo on overseas markets, but he doubted whether the industry was strong enough to start any significant exports

WELLINGTON

of venison within the next two to three years.

The fluctuations in the market for deer products have been reflected in hunting. Helicopter hunting, which became a licensed activity in 1977, has changed over the past two years to a live capture industry.

"Few operators now hunt for venison," the report says. "This means that fewer deer are being removed from the forest, and the number of deer held in captivity on deer farms is showing a marked increase. Forest Service rangers have, in some forests identified a build-up in deer numbers, and have encouraged a return to carcass recovery as a means of control."

There are more than 100 helicopters licensed for deer recovery in New Zealand.

Because of increased demand for live deer recovery permits, it is intended that all Crown owned land will be zoned into three helicopter recovery categories. The first category will be land open to hunting with few restrictions and the third will be closed to all helicopter hunting.

"All operators must now face the fact that Crown owned lands cannot be relied on as recovery areas, as although permits will be issued on request for the open areas, the restricted zones will normally only be available to a limited number of aircraft," the report says.

Searchers Find Helicopter

11/11/80

A search involving several helicopters late yesterday found two men and their downed helicopter in Fiordland National Park.

The full-scale search was initiated at about 7 p.m. after a Hughes 300 helicopter was reported overdue on a shooting trip.

The helicopter, belonging to Thompson Brothers of Te Anau, left Te Anau at 5.30 a.m. on a venison recovery mission in the Charles Sound area. It was piloted by Mr Lex Wohler. Also aboard was Mr John Barker, a shooter. Both are from Te Anau.

The helicopter was last seen in the Charles Sound area at 10.30 a.m. When it failed to return to Te Anau by midday several local helicopters made an initial search.

Police were notified at 6.45 p.m., and immediately called in Mr Bill Black of Alpine Helicopters.

The Rescue Co-ordination Centre in Christchurch was also alerted, and took over control of the search.

Shortly after 9.30 p.m., one of the searching helicopters picked up an emergency locator beacon and tracked the Hughes 300 to the Freeman Burn off Lake Manapouri. The two men were fit and well and the helicopter undamaged.

Police in Te Anau said last night the machine had apparently been running low on fuel, and had been landed as a precautionary measure at about 11.30 a.m.

It was not equipped with radio.

Police expected the helicopter would be refuelled and flown back to its base today.

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Game Packers (N.Z.) Ltd. Melmore Terrace, CROMWELL	50-468, Cromwell C/o D. J. Jones	Mrs J. F. Marton, Frankton, CROMWELL	836, Cromwell
Luggage Game Packers Limited LUGGATE	594, Hawea Flat	Mr J. L. Saxon, Beaumont, CENTRAL OTAGO	186W, Lawrence
Southern Lakes Game Foods Limited MOSSBURN	41, Mossburn	Mrs D. Duncan, Makarora, CROMWELL	32A, Wanaka
Mr R. Dawson, 20 Bligh Street, TE ANAU	454 Te Anau	Mr B. Staite, OTAUTAU	549, Orawia
Mr H. J. Paulin, 19 Cleddan Street, TE ANAU	825 Te Anau	C. J. Sumnerland, Clifden, TUATAPERE	542, Orawia
Mrs M. M. Barnes 35 Lieman Street, OTAUTAU	8309, Otautau	Mr H. G. Dawson, Colac Bay, RIVERTON	250K, Riverton
Mr J. H. Edgerton, 15 Papatotara Road, TUATAPERE	146, Tuatapere	Mr B. J. Norris, Mussell Point, HAAST	820, Haast

HUNTERS HUNTERS HUNTERS

Wapiti Petition

Sir, — I have noticed numerous times in your paper where people interested in our wapiti herd and the petition that went around to protect the outdoor people, have inquired as to what is going on.

I did see where the editor went to the trouble of contacting Mr Young direct and he said the matter would get attention in the near future. That was quite some time ago. Is there something secret going on? It is typical of the Gov-

ernment — out of sight out of mind. The people would like to know this year, not next year.

Our poor wapiti herd seems to be getting no attention at all. The petition is sadly neglected. And those that are left in our Crown land are left wide open for a severe thrashing in the meantime.

What's wrong with the so-called human race? Deer associations and recreational hunters should get cracking and get some use out of our Crown land. It is past time they had their say and meant it. It is election year next year.

D. Hawkless

Bluff

17/11/80

Man Killed In 'Copter Crash

(P.A.)

17/11/80

GREYMOUTH

One man died and two were unhurt when a helicopter crashed and overturned in a treetop in the Arawata Valley region of South Westland, 40km south of Haast, on Friday.

Greymouth police reported on Saturday that the dead man was Robert Norton, a Forest Service ranger of Harihari.

Police said details of the crash were sketchy but it appeared as though the helicopter crashed while on a deer recovery operation and the pilot, John MacIntyre, aged 35, of Haast, was trapped in the overturned machine for 13 hours after his shooter, Mark Cust, aged 25, of Paroa, had climbed down the tree and gone for assistance.

Mr MacIntyre received bruising in the crash and was treated at the scene.

Police believed Mr Norton was flung from the helicopter when it overturned.

Mr MacIntyre was eventually cut free by Constable Roger

Millard, of Haast, and Mr Kevin Hallett, of Alexandra.

The rescuers were lowered into the tree from a rescue helicopter and tied on to the branches.

"Touch and Go"

"It was touch and go as to whether we would knock the helicopter out of the tree as we worked to cut him free," Mr Millard said.

The rescuers used a chainsaw to cut through the bulkhead at the rear of the cockpit and through the pilot's seat.

"We had to take him through the back because he was wedged between the trees and the seat," said Mr Millard. "He was extremely lucky to escape with cuts and bruises because his crash helmet was smashed," he said.

Mr Millard said the helicopter appeared to have been flying at 70 metres when its engine failed and the machine crashed into the tree in dense bush.

It slid about 10m down the tree before coming to rest virtually upside down on the branches.

"It would have stopped 150 feet in the air and we were lowered down to it — it was one great big tree," said Mr Millard.

Rescuers were on the scene at 5 p.m. and finally freed Mr MacIntyre about an hour and a half later.

"He knew how lucky he was to still be alive and that the helicopter may have fallen out of the tree at any time."

Spotlighting On Increase

17/11/80

An upsurge in spotlight hunting of deer in State forests has been noticed by staff of the New Zealand Forest Service's Southland conservancy.

An illegal activity, it involves hunters driving along forest roads, spotlighting deer and shooting them from their vehicles.

The activity was particularly prominent in the western forests, senior ranger, Mr Kerry Mawhinney, said yesterday. Spotlighting usually increased at this time of the year when deer came out of the forests on to road verges in search of new grass.

Forest Service patrols were searching likely areas at night and had caught one offender last week.

However Mr Mawhinney said because of the open forest policy and the accessibility of forest roads it was difficult to cover all areas.

Penalties for the offence could be severe, involving fines and confiscation of gear.

Spotlighting was illegal for a number of reasons, Mr Mawhinney said.

It was difficult to identify animals at night and farm stock were at risk. It was also difficult to identify background at night, and a shot fired at an animal at a short distance could hit something further away.

Cyanide Use Questioned

A scientist working on a takahe survey in the Murchison mountains, Dr J. Mills, is concerned about a further reduction in takahe.

Dr Mills, from the department of Internal Affairs' wildlife branch, has asked the Fiordland National Park Board to reduce the use of cyanide in that region.

Mr J. P. Harty, the Fiordland Park Board chairman, told the Wild Animals Advisory Committee on Monday the board had agreed to make an effort to safeguard the takahe.

It was possible the reduction of takahe could also be attributable to stoats and the correlation of deer destroying the habitat of the takahe, Mr Harty said.

The board has agreed to look into the use of 1080 in the Murchison mountains and will meet Forest Service and Wildlife Service representatives to discuss this matter today.

Mr J. R. Von Tunzelman, the forest ranger at Te Anau, said there had been some illegal opossum hunters in the area before a few responsible operators were working in the region.

The legal operators worked to

a restricted system of bait stations between Lake level and 166m above, and were doing useful patrol work.

They had seen a stoat attack a takahe and had rescued the bird.

Mr Von Tunzelman submitted that the use of cyanide by responsible operators would not endanger the takahe.

"I have not heard of the finding of a dead takahe whose death had been caused by cyanide," he said.

Investigating Wapiti Relocation

Following a request from the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr V. S. Young, to consider relocating wapiti from the Fiordland National Park, the Forest Service and Lands and Survey Department are investigating suitable areas, and methods of capture for temporary relocation on a deer farm.

The senior environmental forest ranger at Invercargill, Mr Kerry Mawhinney reported this to the Wild Animal Advisory Committee at Stewart Island this week.

The Commissioner of Crown Lands in Invercargill, Mr J. P. Harty, said the department was looking for a suitable area, possibly adjacent to the Fiordland National Park.

The wapiti would be held there until a herd of sufficient size, of between 200 and 300 animals, which showed strong wapiti characteristics was assembled.

They would then be released on a recreation hunting area yet to be selected in the South Island, where they could develop into a prize trophy herd.

Once the matter had been thoroughly investigated a recommendation would be sent to Mr Young for his consideration, Mr Mawhinney said.

Need For Deer Abattoir

(P.A.)

TAURANGA

Export markets for deer strictly limited at present, according to Mr Peter Way, manager of Bergs Game Ltd, Whakatane.

But because of this year's drop in deer prices, professional hunters are choosing to kill deer rather than capture them live.

Mr Way said his firm was being supplied with quantities of deer meat from many parts of the North Island.

The only market for wild deer meat was West Germany, which would accept wild venison which had not been inspected.

Mr Way knows of no market which will accept farmed venison which has not had both pre and post killing inspections.

Until a deer abattoir is established as is planned for Kaitake, no facilities exist for the early class of inspection in New Zealand.

Bergs is buying both wild and farmed benison at \$3 a kilogram and holding the farmed venison until it gets a container load. Then the firm will sell it on the market.

Farmers think they have a product worth big money, but this is certainly not the case until proper killing facilities are established, Mr Way said.

Tapanui Satisfactory

Opossums, rabbits and hares were being kept to satisfactory levels in the Tapanui district, and there was minimal damage to the exotic plantations there, the forest ranger for the Forest Service in the area, Mr H. W. Maunders, told the Wild Animals Advisory Committee at Stewart Island this week.

In the Blue mountains, most of the hunting blocks in the recreational hunting area had high use, and evening hunting during the week was proving popular, particularly this spring.

During the winter, deer populations had been pressurized to higher levels on the eastern face of the Blue mountains.

Some assistance had been provided by the service to the eastern district in getting rid of wild cattle in the Ajax swamp area, Mr Maunders said.

A portable bivouac was being used and it was intended to shoot the cattle when they moved up to the swamp areas in the summer.

A total of 3006 permits had been issued for the Rangleburn, Beaumont, Glendhu, West Tapanui and Waikaia hunting areas for the year, compared with 2388 for the previous year.

A total of 580 fallow deer, 6808 opossums, 376 hares, 221 pigs, 38 rabbits and 27 red deer were killed.

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GAME REGULATIONS 1975

PUBLIC NOTICE of intention to apply for deer slaughtering premises licence. Southern Lakes Game Foods Ltd a duly incorporated company having its registered office at Dunedin hereby gives notice that it intends to apply to the Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries pursuant to the Game Regulations 1975 for a deer slaughtering premises licence in respect of premises to be built at Southern Lakes Game Foods Ltd, Mossburn, Southland.

Dated at Dunedin December 5 1980. This is the first publication of this notice. 55002

5/12/80

GAME REGULATIONS 1975

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Dated at Dunedin December 5 1980. This is the second publication of this notice. 55002

12/12/80

Strong Support For 1080 Trial

The Southland conservancy of the Wild Animals Advisory Committee agreed at a meeting on Stewart Island this week to strongly support the Protection Forest Institute research programme for the use of 1080 poison on the south-east coast of the island, to be implemented by the Forest Service in February.

The committee studied the die-back in the coastal rata-kahurangi forest on the island in 1977, and moved then that the ban on the use of 1080 poison on the island be lifted.

The Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr V. S. Young, has agreed to permit the use of the poison for a trial test in the research area of about 15km by half a kilometre between Ocean Beach and Tikotatahi Bay, near Port Adventure, south-east of Halfmoon Bay.

Every precaution will be taken to ensure public safety while the programme is in progress, which is expected to cover three months. The baits will be tested at two-weekly intervals to assess toxicity.

Mr M. J. Cuddihy, forester for the Forest Service at Invercargill, explained the procedure of the operation aimed at reducing the large numbers of white-tailed deer in that region, and opossums.

Three Blocks

The 2000 hectares will be divided into three main blocks and assessments made into the efficiency of natural bait poisoning as a means of controlling white-tailed deer, research into autopsy data to assess the health of the deer population there, with comparison made with American data; research into vegetation, birdlife and opossums.

Pre-poisoning assessments

on birdlife there has been already carried out, including the monitoring of kiwi and more-pork populations.

The conservator of Forests at Invercargill and chairman of the Wild Animals Advisory Committee, Mr Keith Prior, said it was impossible to take action on the issue which would please everyone, but he accepted the fact that the experiment would proceed and that the deerstalkers would not like it. "Personally I do not like poisons, but I don't think that 1080 use is a savage practice compared with the use of phosphorous which the staff have been instructed not to use," he said.

Although Mr Prior recognized the roles that recreational and commercial hunters should play in Stewart Island forests to control deer, he said there were standards to be maintained in forests and deer numbers had to be compatible with the habitat.

A healthy forest had to be maintained and action must be taken on research to achieve that end.

There was no assurance that the 1080 operation would succeed, but it was one operation which could be tried.

High Density

Recreational hunters had not been able to reduce the deer population adequately in the south-east coast region where density was described as from

moderate to high throughout the Port Adventure-Ocean Beach region.

Mr Bruce Sinclair, representative on the committee for the Southland branch of the Deerstalkers' Association, agreed that the association was against the use of 1080 and would prefer that an area be designated to allow hunters to shoot the deer out.

The establishment of two suitable huts in the problem area for the use of hunters would assist, he said.

The association agreed about the damage to the coastal forest and the need to reduce deer numbers.

It was said that some hunters were obtaining permits to shoot blocks, then spending much of their time holidaying and fishing. That had been pointed out to association members so hunting permits could be used to better advantage.

Mr Don Lamont, the Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society representative at the meeting, said there was a strong lobby against the use of 1080, but the society realized that until scientific research found something better it had to be used.

"Our concern is that the Forest Service won't be put off the research programme by public pressure. We are behind the programme and hope the issue will not become political," Mr Lamont said.

Ground Hunters Kill Wild Pigs

In a report to the Wild Animals Advisory Committee at Stewart Island on Monday, Mr R. K. Martin, the Forest Service officer at Queenstown, said eight wild pigs had been killed by department ground hunters in the Matukituki Valley.

They had been liberated in the valley.

When Mr Martin was reporting about a more noticeable presence of deer in the Hunter-Dingle Catchments in the Lake Hawea watershed, Mr G. Anderson of Alexandra raised the point about a recent public notification denying access to the Hunter Valley to private recreation hunters.

Mr Martin said there had been a mistake in the notification and the station owner had no intention of refusing access if private hunters with permits identified themselves to him and asked permission to proceed to the valley.

Chamois had also been more noticeable in the Hawea watershed and pressure on those animals by helicopter operators had not been encouraging, Mr Martin said.

No Effort

There had not been any effort in actual search and recovery.

With live capture now not being economically viable as in the past, operators may again become more interested in chamois, he said.

Careful surveillance by chamois was being monitored because they had become more noticeable in population build-up than deer or thar.

There had been 4000 opossums taken in the Hunter-Dingle catchments which represented nearly half of the kill for the Lakes District.

In a report about goat control in the Mount Aspiring National

Park and Kawarua watershed, Mr Martin said, continual pressure was wearing the goat population down.

It was imperative that the present ground hunting pressure be maintained to keep the population at its present low levels, he said.

More interest had been shown by commercial helicopter operators in goat recovery this year, as the market for goat meat was more available and deer recovery over the winter was not good economically, Mr Martin said.

More than 2000 goats were taken by commercial helicopters up to the end of October.

The figures for the past seven years for goat destruction totalled an amazing 91,000, and Mr J. C. Aspinall of Wanaka said the figure justified the committee's policy in pressing the Government for more finance for goat control.

More emphasis on goat control within Mount Aspiring National Park was the objective for the hunting programme, Mr Martin said.

In reference to the Greenstone-Caples valleys (Lake Wakatipu) Mr Martin said one portable aluminium bivvy had been flown into Fraser Creek (Caple) to direct a few permit-holders into that area for a more complete coverage.

A further three bivvies were still required for key positions.

There had been some illegal helicopter operations in the Caples, Mr Martin said.

Forest Service

Sir, — I am very perturbed in the way that the taxpayer's money is being spent, or I should say wasted by the Forest Service on Stewart Island.

I have heard that three visiting officials were flown by helicopter to the trial poisoning area around Chew Tobacco Bay on Stewart Island. As these officials required lunch, the Forest Service saw fit to send their launch all the way from Halfmoon Bay to Chew Tobacco Bay, approximately one and a half hour's sailing time, so that they could provide the lunch required for these people, who then flew back in the helicopter, and the launch returned as well. Much slower of course.

With all the cutbacks in spending by the Government, in fields like health and education, not to mention the layoffs by Air New Zealand, how can the Forest Service justify this expense?

Irate Keen Island Stalker

Mataura

26/11/80

[Asked to comment, Mr K. W. Prior, Southland conservator of forests, said: "Irate Keen Island Stalker" is quite wrong in his assumptions and what he says he has heard. The facts were the party was taken to the job by helicopter and brought back by boat later in the day when they had finished what they had to do. If they had come back by helicopter, it would have been standing by all the time at a considerable cost, and the boat was the cheaper option. The Forest Service runs its operation as economically as possible, and any other questions of this nature should be discussed with me at my office."]

New Killing Facilities For Deer in Southland

Southland should be equipped with suitable facilities in time for stricter regulations on the slaughter of farm deer next April.

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has allowed farmers to shoot deer on their property, in the same way that deer are culled in the wild. The venison is then inspected at the game packing plants.

The Ministry had realized it would be uneconomic for companies to build slaughtering premises while stock numbers were low.

However, that dispensation is nearly over. From March 31, the deer will have to be slaughtered at premises where both ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections can be undertaken.

Southern Lakes Game Foods Ltd, a subsidiary of Dunedin-based Wilson-Neill Ltd, is intending to add this facility to its venison packing plant at Mossburn before the new regulation comes into effect.

The game meats manager of the export division of Wilson Neill, Mr John Scandrett, said yesterday he hoped slaughter-

ing would start in March. No application had yet been made to the Ministry, but it was expected the building would be ready in February.

He described the slaughtering as "straight-forward." A chain system would be used.

Mr Scandrett said it was expected the Mossburn plant would be able to handle all the farmed deer available for slaughter in Southland in the near future.

No deer numbers are available, but it is thought that of the 160,000-odd in the country, some 15,000 to 20,000 may be on Southland farms.

Last year the Supreme Court of the European Economic Community agreed to classify slaughtered venison as game — that is, the same as hunted venison.

Important Decision

That was an important decision for New Zealand — believed to be the only country in the

world which farms deer in large numbers for venison — because the import tariff was set at only 5 per cent.

If the venison had not been designated as game the tariff could be as high as 40 per cent, which would mean a much lower return to the producer.

The decision encouraged the development of commercial deer farming for venison here. Mr Scandrett emphasized the continuing importance of the West German market, which takes more than 80 per cent of this country's venison exports.

Having the animals inspected before slaughter would mean the meat could be exported to Australia and some parts of the United States because it would now pass their hygiene standards.

However, of a preliminary shipment of venison which had been inspected before slaughter, the Australians had only wanted 56 per cent.

Mr Scandrett said the important thing about the West German market was that it accepted all the venison. There was also plenty of scope for further exports there.

In the peak years of 1975, 1976 and 1977, NZ exported a total of 4000 tonnes packed weight of venison.

In the year ended in July, just under 1000 tonnes were exported. Production had declined mainly because deer had been trapped and not shot.

"Most farmers think that once we get killing facilities, then hundreds of new markets will be opened. That is not the case," Mr Scandrett said.

Wider export opportunities would not be created immediately, he said. It would be a case of developing both the product and the markets.

"Producers must not underestimate the importance of the West German market," he said.



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Die-back Worse In Some Areas 4/12/80

Changes in the past three years in the complex problem of the die-back in the coastal rata-kamahi forest at Stewart Island were noted this week by members of the Wild Animals Advisory Committee who had also studied the situation in 1977.

Mr J. C. Aspinall, of Wanaka, the Otago Federated Farmers representative, said the south-east region was in worse condition than on the last visit. Fuschia trees which were then struggling to survive were now dead, and there was no regeneration on the forest floor.

Some recovery was seen in the enclosures set up by the Forest Service for research purposes, and Mr Aspinall pointed out the vicious circle — that deer were ruining the environment, which, in turn, destroyed the habitat and food for birds.

Although 1080 poison could harm some birdlife, their existence in that deteriorating bush was also limited.

The reasons for the die-back are still a bit confused, but the primary cause is attributed to salt burn, occurring during easterly onshore storms.

However, browsing mammals in the area in large numbers play an important role by eating out under-storey and seedlings, which further opens up the forest and stops the regeneration of undergrowth to provide necessary canopy for the future.

More Obvious

In the Yankee river area, north-west of Halfmoon Bay, where die-back occurred at least 20 years ago, earlier than in the south-eastern region, the pattern is more obvious as regeneration of sorts is developing as deer numbers are reduced.

This area has been the subject of commercial helicopter operations and recreational hunters because of its closer proximity to the mainland, making it more economical for commercial operators.

In this area, dead trees have fallen, so do not present such a disastrous effect as in the south, and the impression from the sea is of lush greenness, which, to the inexperienced eye, would appear to be healthy.

Mr M. Cuddihy, a Forest Service forester, pointed out that where the coastal forest had died, water fern had sprung up along a 14km stretch and had grown to about two metres high and as far as 66 metres inland.

It was unpalatable to deer and caused a tough barrier for rata or kamahi seedlings to penetrate.

Any way of destroying that barrier was not, at present, apparent.

In other areas, including the south-east, coarse grasses, also unpalatable to deer had had the same effect, inhibiting rata-kamahi regeneration.

Exposure

Podocarps, such as rimu and miro, are regenerating as the deer are reduced, but still suffer from exposure caused by the die-back of their rata-kamahi protective coastal belt.

Recovery will be a long-term process, and, as the chairman, Mr Keith Prior, pointed out, the forest will never reach the pristine state it was in before the advent of deer and opossums, and people would have to accept a modification.

In the north-western sector, regeneration had mostly been shade-tolerant, sub-canopy and under-storey species because the podocarp canopy was largely intact, Mr Cuddihy said.

Black sooty mould, similar to manuka blight, which attacks rata, and scale insect also on rata, were not as great a contributor to the damage cycle as at first thought.

Mr Aspinall was delighted to see regeneration on the forest floor up to a meter high in the Big Bungaree Beach area, including miro, rimu, kamahi, rata and coprosma.

Deer signs there were not fresh, as in the south-east, and the signs of browsing were not low down.

In comparison, regeneration over the past three years in the Chew Tobacco region was only about 5 cm.

Kill return figures and permits issued, submitted for Stewart Island between 1977 and 1980, by Mr Ron Tindal, officer-in-charge at the island, indicated that this year 668 permits were issued, resulting in 410 white-tailed deer being killed, nine red deer and 2621 opossums.

This compared with 1976-77, when 261 permits accounted for 346 white-tailed deer, 15 red deer and 3322 opossums.

The trial experiment to be undertaken, starting in February, will involve the use of gin traps for opossums. All trapped animals will be autopsied at trap sites for standard data.

Tissues from rats and cats captured will be collected for parasite studies.

Several comprehensive surveys have been undertaken by the protection forestry division of the Forest Research Institute in the past few years into the die-back problem, which involved an integrated study last year of the vegetation and effects of white-tailed deer and opossums.

The deer were introduced to the island in 1905 and have subsequently spread throughout the area, showing a marked preference for the coastal forests.

They reach high densities in those coastal areas where

they have been established for several decades.

Helicopter Deer Industry Hit 13/12/80

The helicopter deer culling and recovery industry in Fiordland is in serious trouble. A prominent industry spokesman last night described the situation as "the survival of the fittest."

The managing director of Alpine Helicopters Ltd, Mr T. W. Wallis, of Wanaka, said increasing operating costs, coupled with lower deer prices, were making the business "very marginal" for many operators.

It is known that some smaller operators have been forced out of business this year.

There has been a collapse in live deer prices in the past six months. A recovered hind, which would have brought about \$1500 before then, is now selling for only \$500.

Mr Wallis said the downturn could be attributed to high prices last year — for two reasons.

He claimed the Inland Revenue Department had introduced an "unrealistic" standard value, based on the previous inflated prices. The result had been a halt to investment in the industry.

More Licences

At the same time, the Minister of Lands, Mr V. S. Young, had doubled the number of helicopter licences issued.

Mr Wallis described that as "the major contributor to complications that the helicopter industry is facing today."

"In short," he said, "there are far too many helicopters operating for the number of deer available, at present market prices."

The result was a competitive industry which was, at the moment, "the survival of the fittest."

In the 20 years he had been involved with the industry, it had always been volatile.

"I've lived with a rapidly-moving industry and a rapidly-diminishing resource," Mr Wallis said.

Nobody could predict what the market would do in the future. Only time would tell whether the position improved or worsened.

Rising Costs

Increasing operating costs are compounding the problems. Mr Wallis claimed the cost of

fuel had trebled in the past 18 months, insurance rates and parts had doubled, and helicopter prices and risen dramatically.

Economics had determined a marked shift in the emphasis of the helicopter operations.

"If you're a sheep farmer, all you've got to do is sell wool and meat. If you don't like your returns you can change to pigs or cattle, or whatever."

"If you're a helicopter operator you can either shoot and sell, or catch and sell," he said.

"Economics decide what you do."

"Last year we were catching 90 per cent and shooting 10 per cent, and now we are shooting 95 per cent and catching 5 per cent," Mr Wallis said.

With prices at a lower level, it was quicker to shoot than to catch, and, therefore, more economical.

There is likely to be a switch back to live deer recovery if or when the prices improve.

"The market as it is today is hardly a business. I can't tell what it will be like in five years," Mr Wallis said.

Favourable Tb Figure 4/12/80

In his report to the Wild Animals Advisory Committee at Stewart Island this week, Mr A. R. Diack of Dunedin, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries representative, said 45 herds were under Tb movement control in the Dunedin region.

This roughly corresponded with the Southland Conservancy, he said.

Twenty-three of those herds had had one clear test, while 22 had had at least one test, with one or more reactors at the last test.

The figure compared favourably with the 69 herds under movement control on August 1 last year.

"We actually cleared 44 herds over that 15-month period but found another 20 infected herds," he said.

From the 69 original and 20 new herds under movement control, the department found and examined only 150 cattle, with many of those being single animals from quite large herds.

More than 80 per cent of the animals which had received post-mortems were infected with bovine tuberculosis, Mr Diack said.

Last testing year, about 120,000 cattle were subjected to tests in the region.

"There are still 'pockets' of infected herds to be found in East Otago, Lawrence-Tuapeka mouth and Omarama."

Despite surveys there was no hard evidence that feral animals had been involved in those areas, he said.

More than 1000 deer had been Tb tested in the region with three reactors to the bovine Tb test, but the disease was not confirmed at the post-mortem examinations.

Unlike Canterbury, Tb deer

did not appear to be a problem in the Dunedin region.

At present, deer did not seem to present a hazard to cattle in respect of Tb infection, Mr Diack said.

The animal and health research divisions had conducted a survey throughout New Zealand to gain information about the number of deer farmers in the conservancy and other related data.

The information revealed many herds of deer were not known to the Forest Service and produced a factual figure of the number of deer being farmed.

Wapiti Idea 'Could Be Sound' 7/1/81

Attempts should be made to save Fiordland's wapiti for sportsmen, according to a well-known deerstalker from the Gore area, Mr Jack McKenzie.

Mr McKenzie, a former Fiordland National Park Board member, said the wapiti's value to the sportsman was mainly because of the Fiordland backdrop, and he is determined to see the wapiti retained as a resource for future generations in Fiordland or elsewhere.

In reaction to the proposal of the Minister of Lands and For-

ests, Mr V. S. Young, for a joint venture between the Government, wild animal recovery operators and deer farmers for the capture and farming of wapiti, Mr McKenzie said he thought it could be a sound idea.

Mr Young said that the Government was interested in preserving a wapiti population outside Fiordland National Park and that the captured herd would be established somewhere in the Southland-Otago region, to breed for possible release elsewhere.

Mr McKenzie said the only advantage in establishing a herd outside the park would be to remove the wapiti from the jurisdiction of the National Parks Act, which states "Introduced flora and fauna will be as far as possible exterminated."

Under Pressure

He said the Government was under pressure to exterminate the wapiti from conservationists, who believed the wapiti were competing for food with the takahe population.

Mr McKenzie said deerstal-

kers would probably be suspicious of the Government's proposal, as the Government could hand over any captured wapiti to deer farmers, instead of holding them for later release for hunting.

Any deer recovery operators who participated in the scheme would need to keep a lot of the deer themselves, as the deer recovery industry was declining, he said.

However, he said, if the Government would name an area for the relocation of the wapiti outside Fiordland National Park, people would probably be less suspicious.

Fiordland National Park's wapiti population is located west of Lake Te Anau, in an area of about 900 square miles, stretching from Caswell Sound in the south up to Sutherland Sound, and from Middle Fiord in the east to Worsley valley in the west. The wapiti are hemmed in geographically by the sea, the lake and the mountains.

Mr McKenzie said a herd established outside the park would be easier to manage, but would have to be fenced in.

Big Drop in Deer Velvet Price 13/1/81

CROMWELL

Deer velvet prices have plummeted more than 100 per cent in the past year, and many buyers have dropped out of the industry.

The price drop has been caused by more velvet being available on the world markets, even though the quality and quantity of the New Zealand product has improved.

The field representative of the Central Exporting Company, of Cromwell, Mr John Smith, whose company is one of the main exporters of velvet, said yesterday deer farmers would have to grow the type of velvet sought by world customers.

"We have seen a lot of amateur buyers come into the industry, the majority of whom have had their fingers burnt through not knowing what they were doing," Mr Smith said.

"But these buyers have been whittled out of the industry rather quickly over the past 12 months," he said.

"Deer farming is a new thing to New Zealand, and no one has got around to culling out the poorer quality velvet-producing animals."

"I think with the amount of velvet that is around, and the price dropping from \$260 to only \$110 per kg this year, we are going to have to breed from higher quality velvet-producing animals and cull out the poorer ones," Mr Smith said.

Deer farmers would need to see that an efficient venison industry was set up so that ani-

mals that had been culled could be profitably sold.

"Only in this way can deer farmers ensure that all facets of their industry can absorb the ups and downs of world markets," he said.

If deer farmers wanted to stay in the velvet industry, they would need to be prepared to grow the type and size of velvet sought by world customers.

Because of strict health regulations in New Zealand, velvet industries have had to go to the deer farms for their velvet supplies.

But that had not created problems because there were so many deer farms and deer, which made the wild deer velvet a minor market.

The New Zealand industry is small by world standards, and since Korea likes the bigger velvet, buyers had to take what was on the market in previous years. But this year they had been able to be more selective, Mr Smith said.

Two Korean businessmen have spent the past six weeks in Cromwell selecting and processing some of the 700kg of velvet that they have brought from the Central Exporting Company, which is owned by Mr Ron Ussher, of Cromwell.

They were the Choyeng Nulsan Company's importer, Mr A. Kwon, and principle buyer and

velvet processor, Mr H. Suh, of Seoul, Korea.

"The velvet we have selected from Cromwell, though second grade, is still very good quality, and is of a type that we Koreans like," Mr Kwon said.

Both Koreans had high praise for the velvet compared with the previous year's quality and quantity. Mr Suh processed the velvet he had selected himself.

"Last year, we bought 450kg of velvet from New Zealand industries, and this year we have taken 700kg and we hope that it will be even better next year," Mr Kwon said.

"This year there is more velvet on the New Zealand market," Mr Suh said. "The velvet has grown longer, and is of better quality. That is why we have taken more of it."

The velvet is processed through a drying procedure before it is exported. This reduces its weight by 75 per cent and cuts freight costs.

The velvet is used in Korea mainly for medicinal purposes. It is mixed with other medicines and about 30 different herbs before it is taken as a health restorer. Mainly older men use the product. It is used only in spring, autumn and winter.

"Velvet is a very expensive medication for both the customer and for the buyers to import," Mr Kwon said.

Wrightson NMA 10/1/81

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Approx \$90,000 has recently been spent mainly by way of fencing, buildings and in providing a formed ROW access through Springvale Station.

The property is surrounded by a wilderness area and is the main crossroads for migrating and travelling deer herds. It enjoys access to a large tract of the Rangitikei River which has some of the finest river fishing in New Zealand.

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The Southland Times, Tuesday, January 13, 1981. 3



Checking some deer velvet at Cromwell are from left, the field representative of the Central Exporting Company, Mr John Smith, office manager, Mr R. Massey, the Choyeng Nulsan Company's importer, Mr A. Kwon, and its principal buyer and velvet processor, Mr H. Suh.

Two Men Killed In Helicopter Crash

(PA) 1/81 NAPIER
Two men were killed and another seriously injured when a Hughes 500 helicopter cartwheeled into a ravine in bush country near Taupo on Wednesday night.

They were Mr John Baker, of Tarawera, and Mr Bennett Hutchings, of Ruatahuna, near Whakatane, both in their mid-20s.

Their bodies were lifted out by helicopter yesterday morning from the crash site, about five kilometres east of the Tarawera tavern, on the Napier-Taupo road.

The pilot of the Hughes helicopter, Mr Joe Collins, aged 30, of Opoitiki, is recovering from

his injuries in Taupo Hospital. A hospital spokesman said last night he was "out of danger."

Mr Collins lay in a crashed machine all night until he was lifted out in a stretcher by a police rescue team about an hour after the wreckage was sighted at 6am yesterday.

The alarm was raised about 9 o'clock on Wednesday night, when the helicopter failed to return from a hunting trip.

Tarawera tavern publican Mr Tony Batchelar said the helicopter went down in high bush country, with mist shrouding the hills.

Helicopters began combing the hills by moonlight as soon as the weather cleared about 1am.

The wreckage was eventually found near the junction of the Mokomokonui river and the Matakuhia stream.

An inspector of air accidents visited the crash site yesterday.

Deer Control Trials 3/2/81

The 1080 poison trial will go ahead on Stewart Island later this month, and a trial involving increased hunting pressure will also be undertaken.

The senior ranger with the New Zealand Forest Service's Southland conservancy, Mr Kerry Mawhinney, said the 1080 trial would begin on February 15.

At the same time two blocks at the northern end of Port Adventure adjacent to the poison area would be opened for a hunting trial, he said.

"The recreational hunters are keen for us to stop poison trials so they can control the animals by hunting," he said.

"But so far, hunting alone hasn't achieved a satisfactory measure of control."

However, in two blocks recreational hunting will be intensified and this trial will run concurrently with the poison trial. The same monitoring and animal-vegetation comparisons will also be carried out.

The block system on the island and in other areas limited the number of rifles in each block.

Hunters' Wish

This system had been operated largely because of the wishes of hunters, many of whom paid a lot of money to come to areas like Stewart Island.

When it was suggested the block system be abolished in the Blue Mountains there was strong opposition, and it was retained.

However, in the two blocks opened on Stewart Island anyone who wants to hunt there will be able to provided they obtain a permit in the usual way.

"Naturally there will be a need for hunters to exercise great care when identifying their target," Mr Mawhinney said.

No other blocks on the island would be opened in this way at present.

Hunters would be advised of the open blocks when applying for permits and recreational hunting groups would also be told of their availability.

Groups such as the New Zealand Deer Stalkers' Association had advocated increased hunting pressure rather than poisoning as a measure of controlling deer.

Up to Hunters

The hunting trial "will be pretty much over to the hunters to show they can apply the type of pressure that will bring about a satisfactory animal-vegetation relationship," Mr Mawhinney said.

"There are few areas in the top two thirds of the island that have what we regard as a healthy relationship."

He could not comment on the outcome of the hunting trial, just as the outcome of the poison trial could not really be predicted.

The publicity officer for the Southland branch of the Deerstalkers' Association, Mr W. A. Bell, said he was happy to see this sort of effort (the hunting trial) resorted to.

An attempt would be made to get the maximum number of hunters over in order to reduce the number of animals to a tolerable level.

However, the whitetail deer was a shy animal, and although increased hunting pressure would mean more animals shot, many would still be able to escape.

Also, Mr Bell said, many hunters when going to the island did not concentrate on shooting the whole time they were there, but carried out other activities such as fishing.

Opening the blocks would eliminate the problem of parties booking them out and not using them but preventing others from legal access. But there was also a certain element of danger with various parties not knowing where each other was, he said.

Use of 1080 Poison

Sir, — I am pleased to read that the Stewart Islanders are seeing sense at last and trying to stop 1080 poisoning. I think that the Stewart Island people should have a say in what they want on their island. I hear that the Forest Service has done a pellet count on the trial area, but, not a fair one as the count was done around the coast. In my opinion, it should have been done from Ocean Beach inland to Mt Anglem.

There is too much propaganda and too many short-sighted people with too much power who don't listen to what the people really want.

I don't hear the Big Game Hunters Association voicing their disapproval of 1080.

Keen Island Stalker

Mataura

Increase In Illegal Deer Hunting 3/2/81

A significant increase in the number of helicopters illegally hunting deer in Southland has been noticed.

Sightings have been reported to the New Zealand Forest Service by staff, landowners and hunters, senior ranger Mr Kerry Mawhinney said yesterday.

The areas where they had been seen included private land, State forest and Crown land.

Prosecutions were likely to follow in many cases, he said.

The illegal hunting was probably due to increased costs, Mr Mawhinney said. Operators were trying to keep up their tails.

A secondary reason could be a downturn in the number of "easy" deer because of the intensity of hunting, and operators were taking risks and going where they were not supposed to, he said.

Public Notices



POISON NOTICE

NOTICE is given that poison (in the form of 1080 gel) will be laid on Stewart Island in an area up to 1km from the coastline from the North Arm of Port Adventure (Heron river) to the South end of Ocean Beach.

The work will commence on February 15, 1981. The area will be closed to hunting until July 1, 1981.

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Deer Killing Proposals

Facilities to slaughter deer alongside a venison processing factory at Mossburn, may be built soon.

The factory is owned by Southern Lakes Game Foods Ltd, but the venture is awaiting approval from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

If built, the facilities are likely to be the first in the South Island and possibly the first in New Zealand.

Mr J. D. Scandrett, the game meats manager for Wilson Neil Ltd, in Dunedin, which has shares in the company at Mossburn, said he is confident that should approval be granted, the plant should be operational by April.

He declined to reveal the cost of the venture or the slaughtering capabilities of the plant at this stage.

Animals slaughtered on the premises will retain the game classification for export.

Deer velvet prices have dropped significantly over the past few months and many farmers are being forced to examine the quality of their stock. Mr Scandrett said that some farmers may have to cull out the poorer quality velvet-producing animals and in these cases slaughtering facilities for venison would be in demand.

The drop in prices has been caused by more velvet being available on the world market, even though the quality and quantity of the New Zealand product has improved. Countries like China, Russia and Alaska are now trading with Korea, New Zealand's best market.

Until late 1979 Russia did not have legal entry into South Korea.

This year A grade velvet has sold for about \$100 a kg, some 50 percent below the price last year.

However, Mr Scandrett believes the price will soon stabilise at about \$115 a kg for class A (velvet from mature stags.)

Between 80 and 85 percent of New Zealand's velvet is sold to Korea. The rest goes to Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore.

A team from Korea has just left Otago after spending time processing velvet at the Wilson Neil factory at Luggate. Mr Scandrett said he believes the Koreans should process the product themselves. The finer details of this stage determine the acceptability of the product on the market.

The velvet is used in Korea mainly for medicinal purposes. It is mixed with other medicines and numerous herbs before being taken as a health restorer.

Minister in Favour Of Limited 1080 Use ^{10/2/81}

If the 1080 poisoning programme on Stewart Island was successful and animal numbers reduced, it was hoped the level could then be maintained by hunting alone, the Minister of Lands, Mr V. S. Young, said in Invercargill yesterday.

The values of the island were such that some sort of animal controls had to be exercised, he said.

Mr Young is in Southland on tour with the Nature Conservation Council.

Answering claims by the New Zealand Deer Stalkers' Association that there were no soil or water values at stake, and no threat to birdlife, he said these could not be substantiated.

The forest on Stewart Island was just as vulnerable to the ravages of animals as any other.

Mr Young said he had tramped the northern half of the island within the last few years, and also visited the Lords river area.

"Add to this evidence presented to me by the Lands and Survey Department and the Forest Service, and there is no doubt the coastal forest, in particular, is being damaged by a combination of deer and opossums. As well, there are the salt winds as a regular hazard."

Unfounded

Mr Young said that claims by the Deerstalkers' Association that damage was a result of cyclic weather conditions were also unfounded.

There were adjacent islands where there were no browsing animals and which had been subjected to the same weather conditions, but were not suffering the same damage as the Stewart Island coastal forest.

Mr Young said efforts had been made by the Forest Service for a number of years to encourage a greater intensity of sportsmen hunting in the area, but this had been ineffective in controlling deer numbers.

As well, commercial hunting had also been unsuccessful, he said.

"What we want is a well-organized 1080 programme, of limited duration, so we can compare the results of control by poison with those of control by hunting alone."

The values of Stewart Island are such, particularly with its flora and fauna, that we can't afford the forest to deteriorate.

Coastal Areas

"At present the threat to the forests is in the coastal areas, and it is to there on the eastern side that the poison programme will be limited."

Mr Young said if the programme was successful, and animal numbers were reduced, it was hoped the level of control could then be maintained by hunting alone.

We only revert to poison in

cases of absolute necessity, and this is the situation on Stewart Island."

Mr Young said 1080 poison was the only effective poison that could be used against both deer and opossums.

Every effort would be made to avoid the poisoning of non-target species.

Referring to the question of wapiti relocation, Mr Young said a decision should be made by mid-March.

Through its select committees, Parliament had reached the conclusion that it was important for the management of Fiordland National Park, and for the protection of the takahe habitat, that the wapiti herd be relocated.

In fact if this was done it would ensure a purebred herd of wapiti was maintained under the status quo.

The only hope of achieving all these factors was to relocate the herd outside the park, and seek an alternative area where it could be established, he said.

Mr Young said about 10 proposals on this had been received from the public.

He had no idea yet as to where the herd would go, but the Lands and Survey Department and the Forest Service had been instructed to make recommendations to him.

It was likely whatever proposal, if any, was accepted the operation would be costly, and would be undertaken over several years.

eral years.

Mr Young said he could not say whether the balloting for wapiti blocks would continue during this period.

This had yet to be determined, and would require co-operation between the new parks and reserve board and the Government.

During his stay here Mr Young will, along with the Nature Conservation Council, visit Lake Manapouri and look at the power scheme and its associated developments within a national park and visit the Catlins Forest Park and the South-East Otago reserve before touring the Tiwai aluminium smelter tomorrow.

Submission Made On Wapiti ^{10/2/81}

The New Zealand Deer Stalkers' Association has prepared a submission to the Minister of Lands, Mr Young, on what it believes should be done with Fiordland's wapiti herd.

But the association's national vice-president, Mr John C. Bamford, was reluctant after the meeting in Wellington on Friday to release any specific details of what had been proposed to Mr Young.

He did, however, say his association had not changed its position in regard to the wapiti herd's relocation. "The association is still very strongly of the opinion that the wapiti should stay in Fiordland because there is no other area into which they could go," Mr Bamford said.

He emphasized that the association regarded an alternative location as "suitable" only if it was free of red deer and able to be used and designated as a recreational hunting area.

"It's stupid to take an animal out of an area when you have no other place to put it," he said. "It's the association's fear that if it was not involved in the proposal then it would lose any control over the wapiti herd."

A two-week extension had been granted by the Minister for the final date for proposals to be in. Mr Bamford believed several interested deer-recovery groups and deer farmers, without means of recovery, would

also have submitted proposals. He expected Mr Young would make his decision from these groups' ideas.

"The Minister has made it quite clear that any wapiti left after a proposal has been drawn up and acted on will be dealt with under the new Act regarding introduced flora and fauna," Mr Bamford said. "Really, it says the herd is to be exterminated."

He said the association was also looking at a joint proposal with a farming operation and professional deer-catching operators because wapiti had a particularly high mortality rate when taken from the wild. He hoped people from the Invermay research station would also be involved.

"We're not giving up the fight," he said. "If the animals have to be taken out to form a breeding herd then the association wants it to be the best possible herd."

"We hope the animals would be held in some situation pending redistribution, rather than relocation," Mr Bamford said. This was because the association hoped the breeding herd would some day be returned to Fiordland.

"Any animals which were left after a capture operation would be just treated under the new Act as the same as red deer." He did not believe any operation could fully exterminate the entire wild herd, but believed it would be greatly reduced.

He thought this year would be the last trophy shoot balloted for and said the association would also be asking the Minister if the wapiti area in Fiordland could be exempted from the new Act.

Mr Bamford said the working of a proposal would also be difficult for Mr Young to formulate because he believed each group involved in a recovery and holding operation would receive wapiti as their payment instead of money.

He thought that from every six animals who survived the capture, four might go to the catcher, one to the Government and one to the breeding herd.

"It's very difficult to guess how it would be worked," he said. A Government-run capture operation in the Tarawera Ranges had worked on a one for one basis.

Attacked By 1/81 Keas

TE ANAU

An attack by keas was blamed for a trampler losing his way over the Dore Pass track, in Fiordland National Park, this week.

A Californian, Mr John Griffiths, was tramping over the pass track to Glade House on Wednesday to begin the Milford Track walk. When he failed to arrive by midday Thursday search action was initiated. However, he walked out of the bush unaided.

Mr Griffiths told police yesterday that when he reached the top of the pass several keas attacked him, flying around him and surrounding him when he sat down.

To avoid them, he made

his way down a ridge, only to find he was bluffed in.

He spent the night in the bush and on Thursday made his way back up to the pass and continued on to Glade House, where he arrived at 3.45pm.

The Fiordland National Park chief ranger, Mr W. E. Sander, said last night that he felt sure Mr Griffiths was misinterpreting the antics of the keas, well-known for their inquisitive natures.

"I have never heard of anybody being attacked by keas," he said.

Lucky Escape ^{1/81}

TE ANAU

Two occupants of a Hughes 300 helicopter miraculously escaped injury when their helicopter crashed on a deer recovery operation in rugged Fiordland on Saturday.

After the helicopter apparently lost power pilot Kim Hollows fought to keep it under control long enough to have the shooter, Tim Stent, jump on to the steep alpine slope.

He then lost control and it crashed down the steep slope, coming to rest above the bush-line.

Mr Hollows got out of the machine shaken but otherwise unhurt.

The Alpine Helicopters machine left Te Anau at 10.30am on Saturday when a deer recovery mission en route for the company's vessel, Ranganui, moored in Precipice Cove near Doubtful Sound.

The machine apparently lost power and crashed about 11.15am but was not reported overdue until 6pm.

Within a short time, another Alpine Helicopters machine picked up an emergency locator beacon between the Wilmot and Macpherson passes.

By 6.30pm, the crashed helicopter was located in a head basin near the Macpherson pass. The two Te Anau men were picked up and brought back to the resort.

Two helicopters and a fixed-wing aircraft from Fiordland Aero Club were involved in the search.

The Rescue Co-ordination centre in Christchurch was notified but was not required to take up the search.

Yesterday morning, another helicopter was used to lift the severely damaged machine out of the mountainous area. It will be inspected by an inspector of air accidents this week.



DEER FOR SALE

Limited Number of Adult Red Deer Hinds. Percentage with Fawns at foot.

Contact:

B. IRVING

Phone 77-760 Invercargill OR

Contact:

A. BRADLEY

Phone: 416 Te Anau

Economics Grounding Deer Operators

Two helicopter deer recovery operations in Fiordland have folded and some other operators are known to be looking closely at the economic viability of continuing.

Takahe Helicopters Ltd and P. J. and N. D. Egerton pulled out last month in a deer recovery industry slump that is affecting the whole country.

Another Southland-based company, Southland Helicopters Ltd, folded last year.

The operators have had poor cash-flows since the market for live deer compressed in March and April last year. With a general tightening in the economy, some creditors have withdrawn their investments.

Mr D. G. Woodford, of Mossburn, confirmed last night that Takahe Helicopters Ltd was in the process of winding up.

The company had been in the deer recovery business for eight years, but had only operated in Fiordland since last September.

Mr Woodford said high insurance premiums finally drove the company under. The cost of insuring its Hughes 500C helicopter was \$46,000 a year.

"You've got to get a lot of deer to pay for that," he said.

"Meddling"

Mr P. J. Egerton, of Lora Gorge, blamed "meddling" by government departments as a major reason operators like himself were forced out.

Operators had warned the NZ Forest Service two years ago of the consequences of indiscriminately handing out helicopter licences.

However, an extra 50 licences had been issued, and that had set off a troubled sequence for the industry.

Inexperienced pilots started operating and there were more accidents. The result was higher insurance premiums and, therefore, greater costs for the operators.

The Inland Revenue Department's setting of a high standard value on deer had placed an additional strain on the industry.

"The mere fact that they decreased it some months later was an admission that they had been wrong, but by then, it was far too late," he said.

Park Board

Mr Egerton also criticized the Fiordland National Park Board for its continual practice of threatening to suspend helicopter operations because of a lack of performance or supply of information.

"Under no circumstances do they do the same thing to other

concessionaires in the park, like tourist operators," he said.

"Had greater notice been taken of helicopter operators themselves by the park board locally, and the Forest Service and Inland Revenue Department nationally, then I'm quite sure we would have a stronger and more viable industry than what we have."

Mr Egerton said he was pleased the deer farming industry appreciated the importance of having quality animals for a successful venture.

The recovery industry's problem is a dual one. Deer prices have plummeted from the boom in 1979, and helicopter operating costs have continued to soar.

A basic Hughes 500D helicopter costs \$335,000 and a 300 model \$118,000. Extras, such as \$15,000 for a top quality radio, can add greatly to the price.

High Premiums

An operator may have to pay up to 50 per cent of the helicopter price each year to meet loan repayments and interest rates and insurance premiums, which range between 15 and 30 per cent.

Operators list insurance costs as the second biggest concern — behind fuel only. The cost of fuel, which has more than trebled in the last 18 months, accounts for a large part of the \$250 an hour Hughes 500D operating cost.

Maintenance is a major expense, with helicopters being hard on parts. The United States manufacturers of Hughes announced a 40 per cent increase in parts on January 1.

Some say the total costs involved with one helicopter are greater than \$200,000 a year.

The average live deer price for May, 1979, was \$750, consisting of \$950 for hinds and \$450 for stags. In January last year, the overall average had shot up to \$1100, with hinds bringing \$2100 and stags \$500.

However, the overall average was down to \$380 by August. Hinds were worth an average \$570 and stags \$310.

Marked Shift

The economics of the industry determined a marked shift in helicopter operations from catching to shooting. From September to December in 1979, 73 per cent of the deer recovered from Fiordland were captured. That figure had

dropped to 6 per cent in the corresponding period last year.

It is much quicker and cheaper, generally, to shoot rather than capture deer.

In September, 1979, 124 of the 252 deer recovered were captured. The average recovery rate an animal was 1hr 20min.

In September last year, only eight of the 280 deer recovered were captured. The average recovery rate an animal was 38min.

But there is also a poor return on venison. Its price dropped by 60c a kg to \$2.50 a kg for the operator a fortnight ago.

There is traditionally a lower demand for venison at this time of the year in the major market, West Germany, where the domestic hunting season is on.

Sudden Swing

The over-supply situation was exacerbated in the spring with the sudden swing to shooting deer in an attempt to improve the operators' cash-flow.

Another reason for the lower return is a change in the exchange rate between the currencies of the two countries.

If an operator earns \$150 for the venison from one carcass, he must recover an average of nearly two an hour to cover his operating costs alone.

The days of tallies of 220 a day for one helicopter are long gone, and now 20 carcasses a day would be regarded as most successful.

The managing director of Alpine Helicopters Ltd, Mr T. W. Wallis, said his company had not trimmed its operations at Te Anau. Alpine owns five of the 13 helicopters licensed to operate in Fiordland.

Asked what it would take to

make the industry operate profitably again, he replied: "Either the prices for the products — venison or live deer — must double, or the production of a helicopter must double or triple."

Fewer Helicopters

"If it is the latter, it can only happen with fewer helicopters," Mr Wallis said.

The operations manager of Thompson Bros Ltd, Mr N. Thompson, said his company intended to maintain its three helicopters. Two work in Fiordland and a third covers NZ Forest Service areas.

The other operators in Fiordland each have one helicopter, and it is considered likely some will withdraw unless there is a marked increase in the industry's fortunes.

The Fiordland National Park Board decided at its last meeting to invite suggestions from current operators on the block system, and a meeting will be held between the two groups in Te Anau on March 2.

The board has to decide what to do with the blocks, as they were rearranged last August, now that there are two fewer helicopters in the park.

Wapiti Decision Next Month

The Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr V. S. Young, will consider proposals for a joint wapiti farming venture between the Government and private individuals or organizations in the next few weeks.

Mr Young called for proposals last month.

His press secretary, Mr Gyles Beckford, said yesterday 14 had been received.

Most of them had come from the Te Anau-Manapouri area. Those interested were predominantly deer farmers and some commercial recovery operators. One reasonably large stock and station company had also shown an interest.

Largely, the proposals indicated an interest in the venture and a willingness to set aside land, Mr Beckford said.

The joint venture would be in partnership with the Forest Service and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

The location would almost certainly be in the Southland-Otago region as this was close to where the wapiti were found and also to the Invermay Research Centre.

When considering the proposals Mr Young would bear in mind the recent announcement by the MAF that it would import several blood stock wapiti from Canada in order to introduce fresh and pure blood to the stock.

Opinions have also been received from recreational hunters and conservationists, and these would also be considered.

Mr Beckford said the Minister could make a decision in mid-March.

The final decision as to the location of the wild wapiti would take some time and study. Advice was being sought from the Lands Department and Forest Service as to possible areas where a purebred wapiti herd could be established in the wild outside Fiordland National Park.

Deer Recovery

Sir, — Your report in Wednesday's Times about deer recovery in Fiordland makes interesting reading but fails to pinpoint the reasons that lie behind helicopter operators' problems.

The Fiordland National Park Board is the only authority that has operated a "protection" system for helicopter companies throughout the whole of New Zealand.

During the past 15 years it has decided who shall operate in the park and where.

Never has open competition applied between all the operators. Pilots and shooters with ability and the initiative to successfully recover deer have not been allowed to fully make use of their services even though it is board policy to try to reduce deer numbers using whatever means available.

In fact the board appears to be making a commercial business of deer recovery at the expense of taxpayers.

Never in the history of deer recovery in New Zealand has any other park had

so much strife, simply because of the protection system which inevitably causes widespread "poaching."

During the past three years one company has held up to six shooting blocks and only operated up to three helicopters when it suited them, while other operators have been forced to operate one machine to one block.

This board has a lot to answer for considering they are the only one in New Zealand charging operators up to 5 per cent of their gross earnings for the right to shoot noxious animals. The whole control of hunting in the park should be removed from their control to a body that can apply fair competition and carry out the job of deer control in a manner that has democratic conditions as apply to the rest of the country.

The statement released by the Minister of Lands and Forests recently on joint ventures to farm wapiti was most interesting in illustrating how this board proposes to make more money out of private enterprise.

It sounds as though the small operator may miss out again.

Fair Play

Te Anau

20/2/81

2 The Southland Times, Saturday, February 28, 1981.

Deer Slaughtering Plans Delayed

The addition of deer slaughtering facilities at the Mossburn game packing plant has been delayed.

Southern Lakes Game Foods Ltd, a subsidiary of Wilson Neill Ltd, had hoped the facilities would be ready this month and operating in March.

However, the game meats manager of the export division of Wilson Neill, Mr John Scandrett, of Dunedin, said yesterday the company was still discussing "minor details" of the plan with Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries officials.

Since the deer slaughtering facilities would be the first of their type, some planning problems were to be expected.

Mr Scandrett said the company wanted to ensure the facilities would be adequate for the job they are intended to do. He understood two proposed facilities in the North Island had also been delayed by planning problems.

Alterations to the Mossburn

packing plant would start as soon as the plans were finalized.

The facilities are expected to handle all farm deer available for slaughter in Southland in the near future.

Tighter Regulations

The Ministry had realized it would be uneconomic for companies to build slaughtering facilities while stock numbers were low, and farmers have been allowed to shoot deer on their properties.

However, stricter regulations on the slaughter of farm deer, which are necessitating the provision of these facilities, are due to come into effect on April 1.

But if plans are not approved in time for the facilities to be open by then the Ministry is expected to extend the period of dispensation.

The new regulations will mean farm deer have to be

slaughtered at premises where both ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections can be done.

The stricter hygiene regulations will give New Zealand venison the chance of access to wider markets, including Australia and some parts of the United States.

The West German market, which takes more than 80 per cent of this country's venison exports, is expected to have continuing importance.

However, the disadvantage of dependence on that market has been apparent recently.

Demand traditionally slackens at this time of year, which is at the end of the German domestic hunting season. The position has been worsened for New Zealand producers this year because of the poorer exchange rate for the Deutschmark.

Business News

Helicopters Feel Deer Market Pinch

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cash-flows since the market for live deer contracted in March and April last year. With a general tightening in the economy, some creditors have withdrawn their investments.

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A basic Hughes 500d helicopter costs \$335,000 and a 300 model \$118,000. Extras, such as \$15,000 for a top quality radio, can add greatly to the price.

An operator may have to pay up to 50 percent of the helicopter price each year to meet loan repayments and interest rates, and insurance premiums which range between 15 and 30 percent.

Operators list insurance costs as the second biggest concern — behind fuel. The cost of fuel, which has more than trebled in the last 18 months, accounts for a large part of the \$250 an hour Hughes 500d operating cost.

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The managing-director of Alpine Helicopters Ltd, Mr T. W. Wallis, asked what it would take to make the industry profitable again said: "Either the prices for the products — venison or live deer — must double, or the production per helicopter must double or triple."

"If it is the latter, then it can only happen with fewer helicopters."

Occupants Unhurt In Helicopter Crash

TE ANAU (PA). — Two occupants of a Hughes 300 helicopter escaped injury when the helicopter crashed while on a deer recovery operation in Fiordland on Saturday.

After the helicopter apparently lost power, pilot Kim Hollows fought to keep it under control long enough to have the shooter, Tim Stent, jump on to the steep alpine slope.

He then lost control, and it crashed down the slope, coming to rest above the bushline. Mr Hollows got out of the machine, shaken but otherwise unhurt.

The machine, belonging to Alpine Helicopters, left Te Anau at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday on a deer recovery mission on the way to the company's vessel, the Ranganui.

moored in Precipice Cove near Doubtful Sound.

It apparently lost power and crashed about 11.15 a.m., but was not reported overdue until 6 p.m.

Another Alpine Helicopters machine picked up the sound of an emergency locator beacon between the Wilnot and MacPherson Passes, and by 6.30 p.m. the crashed helicopter was located.

The two men were picked up and taken back to Te Anau.

Yesterday morning another helicopter was used to lift the severely damaged machine out of the mountainous area.

It will be inspected by an inspector of air accidents this week.

Major Deer Farm Passed In

(PA) WELLINGTON

A major deer farm near Taupo was passed in at \$800,000 after poor bidding at auction yesterday.

Private negotiations are now continuing in an effort to sell the 679 hectare Forest Park deer farm, which is the subject of a legal dispute in Wellington.

The owners are the Wellington-based Consolidated Traders Ltd, at present in receivership. The company tried unsuccessfully this week to get a court injunction preventing the receivers, the ANZ Banking group, from selling the farm.

Mr Frank West, real estate manager of the auctioneers, Wrightson NMA in Rotorua, said that bidding at the auction had not been animated. He refused to reveal the reserve price.

However, he said he was under instructions from the receivers to sell the farm, and private negotiations with "a number" of possible buyers were proceeding.

Forest Park deer farm was granted New Zealand's first deer farm licence 11 years ago, on March 13, 1970.



DEER FARMERS

Deer Seminar
Mossburn Hall
Wednesday

25 March 1.30pm

Topics to be discussed include:

- Deer slaughter premises—Proposals and progress.
 - Farmed Deer Carcase processing.
 - Review of 1980/81 Velvet Grading.
 - Recent Developments of Marketing Board Proposal.
 - Report on Queenstown Deer Veterinary Seminar.
 - Discussion on remits to AGM.
- All Deer Farmers or interested people welcome.
Admission \$2.00
Organised jointly by Deer Farmers Assn, and MAF.

13/3/81

8448

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Aircraft Hangar and Maintenance Base, property of Mountain Helicopters Limited, in receivership, on prime site at Taupo Airport with buildings situated on 13,000 square feet of leasehold land.

Facilities include well-appointed offices, kitchen, toilet/washroom, storerooms, workshops.

Large concrete apron in front of hangar. Re-fuelling installation and underground tanks for jet A1 and Avgas on site.

Ideal as a base for maintenance or for an aviation company.

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Regional News

Pure Wapiti Importation

QUEENSTOWN (Special).—For the first time in 76 years North American Wapiti will be imported to New Zealand. Criffell Game Park Ltd., owned by Mr Tim Wallis, of Wanaka, will be importing 21 pure Canadian Wapiti in conjunction with Dunedin-based Wilson Neill (Export) Ltd.

The deer, 14 nine-month-old calves, and seven rising two-year-olds, are expected to arrive by air on April.

Mr Gilbert van Reenen, veterinarian for the company, said that the decision to import Wapiti breeding stock was taken because the present Wapiti herd in New Zealand has degenerated substantially. The entire herd is derived from a handful of animals given to the New Zealand Government by Theodore Roosevelt in 1905.

Due to the small number of base stock there has been a high level of inbreeding and the Wapiti have also interbred with the much smaller red deer.

This has resulted, Mr van Reenen said, in animals with lower body weights, lower growth rates and, apparently, with a much lower level of fertility than the North American stock from which they came.

To illustrate, he said that mature Canadian Wapiti bulls can weigh as much as 550kg compared with 300kg for a very good New Zealand specimen.

He explained that the growth rate and, more importantly, the per hectare meat production of Wapiti and Wapiti cross animals is superior to the smaller red deer, and added bonus is that the Wapiti antler velvet is the most highly prized in Korea, New Zealand's major market.

Mr van Reenen selected the

Criffell animals from game parks and zoos in several Canadian provinces to obtain as broad a genetic base as possible. Animals from herds with high levels of fertility were chosen.

As a result of the search for suitable Wapiti which would meet the strict local health requirements, he said, that they found that the Elk Island National Park in Alberta could be prepared to give a number of animals as a gift to the New Zealand Government. Negotiations followed, and 23 animals will arrive on the same charter aircraft, destined for the research project at the Invermay Research Centre at Mosgiel.

The health requirements for the imported animals have been very strict, the New Zealand agricultural authorities being particularly concerned about the introduction of blue tongue, epizootic haemorrhagic disease (a viral disease peculiar to deer), brucellosis and rabies.

Mr van Reenen said that the shipment has been timed for the middle of the Canadian winter to minimise the possibility of insect-borne diseases and when there is the least likelihood of any bacterial infections.

He said that the animals have undergone extensive testing in Canada and are being held for a 45-day quarantine period.

Deer Research Outlined At Seminar

Growth, production and nutrition, are the areas of research on deer currently being undertaken by scientists at Invermay agricultural research station.

At the deer veterinary seminar held in Queenstown last month, Dr Peter Fennessy and Dr Ken Drew outlined developments to date.

Dr Fennessy discussed the cyclical pattern of growth found particularly in stags. During the rut a 50 per cent drop in intake was not unusual and the animals could lose as much as 25 to 30 kilograms during that two-week period, he said.

In trials carried out at Invermay, both in pens and outside, with ad lib feeding, growth was particularly slow during the winter, but came away rapidly in the spring.

He also pointed out that a variation of 10 to 15 kilograms had appeared between two different sires, suggesting that records are most important to keep tabs on sires with high production levels. Dr Fennessy also suggested some relationship between the origins of the sires, although this would be fiercely argued by many farmers.

He said the red deer in Otago and Southland were generally imported from Scotland while the Kaharoa deer of the central North Island are of larger European origins and the Rakaia deer which, while being imported from English parks, had had some German influence in the 17th century and this is still evident.

Body Weights

In examining the weights of young hinds, the trial indicated very clearly that they must be well grown to calve as two-year-olds.

For a reasonable calving percentage in the herd a mean weight of around 80kg is necessary.

At Invermay it was ensured that the hinds gained weight during lactation thus maintaining a good milk supply for the calves and ensuring the hinds go to the stag in good condition.

Calves from these hinds, weaned in March, weigh 48 to 50kg.

Discussing selection of stags, Dr Fennessy suggested their 15 month weight was probably a fairly good criterion. He said there appears to be some correlation between 15 month weights and 27 month weights and antler growth.

Feed Requirements

Dr Drew went on to discuss the feed requirements of deer by season. Comparing a ewe rearing a lamb, with a stag, he pointed out that in the autumn a stag would require one and a half times the feed of a ewe whereas in winter while the ewe was on maintenance rations, the stag's requirement would be three and a half times that of the ewe and he would still be losing weight.

He emphasized the importance—when allocating feed—of remembering that while an adult stag was usually equivalent to two stock units, in the winter this went up to three and a half.

Adult hinds were equivalent to two stock units, except in the summer when they went up to four.

Looking at the autumn procedure, Dr Drew said weaning can either be carried out then or left until late winter. At Invermay the fawns are all weaned at three months of age, but there are points for and against.

In favour of early weaning:

- The calves can establish themselves independently before the winter.
- They can be given preferential feeding.
- Drenching and vaccination is possible during the rut.
- There is a taming effect through having young stock in the yards frequently.

Against early weaning:

- The extra work and planning required.
- The hinds will teach the young stock to eat hay and other supplements.

At Invermay they have had no problems getting the young stock to eat supplementary feed.

However, at this stage they do not have any comparative information on weight gains of the young fawns, Dr Drew said.

Mating

He maintained there was little point in using other than single sire mating in all but very extensive conditions if the

farmer was to be able to make any useful assessment of his stags.

Inherent in this practice was the rotational use of single sires to allow for any that may be infertile and this meant replacing the stag, not just adding a further animal for the next cycle.

Dr Drew said experience at Invermay had shown that putting say four stags in with a mob of 40 hinds was not satisfactory as the actual situation was still one to 40 and the additional stags, rather than providing stimulating competition, tended to fight and injuries were likely to occur.

He advocated separating yearling hinds from the adults to avoid bullying. As the yearling hinds tend to have a short heat period, he suggested that several spikers could be run with them. At this stage they do not fight seriously.

Winter management should include removing the stags early in June to avoid the problem of late calves.

The hinds should be on good hay and/or pasture with a three wire electric fence, as they have found that they simply will not eat poor quality hay. He said that a body weight loss of five to 10 kilos in older hinds over the winter was reasonable.

It was important the stags be fed well also and young stags should be fed separately because of bullying by the older animals.

Calves

For calves, Dr Drew recommended that good feed would assist in avoiding health problems. They should be on clean pasture and he suggested break-feeding with a three-wire electric fence shifted about twice a week. If small or late calves are fed separately and well they will often recoup their weight disadvantage by the end of the winter.

Moving on to spring, Dr Drew advocated feeding hinds well to mid-October, but from then until the beginning of December, feed should be limited as they have a tendency towards over-fatness and consequent calving problems at this stage.

He suggested limiting feed simply by heavy stocking and he pointed out the importance of budgeting the feed to allow for set stocking over calving.

Dr Drew said the stags should have ample feed. During this time the farmer should record the time of shedding of the antler buttons as it appears there is some correlation between this and subsequent antler growth, although work is still proceeding at Invermay in this area.

HUNTERS and DEER FARMERS

EDMONDS GAME CONSOLIDATED paying top prices for all feral game and farm deer. Special notice to groundshooters, a competition will be run for the highest number of deer Chamois Thar and pigs shot from April 1 to June 30, 1981. For all details and entry forms please contact Mr G. Muldrew, Phone 50-5 Tuatapere.

81352



DEER FARMERS VELVET

END of season velvet buying.

We will be buying velvet antler at our Mossburn game packing house (Southern Lakes Game Foods Ltd) on Tuesday (March 31), Wed (April 1), Thurs (April 2), between the hours 9am and 5pm.

For details regarding price and grading please telephone. Howard Paulin, Te Anau 825



Wilson Neill Ltd (Export Division)

Deer Recovery Block System Results of Review Available Today

The results of a review of the block system for helicopter deer recovery in Fiordland will be made known to operators today.

The Fiordland National Park Board invited current operators for submissions on the future of the block system following the withdrawal of two helicopter operations in January.

Board staff will inform the operators of any changes to the system at a meeting in Te Anau today.

Operators' opinions on the system vary widely. Some would like to see it abolished, some retained and others modified.

The board, which is aware of the recovery industry's troubled times, will seek to retain an equitable system to encourage operators to continue.

Need Each Other

The park board and the operators need each other. Although they have the same objective — the cull deer — they are motivated by different forces.

The board must meet its statutory obligations under the National Parks Act 1952, while the operators, naturally, must operate viably.

The board regards the helicopters as management tools. They reduce the presence of browsing animals and enable subsequent forest regeneration.

An objective of the board is to achieve a level of regeneration which is faster than the growth of animals.

The introduction of helicop-

ter deer control has created a dependence on the machines for future control. There must be continual deer culling to maintain control over the population.

The board's senior ranger in charge of helicopter operations, Mr Ted Atkinson, said yesterday the deer population could recover to the level of 15 years ago if it was left uncontrolled for five years.

Excellent Conditions

Diminished deer numbers have meant that those remaining have excellent breeding and rearing conditions. The size of the deer recovered from the park has increased in recent years.

Mr Atkinson said the board recognized the companies' need to maintain viability, "but that is really their concern, not ours."

"If the number of machines is reduced, we will have to try to balance the situation to get optimum coverage where the highest population exists.

"We must continue to control the situation," he said.

A 12-block system was in use until September last year, with an operator having exclusive rights to an area for two months before the blocks were rotated.

Halved

The board then halved the number of blocks to encourage more culling at a time when the recovery industry was at a low ebb.

The larger blocks, which are shared by two helicopters, were intended to introduce a greater element of competition and give the operators more room in which to work.

This review has been precipitated by the folding up of two operations. Some of the remaining seven operators, who between them have licences for 12 helicopters in the park, are known to be seriously considering withdrawing.

The operators have several problems. The biggest appears to be the spiralling cost of operating their machines. The overall cost, including loan repayments, depreciation, insurance, maintenance and fuel, has been estimated to be \$500 an hour.

Prices for both live deer and venison have plummeted from their high level in 1979.

Numbers Dwindle

Deer numbers have dwindled because of the heavy culling in the last decade. The average flying time for the recovery of one animal — either dead or alive — is now 36 minutes.

At that rate, operators have

been more cautious in venturing out in weather not conducive to success.

The weather can vary greatly from one end of the park to the other. While one operator may not be able to fly in his block because of bad weather, another might have favourable conditions elsewhere.

If the park board abolished the block system then some operators would be happier.

Their stand on the question of "open slather" — as an open system as referred to in the industry — could be determined by the order of the ballots.

Those who have already had their turn in the more productive areas and are now confined to other parts of the park can be expected to support an open system.

Conversely, those who are working in the more desirable areas in this two-month period or those who have yet to work there would support the retention of the block system.

No Competition

The biggest operator, Alpine Helicopters Ltd, which is licensed to operate five machines in the park, is not presently in competition with another operator in one area of the park.

This has enabled the company to cut down its operations, and still retain the exclusive rights to one of the blocks.

Other than dispensing with the block system, the board could adjust the existing blocks and allow the remaining operators in the park to pick up the vacant areas, or it could allow other operators, who are presently confined to the NZ Forest Service areas, into the park to fill the positions.

Two Deer Blocks Reallocated

The Fiordland National Park Board has reallocated two helicopter deer recovery blocks to operators in the park.

The board's executive officers had been given power to implement changes to the block system, but they said yesterday that had not been done. Provisional changes had been made instead — which would be confirmed by the board at its meeting tomorrow — and the situation would be kept under review.

The reallocation became necessary following the withdrawal of two operators in January. Also the six-week wapiti trophy shoot started on Monday, and helicopter operators

are not permitted to work in the two blocks concerned.

In the reallocation, Mr Jim Kane, formerly in the wapiti block, has been given another block, and Mr Derek Cook has been given a licence to operate his own helicopter in the park for the first time.

The board is legally bound to continue with a block system until the season ends on August 31. Consideration will be given to the system to be in use for the following year before then.

The industry was facing dangerous times. Economics had already forced two operators out, and the remaining ones freely admit that they are losing heavily at the moment.

Alteration

If further operators were to withdraw in the next two months, then the block system may need to be altered. If that was the case, board staff say, operators would have to be consulted.

A decision by the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr V. S. Young, on the proposed joint venture on the capture and farming of wapiti could also hasten a further review.

The board is legally bound to continue with a block system until the season ends on August 31.

At a meeting at Te Anau yesterday, the operators pressed the board to drop the fees they have to pay for each animal recovered from the park.

The operators have to pay 4 per cent of current prices to the board. At the moment, that is about \$14 for live deer and less than \$5 for a carcass.

Service to Board

Admitting that they would not go broke over \$5 an animal, the operators argue that they should not have to pay fees — as all concessionaires in the park have to — because they are doing a service to the board in the control of wild animals.

While the recovery industry was in good shape, the operators were not so concerned about the fee. But now that they face hard times they are attempting to trim all costs.

Conversely, the board says the helicopter operators are businessmen and that they should pay something for their resource.

The deer have done much damage to the park over the years, and it sees the fee as a way for the animals to contribute to the betterment of the park — to the taxpayers' advantage.

The board will consider the request tomorrow.

Deer Farming Seminar At Mossburn

With velvet prices falling off over the last season deer farmers are turning their attention towards venison production.

At a field day to be held by the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association at Mossburn on Wednesday deer farmers will have the opportunity to discuss all aspects of slaughtering, processing and marketing.

There are no deer slaughtering premises in New Zealand, and if farmers want to dispose of any animals, they have to shoot them in the paddock and take them to a game packing house where they are processed separately from the farmed deer.

Markets for this farm-killed venison are limited as West Germany, New Zealand's main venison buyer, wants only feral venison, and most other markets require an ante-mortem inspection certificate on any game they import.

Small quantities can be sent to one or two North American states and to other European countries.

Approved Facility

To qualify for an ante-mortem certificate the deer must be slaughtered in an approved facility.

Over recent months deer farmers and game packing companies have been preparing plans and several suitable facilities are now under way. Mr John Scandrett of Southern Lakes Game Foods Ltd will discuss the planning and establishment of these premises at the field day.

Southern Lakes Ltd hope to have their deer slaughtering premises in Mossburn operating in June, and approval has been sought from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries meat division to extend the cut-off point for on-farm killing from March 31, until this facility and two in the North Island are operational.

Processing of farmed deer carcasses will be discussed and demonstrated at the game packing house. A potential problem with aged stags becoming overfat will be discussed. This is expected to be overcome once the slaughtering industry becomes established as the optimum time for slaughter will be

15 to 27 months before the animals have had time to build up excessive fat reserves.

Velvet

Many farmers have had problems with velvet buyers apparently varying the grading of the product over this last season. This has largely come about with the reversal from a seller's market to a buyer's market. A representative from a processing and exporting company, and also local council member, Mr Tim Wallis, will discuss this in detail.

What is evident out of a complex situation is that if New Zealand wants to remain a major exporter, the quality of velvet must be paramount.

The Deer Farmers' Association Council, at the direction of the last annual meeting has been moving towards the establishment of a marketing board in conjunction with the Game Industry Association.

With more and more of New Zealand's primary products it is

becoming evident that certain controls over marketing are necessary for the future of these industries, and this applies equally to the farmed venison and velvet industries. Council members will discuss the latest developments in this area.

At the recent deer veterinary seminar, more than 60 veterinarians from all parts of the country spent three days discussing management, disease problems, parasites and research.

Mr Gilbert van Reenen, one of the organizers, will report on some of the views and findings of the veterinary profession, particularly the latest developments on malignant catarrhal fever.

The field day will include a report from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, and a discussion of remits to the association's annual general meeting to be held in Christchurch next month.

All deer farmers and interested farmers are welcome to attend the field day.

Row Brews Over Deer Pen Removal From Park

Staff of the Fiordland National Park confiscated two deer pens in the Back Valley area of Lake Manapouri on Friday, March 6 operated by Te Anau hunter and opossum trapper, Mr Hunter Shaw.

Mr Shaw claims that he received no notification of the intending confiscation and no advice from park staff once the pens had been removed. He said that until February 4 this year he was in breach of regulations governing his deer pen operator's permit in that he was in arrears with regard to the \$5 per month per pen payment required by the Park's board as one of the conditions of his permit.

Mr Shaw said during January he had paid \$50 towards his outstanding arrears account and had received a letter acknowledging receipt of the payment and requesting payment of a further \$58 consisting of the outstanding arrears and pen fees for January. The letter requested that payment be made by January 31.

Mr Shaw said he paid the \$50 to a senior staff member at the park board headquarters on February 4 and had received a verbal assurance that there was no cause to discuss the matter further as all financial obligations had been met. He thought that no more would be heard of the matter until he made an inspection of his

pens on March 10 when he found they had been removed.

Mr Shaw said in conversations he had had with parks board staff since the removal of his pens, the staff claimed he was shown a file copy of a letter dated February 4 informing that his permit had been cancelled and that he had 30 days to remove his pens from the park.

However Mr Shaw claims he was not shown a copy of the letter, nor did he receive a copy of this.

He said that the cost of materials for building the pens was about \$400 and with their removal, the potential loss of income with the roar season now approaching was a financial burden he could do without. Additionally he had received an account for more than \$300 from the parks board for the removal of his pens.

Mr Shaw says he is at a "complete loss to know why the pens had been removed as he thought the matter of his arrears had been cleared up with his payment on February 4. He added that although he knew he had breached the regulations with regard to his arrears,

he wondered why his pens had been chosen for confiscation when other pen operators had also been in arrears with their payments.

Chief ranger for the Fiordland National Park Mr Wally Sander said Mr Shaw's pens were a business arrangement between himself and the Fiordland National Parks Board and he had failed to meet his obligations.

Mr Sanders considered his staff had acted correctly at all times and in the best interest of the park and if Mr Shaw was not satisfied he should write to the Commissioner of Crown Lands or discuss the matter with his solicitor.

He added that it was unfortunate that the letter of February 4 had not been registered but future correspondence of a similar nature to any operator would be registered.

Chairman of the Association of Deer Pen Operators in Fiordland Mr Jack Murrell said of the confiscation that either someone had over-reacted or a horrible mistake had been made.

Mr Murrell said in the past he was proud to have been

associated with the park and the Park Act in his capacity as an honorary ranger but certain actions on the part of parks board staff including the confiscation of Mr Shaw's pens had appalled him.

"To have one's livelihood snatched away was a traumatic experience and he would have thought a registered letter or telephone call prior to the confiscation would have been the very least the park board could have done by way of good public relations," he said.

Mr Murrell said there were more than 20 deer pen operators in the park and at a time of declining employment and fortunes in business, the prosperity of his association's members was extremely important as all had a contribution to make to their community. He stated further that of the association's 20 members almost all had at some time been in breach of their permit's regulations and many pen operators were now wondering if their pens would still be there when they went to check them.

Mr Murrell said the pen operators association would be meeting soon so as to be kept informed of the action taken against Mr Shaw in order to formulate reasonable defences against any such unwarranted confiscations.

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES FOR SOME OPERATORS

The Fiordland National Park's chief ranger Mr Wally Sander said this week that some deer pen operators in the park were facing financial difficulties as a result of the drop in prices of captured deer. He believed the cost of pen inspections and the extraction of animals, especially from remote areas was becoming much less financially rewarding to some operators than it had been in the past.

Mr Sander said this was a cause of worry to the board as when the concept of deer pen operations was first mooted in the park, the board had been reluctant to accept the idea because it involved fencing off areas of the park for commercial gain and the problems that could evolve should any operator abandon their pens was foreseen.

Deer pen operations were a commercial operation in the park of a type for which a permit was issued rather than a licence granted, Mr Sanders stated. After an approach was made to set up pens, the board decided if the area was suitable as far as public use of the park was concerned.

If the pens were not likely to hinder public use, the ap-

plicant was then requested to sort out specific sites in the area applied for and these were either approved or otherwise after an inspection had been made.

Before a permit was issued, Mr Sander said the applicant was required to read and understand the conditions of the permit before signing. The pen fees charged by the board were intended to go some way towards paying administration and inspection costs.

Mr Sander explained that if an operator wished to pull out a condition of the permit was that all materials were to be removed and the area restored as much as possible. If the board should decide to cancel a permit the operator was given 30 days to remove his materials

with an extension of time allowed where pens were situated in remote areas. If an operator failed to remove the pen within the time specified - after notice of cancellation, the park board would remove the materials and attempt to recover the costs of removal.

To date, there had been no cases of abandonment of pens but some operators had transferred ownership of their pens. Until the end of March three operators had been requested to remove their pen material because of failure to meet the obligations of their permits, Mr Sanders reported.

Approximately 130 deer pens have been erected in Fiordland National Park since permits were first issued.



DEER FARMERS
VELVET

END OF SEASON VELVET BUYING

WE will be buying velvet antler at our Mossburn game packing house (Southern Lakes Game Food Ltd) on Wed (April 1), Thurs (April 2), between 9am and 5pm.

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Killing Dispensation Extended

The Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries has extended the period of dispensation for the killing of deer on farms until April 30.

The ministry has decided to extend the previous deadline, March 31, because approved deer slaughtering facilities will not be ready by then.

When there was an increased trend from farming for velvet to farming for venison, the ministry had realized it would be uneconomic for companies to build slaughtering facilities while stock numbers were still low.

Therefore, farmers have been allowed to shoot deer on their properties and transport them to a game packing plant for processing in the same way that feral deer are dealt with.

However, the new regulations will mean farm deer have to be slaughtered at prem-

ises where both ante-mortem and post-mortem inspections can be done.

Southern Lakes Game Foods Ltd, a subsidiary of Dunedin-based Wilson Neill Ltd, is the only South Island company planning the slaughtering facilities. It will add the facilities to its game packing plant at Mossburn.

The ministry had to extend the period of dispensation because minor planning problems held up the provision of the Mossburn plant and two in the North Island.

The company has applied to the Wallace County Council for planning consent for the slaughtering facilities. The county is expected to consider the application at a meeting on April 2.

The stricter hygiene requirements at the slaughter houses will give New Zealand venison the opportunity to extend its markets to Australia and some parts of the United States.

However, the West German market, which accounts for more than 80 per cent of this country's venison exports, is still expected to be most important.

In 1979 the Supreme Court of the EEC decided to classify slaughtered venison as game.

That move was welcomed here. It meant the import tariff was set at only 5 per cent, whereas it could have been as high as 40 per cent had the slaughtered venison not been designated as game.

3/4/81

'Miraculous' Safe Landing by Pilot

21/3/81

'Miraculous' flying by an Alpine Helicopters' pilot brought a stricken machine down in a rugged area in Fiordland yesterday without injuring the two men on board or damaging the helicopter.

Mr Boyd Gear was piloting the Hughes 500C helicopter near the Edith saddle when he lost his rotor blade and the machine went out of control.

It dropped about 600 metres before Mr Gear managed to bring it down on a rugged rockslide in the Glaisnock valley.

Constable Lloyd Matheson, of Te Anau, last night described Mr Gear's handling of the machine as "miraculous."

The accident happened between 4.30 and 5pm.

Mr Gear and a Fiordland National Park Board ranger, Mr Ron Peacock, were approaching the Edith saddle, near the headwaters of the north arm of Lake Te Anau, to pick up another park board employee, Mr Chris McMillan.

As the helicopter approached, Mr McMillan saw

something fall from the machine, and then the helicopter overshot the saddle and disappeared into the valley below.

The helicopter was obviously in difficulties, and Mr McMillan noticed that the engine was backfiring.

After losing sight of the machine, Mr McMillan heard an explosion and he contacted the park board office in Te Anau by radio to notify it of what he knew.

The police were called in and Constable Matheson, Dr Trevor Walker and an ambulance attendant, Mr Tom Smellie, were flown into the area by Mr Alan Bond, another pilot with Alpine Helicopters.

By the time they got to the area it was dark, but they tracked down an emergency locator beacon and a few moments later two red flares were sighted in the valley.

The helicopter was located and the two men were fit and well, Constable Matheson said.

Can Fell Out

"A fuel can had fallen out of the machine and this caused the tail rotor to sheer off, causing loss of control," he said.

"By some miraculous flying, Mr Gear managed to land without damage to the machine or

the persons on board."

Constable Matheson said Mr Gear's landing was even more incredible in that it was on a rugged rockslide.

The only damage caused by the landing was a slightly bent sandpad under the skid.

"They were very lucky people," Constable Matheson said.

Mr McMillan and a shooter, Mr Tim Stent, who was in another part of the area looking after a live deer at the time of the accident, were also picked up and all four were taken back to Te Anau.

Looking at Fishing, Game Industries

Southland is a key province in the fishing and game export industries according to the MP for Awarua, Mr Rex Austin.

Mr Austin is a member of a three-man sub-committee, set up by the Minister of Agriculture, Mr MacIntyre, which arrived in Southland yesterday to inspect export game and fish processing houses in the province. The visit is part of a study of the two industries being made throughout New Zealand.

Chairing the committee is Tarawera MP, Mr Ian McLean, working with Mr Bruce Townsend, MP for Kaimai and Mr Austin.

For the past four years, game and fish processing industries in New Zealand have had to be licensed, not only to meet health and hygiene regulations, but also to meet economic criteria.

To gain a licence, the company must prove it is an economic proposition and that its production will not affect similar processors already operating.

"Now that the licensing of the meat industry has been removed, we are looking at whether there is a need to retain eco-

nomics licensing criteria in the fish and game exporting industries," Mr McLean said.

Key Province

Several industries in the North Island have already been visited by the sub-committee and it has now moved on to Southland, described by Mr Austin as a "key province" in both export industries.

"About 30 per cent of all deer farmed in New Zealand are on Southland farms and the province is the best earner in the fish export industry in New Zealand," Mr Austin said.

Yesterday afternoon the men visited the Mossburn game packing plant, Southern Lakes Games Foods Ltd, while today they visit a fish processing plant at Bluff and Invercargill as well as the eel factory at Kennington.

Mr McLean said in addition to seeking a decision on the future of economic criteria licensing, he and the others would be listening to the sort of problems

the industries were experiencing.

"There is no point in making decisions in Wellington without knowing what the people are thinking and doing in the rest of the country," he said.

Mr Townsend said there was still potential for large growth in the fish processing industry and the sub-committee wanted to see if Southland was experiencing the same pattern of growth as the rest of the country in its on-shore fish processing.

The fish export industry now accounts for \$160 million of the country's export earnings with a 60 per cent increase evident over the past 12 months.

As well as touring plants, the sub-committee will meet with officials from all facets of the two industries, from fishermen and deer farmers to processors and exporters.

Mr McLean said he hoped to make a report on the sub-committee's findings to Mb MacIntyre before the House resumes.

The members of a sub-committee set up to study aspects of the fish and game export industries arrived in Southland yesterday. They are (from left) the chairman, Mr Ian McLean, and Messrs Bruce Townsend and Rex Austin.

28/4/81 Trophy Shoot Disappointing

Early reports indicate the 1981 wapiti trophy shoot, which ended on Easter Monday, was less successful than last year.

A Fiordland National Park ranger, Mr R. J. Peacock, said yesterday there were many disappointed deerstalkers at the end of the shoot — "but there always are."

He said those who had been fortunate enough to gain a block had high expectations of success. However, he said it took some time to get used to the rugged terrain, and the scarcity of deer was a disappointment.

Park staff have received reports from nine of the 22 parties in the shoot. They have accounted for 12 trophy heads.

Mr Peacock said the total would be down on last year, but at least as high as he expected.

The Edith Valley block and two in the Catseye region had been the best. Good specimens were seen in the Glaisnock Valley, but they proved elusive for hunters.

The proportion of wapiti sightings, compared with red deer, was higher than last year. That was to be expected, Mr Peacock said, with the continued commercial culling of red deer in the wapiti block.

He said reports from the remaining 13 parties were awaited.

The reports helped park rangers with their own records and would also benefit future trophy shooters.

Helicopter Movement

Sir, — I read with interest of a helicopter pilot's and park ranger's miraculous escape after a tail rotor strike (ST 21.3.81) in the Glaisnock Valley — Edith Saddle area of the wapiti block in Fiordland National Park.

Not wanting other trophy hunters to feel as I do on this issue before the 1981 trophy hunt had begun, and feel dishheartened, I have left this letter until the hunt is under way. May I ask the Park Board four questions:

1. What was a helicopter doing in the area when it had been closed for two weeks before hand to give what animals are left a break from helicopter activity for the 1981 trophy hunt which is now under way? On reading further, it was mentioned that a crew member of the helicopter involved was left on the hill with a live deer that had been captured.

2. Why was the helicopter on a live deer recovery operation in the wapiti area when all other private recovery operations had been stopped for the sole purpose of spelling the block for the trophy hunt?

3. Was there not a case of much the same thing happening at approximately the same time last year when a ranger did an unauthorized cull in the same area?

4. What is the Park Board's "1981" excuse?

Disheartened Trophy Hunter (1981)
Te Anau

4/81

[Asked to comment Mr J. P. Harty, Commissioner of Crown Lands, said: "It has long been established policy not to answer anonymous correspondence. However, I am prepared in this instance to assure your correspondent that I have investigated his complaint and I am satisfied that any helicopter movement in the wapiti area during the period under discussion was undertaken only in the interests of trophy shooters."]

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\$78,300

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88176

Call to Widen Definition Of Stock in Act

The definition of stock in the Meat Act should be widened to include farmed deer, the executive director of the New Zealand Freezing Companies Association, Mr Peter Blomfield, believes.

He told the annual meeting of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association in Christchurch, the association believed companies should have the right to process farmed deer if they wished.

Deer farmers could use their own facilities, but the meat processing industry had modern beef processing facilities which had surplus killing capacity.

"In fact, some beef facilities are operating at 25 per cent of capacity," Mr Blomfield said. "These facilities, with some slight modification, would be ideal for processing deer."

Hygiene

"Farmed deer can be processed by meat processing companies in a manner that would satisfy Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries hygiene requirements and also those of importing countries. Veterinarians and meat inspectors are already on-site to provide a full ante and post-mortem inspection which will satisfy all markets' hygiene requirements."

Many millions of dollars had been spent upgrading and meeting hygiene requirements over the past 10 years. It would be wasteful not to use excellent beef facilities for deer processing, he said.

"As I understand it, deer farmers have three main reservations about meat processing companies processing deer. These reservations are market related, cost related and industrial."

"From the marketing standpoint, you want to retain the identity of your product. In this connection, meat processing companies would, of course, be prepared to kill for you like any other exporter, and you would retain ownership and market the venison according to your own specification."

Deer farmers were naturally concerned about costs. But it would be a matter of debate whether it would be preferable to build facilities and process deer or to use existing beef-house facilities which would require little alteration.

"In any event, you could, subject to the amendment of the Meat Act to include farmed deer within the definition of stock, have freedom of choice to use your own or meat company facilities," he said.

Industrial Issues

"However, I suspect your real concern is related to industrial issues. You will all be aware that the meat workers union will want coverage of all deer processing facilities and with our industrial reputation, you may not want this."

"Nevertheless, I believe you would be unwise not to agree to the Meat Workers Unions having coverage of your deer processing facilities, and should deer be processed by meat processing companies, they will certainly be processed by our meat workers."

In the past year there had been some improvement in industrial relations, and he believed that more progress would be made to resolve some problems during the year.

Mr Blomfield said not all freezing companies wanted to process deer, but all wanted the right to do so if they wished.

Deer Industry May Set Up Special Board

(PA)

WELLINGTON

Moves are afoot in the deer industry to set up a special board to oversee its export drive.

The industry is now setting up slaughtering facilities for the export of venison, and the board is seen as a way of marketing the new product in an orderly way.

It is hoped that the proposed board — whose fate will be decided at the Deer Farmers' Association conference next week — could be a stabilizing force in the volatile velvet market.

The board could shape the future of the whole industry as it continues its recovery from the twin shocks last year of a collapse in velvet prices and a steep drop in the returns for stock.

A set of draft regulations for the proposed Game Industry Board has been circulated to all 1000 members of the association, which included most of the commercial farmers in the country.

Export Licences

The main function of the proposed board would be to issue export licences for deer and deer products.

It would consist of five members of the association, five members of the Game Industry Association, and one government appointee.

Venison is not a large export product, but the industry is now in the process of building three deer slaughterhouses, in Southland, Bay of Plenty and Northland.

The board would ensure high quality produce for export, and orderly development of new

markets as increasing quantities of meat came on stream, association executive officer, Michael Pattison, said yesterday.

"Venison prices are largely set by the West German market, which has been fairly steady over the past two or three years. But with increasing amounts of farmed venison becoming available besides feral venison, new markets will be sought," he said.

"And at that stage it is perhaps more important to know who is selling what, and where."

Weak Seller

The board could also help guard against the weak seller in the velvet market, although it was recognized that the market would continue to be a difficult and complex one.

Velvet prices showed a recovery during the latest December-January season, with an average price of about \$110 a kilogram. Supply and demand seemed about in balance, unlike last season when prices plummeted dramatically mid-way through.

Deer prices have also recovered, and are about \$1000 for mixed-age hinds, Mr Pattison said. Prices dropped drastically last year as a result of velvet crash and a crackdown by the Inland Revenue Department on the tax savings available to deer livestock buyers.

The association conference is being held in Christchurch from April 22 to 24.



THE Wanaka area will have its own resident veterinary surgeon from next week.

Mr Gilbert van Reenen, who has been specialising in deer work with Alpine Helicopters for the past two and a half years, based in Queenstown, will establish a permanent clinic in Wanaka while living in Luggate.

Trained at Massey University, Mr van Reenen was with the veterinary club in Darfield and in private practice in Karamea before moving to Queenstown.

He is particularly concerned with preventive veterinary medicine and applying veterinary knowledge to increasing agricultural production.

Central Otago is currently served by veterinarians based in Queenstown and Alexandra.

Caples - Greenstone Area Now Recreational Hunting

The Minister of Forests, Mr Venn Young, has approved the establishment of the Caples-Greenstone Recreational Hunting Area in the Wakatipu State Forest.

The hunting area covers 16,500 hectares of the Caples and Greenstone catchments at the north west corner of Lake Wakatipu. The region is already very popular for tramping and hunting.

Red and fallow deer are the major species present, and chamois are seen occasionally. The fallow deer herd is considered to be one of the best in the country, noted for its fine trophy value.

Mr Young said the topography and vegetation combined to provide a typical South Island scenery which would be a challenge to all users. At the same time the soils and vegetation were in a stable condition, and thus the area was well suited to being a recreational hunting area.

Access is from Lake Wakatipu at Elfin Bay by a walking track through various scenic and recreation reserves, and also from Brichdale wharf.

Mr Young said good progress was being made in establishing recreational hunting areas and he expected to announce the creation of further areas later in the year.



Former Te Anau Men Killed

Two former Te Anau deer hunters were killed and a third was seriously injured when their helicopter crashed between Waiohau and Ruatahuna, in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, on Monday.

The dead men were Mr Bernard Cyril te Moana-Nui-a-Kiwa Milroy, aged 43, of Ruatahuna, and Mr John Redmond Guthrie, aged 22, whose home address was given by police as Wanaka.

The survivor was Mr Stewart Feaver, aged 22, whose home address was given as Invercargill. He is in the intensive care unit at Rotorua Hospital with head and chest injuries.

His condition was described yesterday as serious, but out of danger.

All three men were based at

Ruatahuna as meat hunters, a job all three had previously carried out at Te Anau.

Search

The men left their base at Ruatahuna, where they were working on deer recovery operations, at 10.30 on Monday morning, and when they had not returned by 4pm the civil aviation division of the Ministry of Transport was advised.

Other helicopter operators were asked to search, and one flew to an area where the Hughes 500 machine was last seen. The operator found wreckage, and only one survivor.

A doctor was flown in, and the injured man was flown to Rotorua Hospital.

The two bodies were not recovered until yesterday morning.

Mr Milroy was well known in the Fiordland area, where he lived for many years. He worked on the West Arm power project in the 1960s before becoming involved in meat hunting and, eventually, helicopter work. He left the district about three years ago.

The three men were in his helicopter when it crashed, although it is not known who was piloting it.

Mr Guthrie, who was known as John Duncan when he lived at Te Anau, was a shooter with Alpine Helicopters for about two years, until earlier this year.

Mr Feaver flew in Forest Service blocks in Southland and for Alpine Helicopters for about six months before he also headed north earlier this year.

FARMERS PROTEST CHOPPER HUNTS IN PARK

DEER poachers in "phantom" helicopters have zeroed in on the Ureweras.

They have defied a Urewera National Park Board ban.

Galatea farmers are concerned about helicopters intruding in the Urewera foothills.

The illicit operations were disclosed at the annual conference in Tauranga of the Bay of Plenty province of Federated Farmers.

The conference called for enforcement of the ban on helicopter deer hunting in the foothills. The farmers will ask their national body to help have the ban enforced.

B. J. Doney, of Galatea, said the board had opened up some remote areas to helicopter hunting. But it banned flying in foothill areas used by recreational hunters and youth groups.

In spite of the ban, helicopter hunters were heavily exploiting the foothills.

Helicopters had their registration markings taped over, Mr Doney said. If caught in the prohibited area, the hunters claimed to have been forced down by lack of fuel.

Rangers had experienced extreme difficulty in prosecuting poachers. When they did obtain a conviction, the fine was too small to be a deterrent.

The helicopters were endangering legitimate users of the area.

M. O. Ross, of Katikati, said helicopter hunting would stop when deer numbers dropped to a level making it uneconomic.



LOCAL residents are upset that hunting is encroaching on recreational land.

DUNCAN, John. — On June 8, 1981 (as result of accident) at Ruatahuna, loved son of Denise and Alan, loved fiancé of Vicki, loved brother of Sharon (Sydney), Moana, Debra and Rei (Queenstown), Mark (Cromwell) and Kupa (Dunedin) aged 22 years. A service will be held at his parents home Makarora at 11am on Monday, June 15, the funeral then leaving for the Makarora Cemetery. 98912

DUNCAN, John. — On June 8, 1981, at Ruatahuna, loved and respected friend and brother-in-law of John and Willie (Queenstown). 11621

Deer Farmers Saw Chinese Methods

A seven-man New Zealand delegation has returned from China with an insight into practical deer farming methods there.

Led by Southlander Mr Bernard Pinney, president of the New Zealand Deer Farmers' Association, the delegation returned at the weekend after two weeks in Peking and the North East China provinces of Jilin and Heilongjiang.

The delegation was invited and hosted by the Chinese Ministry of Forestry.

As well as visiting seven farms, the group saw the Research Institute at Zhuojia, the North East Forestry Institute in Harbin, met scientists from the Institutes of Traditional Chinese Medicine and held discussions with leaders in the production and marketing fields.

20 Species

In China, the group found that there are 20 species of deer, with the key species for the production of antler being sika and horse deer. The horse deer is similar to the New Zealand wapiti red deer hybrids and is known locally in China as the malu.

It produces large sets of antlers averaging about 3.5kg a set in velvet before processing, the delegation was told.

While half China's velvet production is consumed locally, the main export market is South Korea. Known locally as the Meihualy, the sika or spotted deer is the predominant species being farmed.

Most deer inspected were run in well laid out feed lot areas, fed concentrates, maize silage, fresh cut grass and either dried or fresh oak leaves.

Herdsmen

In some instances, where land is available, some hill grazing is done by herdsmen taking the deer out once or twice a day. The deer seemed very quiet and

responded to calling, a stock whip, a pole or in one case, two Alsatian dogs, Mr Pinney said.

While visiting the two research centres, the delegation looked closely into the Tb testing system and contact was made with the professor who developed the eye test used there.

Apart from Mr Pinney, members of the delegation were the two vice-presidents of the NZDFA, Hans Fitz (Auckland) and Mark Acland (South Canterbury), Dr Peter Fennessy, an Invermay scientist, Dr Whitley Otway, a medical practitioner from Auckland, John Scandrett representing the New Zealand Game Industry Associ-

ation, and Tim Wallis from Wanaka, a helicopter deer recovery expert and deer farmer.

Mr Pinney said last night a fuller report on the delegation's findings is being prepared and will be released through the NZDFA in about a month.

13/6/81



INVERMAY 2nd ANNUAL DEER AUCTION

12.30pm Monday June 15

on the property Invermay Research Station

- 8 Mixed Aged Wapiti Hybrid Hinds
- 3 Wapiti Hybrid Breeding Stags
- 20 Yearling Hybrid Hinds
- 12 Weaner Hybrid Hinds
- 15 2 year Red Deer Hinds
- 20 Yearling Red Deer Hinds
- 35 Weaner Red Deer Hinds

Inspection from 11.30am day of sale

Catalogues available at sale

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Wishart Helicopters (1978) Ltd have for sale 4 Helicopters that are now surplus to requirements.

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DISPERSAL SALE TE PUNA RED DEER AUCTION

11am WEDNESDAY JUNE 17, 1981

on the property
MOUNT STUART, WAITAHUNA

- 21 Mixed Aged Farm Bred HINDS
- 68 Yearling Farm Bred HINDS
- 61 Mixed Sex Farm Bred WEANERS
- 12 Yearling Farm Bred STAGS
- 6 Breeding STAGS
- 90 Mixed Aged HINDS, farm trained 12-30 months

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13/6/81

99403

SOUTHLAND S.F.C. FARMERS

2nd ANNUAL SALE OF SELECTED FARMED RED DEER

"ROSEDALE" TUSSOCK CREEK

Thursday, June 18, 1981, at 12.30pm

THE SOUTHLAND FARMERS' CO-OPERATIVE ASSOCIATION LIMITED will offer Account

- Rosedale Deer Farm
- 20 Weaner HINDS
- W. Pinckney & Co, Glenarary
- 20 Weaner HINDS
- K. Kelly, Otama
- 10 Weaner HINDS
- Dunrobin Stag Range, Mossburn
- 5 Weaner HINDS
- D. P. J. Marshall, Otautau
- 5 Weaner HINDS
- Criffel Game Park, Wanaka
- 10 Weaner HINDS
- Mararoa Station, The Key
- 10 Weaner HINDS
- R. J. Swann, Fairlie
- 10 18mth HINDS
- R. N. Jennings, Awarua
- 20 18mth HINDS
- Linwood Partnership, Awarua
- 10 18mth HINDS
- A. J. Hamilton & Sons, Forest Hill
- 10 4 1/2 year HINDS
- Criffel Game Park, Wanaka
- 10 Weaner STAGS
- Mararoa Station, The Key
- 10 Weaner STAGS
- D. B. Broomfield, Invercargill
- 10 Weaner STAGS
- Homestead Wapiti, Oteramika Road
- 5 Weaner Hybrid STAGS
- 1 18mth Hybrid STAG
- M. J. Brice, Rakauhauka
- 1 Weaner Hybrid HIND
- 2 Weaner Hybrid STAGS
- B. E. Barnes, Longwood
- 2 Weaner Hybrid STAGS

The above deer have all been selected from top South Island properties and can be recommended to intending purchasers. All deer are Tb tested

Enquiries to

Geoff Erskine Phone 78-097 Invercargill

12248

Decision On Deer 7/5/81 Welcomed

The decision by the Minister of Agriculture, Mr MacIntyre, to retain the classification of farm-reared deer as game was welcomed yesterday by the president of the NZ Deer Farmers' Association, Mr Bernard Pinney, of Mossburn.

Mr Pinney described the threat of deer being redefined as stock "unfortunate in the extreme."

"It effectively put a stop of several months on the construction of deer slaughtering premises, which have been planned for a number of years."

"Deer farmers can now look forward to the completion of these facilities, and a start to the slaughtering of farm-reared deer before the year is out," he said.

A change in the classification of the deer could have effectively handed the slaughtering to the freezing industry, something the deer farmers did not want, Mr Pinney said.

Southern Lakes Game Foods Ltd will soon add slaughtering facilities to its game packing plant at Mossburn.

Shooter's Death Safety Strap 8/7/81 Snapped

(PA) WELLINGTON
A helicopter deer-shooter, John Unsworth, died because his worn lap-strap snapped, a crash report says.

The Te Anau shooter might have lived if he had been wearing a protective helmet, the report says.

Mr Unsworth died when he was flung head-first into a rock from a crashing helicopter.

The crash happened on a remote beach in the Big River area of Fiordland, east of Puysegur Point, in October, 1977. The helicopter ran into turbulence and a deer carcass clung beneath it swung up and hit the tail rotor.

The Chief Inspector of air accidents, Mr Ron Chippindale, said Mr Unsworth might have survived the accident had his seatbelt held him inside the Hughes helicopter.

"The provision and wearing of a suitable shoulder restraint and a protective helmet would have almost certainly guaranteed his survival, probably

without significant injury," he said.

The helicopter pilot, James Shewan, escaped the crash uninjured. He and the wreckage were spotted by a searching aircraft 22 hours after the crash.

Civil aviation regulations require helicopters to have shoulder harnesses, but Mr Chippindale says they are usually removed from the shooter's seat in any aircraft regularly used for venison recovery.

The lap-strap, which Mr Unsworth had been using in place of a harness, was badly faded. It was not marked as required by aviation standard orders and its left and right sections were of different origins.

Mr Chippindale says the helicopter had been involved in three previous accidents, each causing substantial damage to its airframe.

Wapiti Details 8/7/81 Wanted

Two groups have been asked to give further details on their proposals for the eventual relocation of the wapiti deer herd from the Fiordland National Park.

This follows a call from the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr V. S. Young, late last year for proposals from wild animal recovery operators and deer farmers for the capture and farming of wapiti.

Mr Young said yesterday he had received 14 proposals and had asked two of the groups involved to come back to his departments (Lands and Forest) with further details of their plans.

"The Government still believes that relocation of the wapiti deer outside of the Fiordland National Park is in the best interests of the deer, recreational hunters and the many thousands of users of the national park who expect the park to be administered to the highest standards," Mr Young said.

"The Department of Lands and Survey and the Forest Service are still investigating possible future habitats for the animals."

In the meantime, to prepare

for a possible breeding programme, and to take pressure off the animals, it was intended to spell the wapiti area within the park for six months.

During that time, effective from now, no wapiti or wapiti-type animals can be taken.

Wapiti trophies can only be taken over a three-week period, about April, and only those who are balloted blocks are eligible to shoot them.

However, the Minister's press secretary, Mr Gyles Beckford, said there were some animals which were not always readily identifiable as wapiti and the spell meant the closing off of the area and letting all the animals settle down.

Mr Beckford said undoubtedly the Southland National Parks and Reserve Board would be kept informed of what was going on by the Commissioner of Crown Lands, and it would be able to make its views known through the National Parks and Reserves Authority.

Missing Hunter Found

A man was found at 12.50 yesterday morning after being lost for nearly 10 hours in the Blue Mountains.

Mr Clive Frederic Giles, of Roseneath, near Dunedin, was on a hunting trip with two companions.

The three men split up at 8.30 on Monday morning and arranged to meet up at 3pm.

However, Mr Giles was not at the meeting place at the agreed time.

His two companions started a search for Mr Giles and at 5pm they made voice contact with the missing man.

From the conversation that followed, the two formed the

opinion that Mr Giles had a broken leg and was trapped in a valley.

The alarm was raised by the two men at 9.30pm, when they walked to the Forest Service headquarters at Rankleburn. The area ranger in Tapanui, Mr Alan Jackson, was contacted and he arranged a search for the missing man.

At 10.50pm, a team of five men, made up of forestry workers and Constable A. Pine, of Tapanui went into the area.

Another team of nine forestry

workers was sent in at 11.30pm, but Mr Giles was found, fit and well, at 12.50am by the first search team. He had not broken a leg, as thought, and had managed to build himself a shelter and light a fire to keep warm.

It took some time to notify the other party that Mr Giles had been found, because the first party did not have a radio.

It appears Mr Giles lost his bearings and had decided to remain where he was until daylight.

Dalgety LIVESTOCK

A/C FIORDLAND WAPITI PARK
3rd ANNUAL WAPITI AND
HYBRID AUCTION

on the property at Te Anau
Thursday, July 16, 1981
commencing 12.30pm

- 10 Wapiti Weaner BULLS
- 9 Wapiti Weaner FEMALES
- 1 Rising 5 year old Hybrid BULL
- 1 Rising 3 year old Hybrid BULL
- 1 Rising 2 year old Hybrid BULL
- 24 Hybrid Weaner STAGS
- 23 Hybrid Weaner HINDS
- 15 Red Deer Weaner HINDS
- 6 Red Deer Weaner STAGS

AUCTIONEERS NOTE

We recommend the above deer to all intending purchasers wishing to upgrade their herds. All deer will be sorted into lots to suit intending purchasers.

The weaners have been weaned since the end of February and will be in a forward condition.

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1503

Poaching Not Problem

Helicopter deer poaching did not seem to be a problem in Southland, the president of the NZ Deer Farmers' Association, Mr Bernard Pinney, of Mossburn, said yesterday.

There had been some reported cases more than a year ago, Mr Pinney said, but since then there had been a big drop in the number of helicopter operators because of economic difficulties.

He said he was not aware of a problem locally, although that did not mean there had been no poaching.

The main poaching problem was in the North Island, he said.

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GUNSHIP HELICOPTER DEALS DOUBLE DEATH

A PILOT suspected of "buzzing" ducks to death with his helicopter, is himself dead.

Bernard Cyril Te Moana-Nui-A-Kiwa Milroy, 41, of Ruatahuna in the Ureweras, was killed when a helicopter he was in crashed in rugged country between Waiohau and Ruatahuna on June 8.

Rotorua police confirm the helicopter which terrified the

ducks on the Matata Wildlife Refuge (Truth, June 9), has been identified as the machine Milroy was believed to own.

Inquiries they made in a bid to help the Acclimatisation Society find and prosecute the offender indicated that Milroy was at the controls during the May 13

By Jill Nicholas

incident. Truth understands Mr Milroy was not a licensed helicopter pilot.

Crashed

When Milroy's helicopter crashed in dense bush, another passenger also lost his life. He was 22-year-old John Red-

mond Guthrie, of Wanaka.

The pilot, Stuart Feaver, also 22, survived but received serious head and chest injuries. After a few days in Rotorua hospital's intensive care unit, he was transferred home to Invercargill. The three on board during the fatal flight were based in Ruatahuna working on deer recovery.

An inspector of air

accidents from Auckland is preparing a report on the cause of the crash.

In recent weeks deerstalkers and trappers who know the Ureweras have complained about helicopters in the national park and neighbouring areas. They claim it'll only be a matter of time before their recklessness brings about the death of an innocent member of the public.

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27/6/81

13927

Winter Feed Requirements For Deer Assessed

Considerable attention has been given in recent years to the feed requirements of sheep and cattle during the winter, resulting in the development of all grass wintering systems.

Little practical attention has been given to deer requirements and as a consequence there has been a problem of some stag deaths during the winter period.

Low winter feed levels are thought to have contributed to the incidence of deaths in some herds.

Invermay research has come up with suggested deer winter feed requirements and these figures are now being monitored, as conditions allow, on three Southland deer farms, where the planned feed has been assessed at the start of the winter. The animals are weighed during the winter to determine any significant changes in live body weight.

The three properties in the survey are the Southland Co-operative Phosphate Company's farm at Awarua, Mr John Cowie's at East Limehills and the Southland Farm Produce deer farm at Ryal Bush.

Winter feed being given on these properties includes grass wintering, swedes, silage, hay and grain.

The deer appear to be doing well on a silage ration and this supplement could have a place on intensive deer farms as a means of achieving high quality

summer pasture and as a low cost winter feed.

Electric Fencing

The use of special electric fences is assisting the allocation of winter feed, as well as assisting the general feed observations, on the Southland Co-operative Phosphate Company deer farm at Awarua.

The electric fences have been adapted by the farm manager, Mr Carl Pollock.

Last winter Mr Pollock used a four strand, 1.4 metre high livestrand system but found that it was not entirely satisfactory as some deer had become entangled in the thin wires.

This year he is using a new hot tape electric fence system.

This tape is a bright orange colour and being wider and more elastic than livestrand, it flutters in the wind causing a visual barrier, easier seen by the deer.

It is now proving very effective in the wintering of 70 hinds and 61 weaners on all grass, and the break feeding of 76 stags on swedes.

The feeding levels for hinds has been assessed at 90 per cent maintenance using Invermay feeding levels:

- 60 kilograms oats/mob/day.
- Three bales of lucerne hay/mob/day.

- A picking off the swedes after the stags have been taken off. This is estimated to be about 20 per cent of the crop.
- A sparse picking of grass on a rough run-off paddock.

The stags are being allocated:

- 60 kilograms oats/mob/day.
- Four bales of lucerne hay/mob/day.

- The swedes are being fed at 0.025 hectares/day. Shifts are every second day.

The weaners' winter feed allocation is:

- A six week grass rotation on breaks of approximately 0.75 hectares.
- 60 kilograms of oats/day allowing for a 10 per cent wastage.

- Half a bale of lucerne hay/day.

The results of the trial on the Awarua property were as follows:

	Date weighed	
	25/5/81	3/7/81
Hinds:	86kg	88kg
Stags:	130kg	128kg
Weaners:		
Hinds:	52kg	50kg
Stags:	57kg	62kg

Farm advisory officer, Mr Mike Harbord who has been conducting the feed trials said the use of the hot tape electric fences had enabled the strict

control of feed rationing over the critical winter period and meant that the stags especially could be wintered intensively on swedes.

It also opened up the possibility of applying nitrogenous fertilizers in the autumn to give a bank of grass for winter deer feed.

Mr Harbord said these results tend to suggest the Invermay deer requirement figures were good, and that the use of electric fencing as a means of allocating feed to deer was very successful.

Meeting Dined On Velvet Soup

An exclusive mannequin parade and display of deer suede clothing was a feature of the annual general meeting and dinner of the Southland Deer Farmers' Association held on Monday evening.

The clothing was supplied by Mrs Joan Allison of Wapiti Handcrafts, Mossburn.

Guest speaker at the evening function held at Ascot Park hotel was Mr Bernard Pinney who gave an interesting and enlightening report of his recent visit to China.

He presented a clear description of deer farming in China and it was obvious from the questions afterwards members were keen to know more of the Chinese style of deer husbandry.

Seventy members attended the annual general meeting and the following officers were appointed: Chairman, Mr Peter Ryan; secretary, Mr H. Whyte; treasurer, Mr J. Cowie; committee members, Messrs G. Cruickshank and T. Chaston.

Special Menu

At the dinner that followed the meeting, 140 deer farmers and their wives dined on a menu that included velvet and ginseng soup and roasted venison.

Some people sampled dried velvet flakes and other oriental dishes that served as appetizers.

In his report to the association, the chairman, Mr Peter Ryan said the only way a deer farmer can be fully informed at all times on matters that affect the deer industry, was to become a member of the association. This applied whether a person had five or 500 deer, he said.

The Southland Deer Farmers' Association is also planning a display pavilion at this year's Southland A and P Association summer show.

Game Industry Board

Mr Ryan explained the workings and functions of the various groups associated with the deer industry and which will eventually make up the Game Industry Board.

The Deer Farmers' Association represents all deer farmers and companies with allied interests.

The NZ Game Industry Association represents the game

packing houses and game manufacturing houses and exporting.

Any proposed deer slaughter premises if incorporated with a game packing or manufacturing licence, at present a member of the NZ Game Industry Association, will have direct access to the Game Industry Board through their own elected members. But slaughter premises set up as such will either have to form their own organization and seek representation through the Minister of Agriculture, or have representation through the NZ Deer

Farmers' Association.

Game exporters are the main small companies and individuals essential to the industry for the competitiveness in which they operate, exporting deer by-products. They are not part of the Game Industry Association at present, and have no access to the Game Industry Board, Mr Ryan said.

Although there are still some grey areas to be worked out with regard to the proposed Game Industry Board, Mr Ryan said it should cover all interests in the deer industry and was supported by his committee.

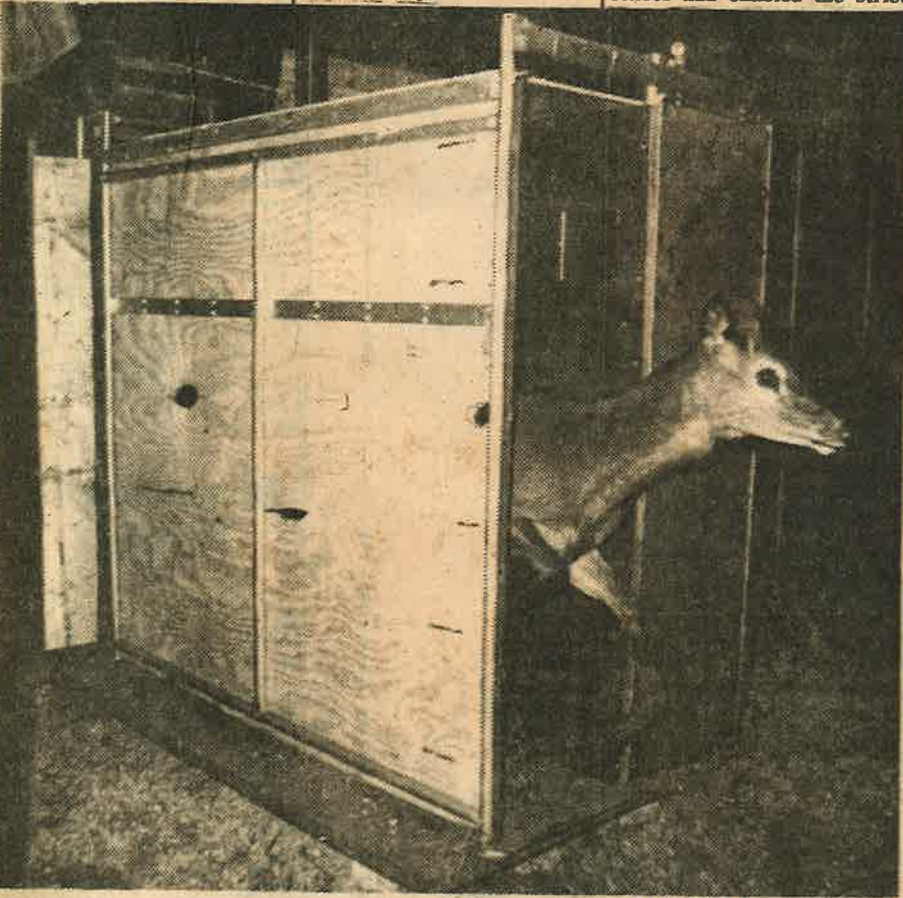
Wapiti Herd

Sir, — I find the remarks by the MP for Marlborough, Mr Doug Kidd, arrogant and in line with his party's thinking on the Fiordland wapiti.

Until his party comes up with land outside the Fiordland National Park for the wapiti, how can they expect deerstalkers to believe they are interested in the wapiti, and that it is not a big con to get them out of the park? No wonder there is fighting talk as he puts it. And to say the wapiti herd had to be eliminated from Fiordland National Park if only to protect the takahe which had its only home on planet Earth there, the takahe have all the Murchison mountains which have been closed for years for them. That's not in the wapiti area.

The wapiti area is from the middle arm of Te Anau to Sutherland Sound. And he said those who wanted the wapiti herd preserved in the Fiordland National Park were pushing water up hill. Some of us, especially in the farming world, are used to pushing something else up hill under his Government, so water should be easy.

9/7/81 David Mackie
Clinton



A red deer hind leaving the specially constructed weighing box.

Pirate copter hunters in gun

Deer hunters are in the gun.

Airborne hunters in the Ureweras are still being accused of poaching.

And hunters' helicopters have been frightening people at a youth camp.

Helicopters operating nearby could endanger those staying at the Urewera Lions youth camp, a Whakatane meeting was told.

The meeting of recreational deer hunters and others interested in Urewera National Park decided to try to stop helicopter deer-recovery operations there.

Of the situation at the camp, mountain safety representative Don Herdman said: "We do a lot of work with young people. We've had helicopters close by and have had to reassure the youngsters that they were not going to be shot at."

"We have people blatantly breaking firearms regulations by shooting at something they can't see."

Effects

Deer stalkers who called the meeting say helicopter shooters fire indiscriminately into the bush.

The stalkers are concerned about environmental effects and the possibility that poachers will "clean out" the area.

They say the authorities don't seem able to curb illegal activities.

Several hunters said they had considered they had sufficient evidence about incidents but because of ineffective regulations the poachers were not prosecuted.

But a helicopter operator told the meeting that recreational hunters were being "too emotional" about safety.

"We can see people standing in a clearing from 1000 ft," he said. "We can shoot within 25m of someone quite safely."

He denied an allegation that operators fired into dense bush to flush out deer.

A Forest Service representative said the trouble with helicopters was prominent in the northern end of the park, where licensed operators did not work.

Forest Service employee Harry Vipond told the meeting that helicopter pilots were turning to poaching to survive. Too many permits had been issued for aerial hunting in the Rotorua conservancy.

The meeting elected a committee which will try to have the regulations changed.

Two Former Te Anau Men Killed

Two well-known helicopter pilots who left Te Anau only three months ago to take up venison recovery near Rotorua, were killed on Saturday in a helicopter crash.

Those killed were the pilot, Boyd Stephen Gare, aged 25, of Taupo, and Richard Dean Stent, aged 30, of Havelock North.

The news cast a pall of sadness over Te Anau people who knew the men while they lived in the town and worked in the Fiordland area.

By tragic coincidence, the accident happened not far from the site of a similar helicopter crash which claimed the lives of two former Te Anau men on June 8.

Senior Sergeant Fred Jamieson, of Rotorua, said yesterday that the two men left Murupara late on Saturday on a deer recovery trip.

They were reported overdue about 7pm, and another helicopter made a quick but unsuccessful search.

Early yesterday, a Royal New Zealand Air Force Iroquois helicopter made a search of bush around the Whirinaki river near Murupara, about 70 kilometres east of Rotorua.

The crew spotted the wreck of the downed helicopter on the riverbed near the western boundary of the Urewera National Park.

The bodies were flown to Rotorua.

Well Liked

Mr Gare and his wife were well liked in Te Anau. Mr Gare flew for Alpine Helicopters and was respected as a capable pilot.

In March, he managed to safely land a stricken helicopter in a rugged area of Fiordland in what police later described as a "miraculous" piece of flying.

A fuel can falling out of the Hughes 500 machine sheered off the tail rotor, which meant Mr Gare had little or no control.

At the time, he was flying near the Edith saddle, and the machine dropped 600m before Mr Gear managed to land it, undamaged, on a rugged rockslide in the Glaisnock valley.

Mr Stent had only recently earned his commercial helicopter pilot's licence and he spent

much time in Fiordland as a shooter.

About two years ago, he also was involved in a dramatic accident in the Glaisnock region.

He was aboard a helicopter piloted by Mr Austin Osborne which crashed while it was lifting out a deer on a long strip on November 10, 1979.

Mr Osborne was badly hurt and unconscious. Mr Stent wrapped him in a survival blanket then laid out a clearing nearby with materials which would catch the eye of any aerial searchers. It took him half-an-hour to get Mr Osborne out of the crashed machine.

Late at night, the crashed

helicopter was found by its emergency locator beacon, and Mr Bill Black made a dramatic rescue of both men in pitch darkness in what Mr Stent described as a "very impressive piece of flying."

Ironically, Mr Gare had taken part in the search in June for three former Te Anau men missing when their helicopter crashed between Waihou and Ruatuhuna in Eastern Bay of Plenty on June 8.

Two of the men died in the crash and the third was seriously injured. All three had also previously worked in Fiordland venison recovery industry.

Rigid Clamp On Wapiti Hunting

Two helicopter licence holders, three deer pen operators, and about 17 hunting permit holders will be affected by the wapiti area in the Fiordland National Park being closed off to hunters.

The 17 hunting permits to be cancelled represent about 33 people.

The Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr V. S. Young, announced on Tuesday that the area would be spelled for six months. This would take the pressure off the animals and prepare for a possible breeding programme.

"Settling Down" Period

From yesterday, all shooting and deer pen and helicopter operations in the wapiti area had been stopped, said the division-

al officer for parks and reserves in Southland, Mr Wynston Cooper.

He said he thought the closing would achieve its purpose and allow the animals to settle down.

This was a recognized method of improving returns from the area.

The chief ranger for the park, Mr W. E. Sander, said yesterday that the two helicopter operators would cease operations from midnight. They would be offered other areas.

The three deer pen operators would cease as soon as practicable.

They would have to be given time to go into their blocks and remove the doors from their pens or padlock them open, Mr Sander said.

The 17-odd hunting permits for recreational and commercial ground hunting would be cancelled from midnight. The people affected could get permits for other areas.

Opossum hunting could continue, as could any other recreational activity such as fishing and tramping.

Increased Patrols

Mr Sander said he suspected there could be adverse reaction to the closure.

There would be those who would not be very happy with the Minister's decision.

Increased patrolling of the area would be carried out by park staff, however, and Mr Sander hoped there would not be too many problems.

As to whether the closure would have the desired effect he said the Minister obviously thought it would. Presumably, he based this on responses he had from those who forwarded submissions on the wapiti relocation proposal.

There were 14 submissions and he assumed the Minister's decision stemmed from some of these.

The Southland Times, Saturday, August 1, 1981. 11

Venison Export Plan For Rotorua

(PA)

Rotorua could become one of the main centres of the venison exporting industry. A deer abattoir will be built at Mamaku and a second company is to build an abattoir in Rotorua.

A third company has "sounded out" deer farmers to find how they feel about a deer abattoir at Rotorua.

A Ministry of Agriculture field officer said amendments to Government regulations meant that abattoirs could be built to process venison for export.

Fast-growing

Several would be based in the Waikato and the Bay of Plenty — the fastest-growing area for deer farming in New Zealand.

The manager of the packing plant of Consolidated Traders Ltd, Mr W. Bramley, confirmed

yesterday the Wellington-based company's intention to build a deer abattoir at Rotorua.

An application would be considered by the Rotorua District Council.

The company manager of New Zealand Primary Processors, Mr R. H. C. Morris, Mount Maunganui, said his company was building an export slaughterhouse at Mamaku.

It would handle sheep, goats, lambs and some farmed deer.

No Decisions

Bergs Game Ltd, Whakatane, has "sounded out" deer farmers to see how they would feel

about the firm building an abattoir at Rotorua, the manager, Mr P. S. Way, said yesterday.

"No decisions have been made yet," he said. "We have approached a few deer farmers to see if they are interested in becoming involved."

He said the firm had previously been involved only in wild game venison, which was acceptable only in West Germany.

However, farmed venison could be exported throughout the world and the company was interested in diversifying to handle it.

Helicopter Safety Study By Civil Aviation

(PA)

The Civil Aviation Division of the Ministry of Transport is to launch a three-month investigation into helicopter operations in New Zealand.

ROTORUA

The move follows five helicopter accidents in the North Island during the past three months.

The investigation is to start immediately and the division expects to take delivery this week of a hired helicopter. It

will be manned by two experts in the field of helicopter operations, the assistant director of flight operations, Mr M. E. McGreal, said in Wellington yesterday.

"Three of the helicopter accidents have been associated with

venison recovery operations, and this has triggered off a particular concern as to whether pilots and operators are using the best techniques," Mr McGreal said.

Some of the recent accidents were related to operating techniques although not all had been from careless operation, Mr McGreal said.

Helipads

The investigation team would be looking at helipads and the surrounding clearance, to see if it could find defects in operations and do something to overcome them.

The division had a commitment in air transport activi-

ties to ensure that operations were of a safe standard. The hired helicopter would be able to fly into work places which were often deep in remote country, he said.

Constable R. F. Schollum, of Murupara said he was very concerned that four crashes had taken place in the area over the last two months, but he discounted rumours that helicopters might have been shot down.

"When an accident in the park — or anywhere — takes place, we send a special team to the site of the wreckage," he said.

"There has been no evidence of foul play in any of the accidents I have attended."



Dr Ken Drew, with the nearly completed research abattoir in the background. Although deer slaughter has a priority in the building's design, all animals will be killed here.

First deer slaughterhouse

Construction of the first commercial deer slaughterhouse in the South Island, at Mossburn, has been given the green light and the plant is expected to be operating towards the end of November.

The head of Wilson's Game Department, Mr Scandrett, said that a seven month wait at the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries had given permission to construct for company deer slaughtering premises at Mossburn, in central New Zealand, where a subsidiary of Wilson Neill, Southern Lakes Game, has a licensed game slaughtering house.

Said construction was expected to begin towards the end of August. It would be about the end of the season, in plenty of time for the main season's

The existing packing house was fully licensed to export and was of a high standard. The new deer slaughtering premises would be built within the existing factory, though an extensive yarding complex would be added.

The packing house would still handle feral deer, but as the numbers were dropping off, the farmed deer would become the main operation. The slaughterhouse was designed to handle 150 deer a day, as well as the feral deer. The present staff of 10 would be increased to about 18.

He said the success of the venison industry so far was its game meat status. It was significant that the farmed deer would be slaughtered under the game regulations. This allowed the farmed venison to retain the game classification. The bulk of the meat would be exported, though some would be kept for the local consumer.

He saw venison production as a growth industry. In 1972 New Zealand exported 4,400 tonnes. Last year it was 1,060 tonnes.

Despite this drop in tonnage the meat was worth about \$5.5 million both in 1972 and 1980. He expected venison exports to increase to the 4,000 tonne mark again over the next four to five years. The monetary value would rise in proportion.

The Mossburn slaughterhouse was expected to be the only one operating commercially in the South Island this season. Others were believed to be planned for Hokitika on the West Coast, and in Canterbury, but neither was expected to be operating this season.

Pilot Fined \$1000

A 26-year-old Christchurch man was fined a total of \$1000 after being convicted of civil aviation offences in the Invercargill District Court yesterday.

Colin Francis Kelly, a helicopter pilot, was charged with three counts of breaching civil aviation regulations and one of catching a deer in the Waitutu Valley without consent of the owner. The latter charge was defended but lost.

The hearing was presided over by Judge Anderson.

The first charge was that Kelly, being a pilot in command of an aircraft, landed in a place that was not a licensed aerodrome and without the approval

of the occupier. The site was in the Long Point area of the Waitutu Valley. He was convicted and fined \$200.

The second charge was that Kelly, being a pilot in command of an aircraft, flew the aircraft in New Zealand when it did not visibly bear registration marks. He was convicted and fined \$200.

No Log Book

The third charge was that Kelly did wilfully fail to keep a log book of the flight undertaken on January 15, 1981. He was convicted and fined \$200.

A fourth charge of catching a deer in the Waitutu Valley without the consent of the owner was defended. The case was lost and Kelly was fined \$400, witnesses expenses \$25.

Kelly had no solicitor appearing for him. The charges were brought by the conservator of forests.

At the time of the offences he was living in Te Anau.

The hearing took almost two hours.

DEER TRAP LINE

FOR personal reasons I wish to sell my deer trapping business consisting of 29 traps in the Doubtful Sound area.

I would prefer to sell the business as a going concern. Assets include 29 traps still operating. 1 SWB Hardtop Landrover situated on the Wilmot Pass Road. A 16ft 6 Wattline aluminium runabout with 115hp Johnson and 10hp Honda auxiliary. Realistically the plant already mentioned plus the 9 radio transmitters and other spares should be worth at current market rates around \$12,000.

The traps are still catching steadily but must be sold so the best offer over \$12,000 will be accepted.

27895

12/5/81

Deer Parasite Study At Invermay

A study of internal parasites in farmed deer by a Canadian researcher at Invermay may lead to better understanding and control of a problem about which little is known at present.

Dr Tom Watson began his research at Invermay Agricultural Research Centre in May 1980 and is in New Zealand on a three year National Research Advisory Council fellowship.

He is a Master of Science, graduate of the University of Guelph, Toronto and during the course of his studies developed a special interest in deer and deer parasitology.

Originally an agricultural college, Guelph now covers all academic fields and has more than 10,000 students.

Dr Watson's involvement with deer began with a two year study of external parasites of Canadian white tail or Virginian deer.

Canadian legislation in most provinces prohibits the keeping of deer in a domestic environment except in game parks. The animal is classed as a recreation animal with a shooting season of about one month.

Deer are not considered a noxious animal as in New Zealand and in fact there is concern in some areas of Canada of the declining deer population.

Management

By studying the parasite levels of feral deer, it is thought that controlling authorities will be able to adopt management plans such as shortening or even closing shooting seasons, or culling, if numbers suddenly increase above acceptable levels that can be sustained by the environment.

Canadian research is aimed at determining whether or not there is a clinical problem in the wild deer population as well as finding out whether age and sex of the deer have any bearing on infestation levels.

Following his two year study in Canada, Dr Watson was employed by a wild game conservancy in the southern states of the US based in Georgia where he worked closely with the University of Georgia ob-

serving the disease status of Virginian deer.

This was also a management programme based on the internal worm burden of the deer as an indication of the state of the health of the herds and their numbers.

Dr Watson said the worm burden count in the animal's faeces appeared to be an efficient method of determining management policies for feral deer.

Experimental

The attraction of NZ for him as a researcher is the availability of deer in large numbers in a farmed situation. No other country in the world at present is able to provide deer as an experimental animal under similar conditions.

His work at Invermay will place special emphasis on internal deer worm parasites of tissue and lung worm — with recommendations as to preventative and control drenching.

Much of the present research into deer is concerned with breeding and nutrition and little significant animal health work has been completed.

His first task was to conduct a survey of 80 deer farms throughout Southland and Otago and parts of South Canterbury, chosen on a random basis, to attempt to get an overall indication of parasite levels. This was done by assessing the worm burdens in faeces on the ground.

It appears to Dr Watson that most deer farmers are using a wide variety of drenches and using them at varying strengths and at different times during the year.

Hopefully his research will provide a basic drenching pattern together with the ideal requirement to control worms. But even with the present random drenching, Dr Watson does not see overdrenching as a problem apart from the cost of drench. Once farmers begin to cull breeding animals more severely for selection, they will not wish to waste time and money drenching cull animals, he said.

Intensive Stocking

Deer may also be less susceptible to internal parasites than sheep or cattle, but Dr Watson said that no-one has done sufficient research to find out if this is in fact true.

Dr Watson believes feral deer

may have a lower worm burden due to their being more widely spread out and not in the same contact with each other as farmed deer. Once feral deer are brought into an intensive stocking situation it was only to be expected that there would be an increase in internal parasites.

Dr Watson said there appears to be evidence that suggests deer may show an immunity to internal parasites with age, and many people now seem to stop drenching after the first year.

The farms co-operating in the survey, will be inspected three times a year in order to determine the theoretical high and low worm infestation levels which may vary according to the seasons.

Dr Watson said a preliminary study has suggested that there are no significant high worm burdens present on any one property, and he has not yet seen a case that could be classed as a clinical example.

Deer also appear to be able to tolerate a higher level of worm infestation than sheep or cattle, but this reason is as yet unknown.

Co-operation

The Fiordland Park rangers and private helicopter deer recovery operators have been co-operating in the programme by forwarding faecal samples from feral deer. The worm populations of these will be compared with those of farmed deer.

The farmed deer industry in Australia is still in its infancy and Dr Watson's research may well have implications for NZ should Australia decide to import future breeding stock. Australian deer are free from tissue worm and Dr Watson said that imports of live animals into Australia would probably have to be certified as free of the parasite.

Adult tissue worms normally develop in either the brain or in the muscle tissue, where, if they become obvious have to be removed, thus down-grading the value of the venison.

The tissue worm requires an intermediary host, usually snails or slugs, which are ingested by the deer during grazing.

Lung worm larvae develop on the pasture and the adult worm generally settles in the bronchia of the animal.

Once tissue worm is introduced to a property and reaches a high level of infestation it may take a considerable and expensive control programme to reduce it to a manageable level.

Trials

Following on from his preliminary work, Dr Watson hopes to carry out drenching trials to find out how often drenching should be carried out and at the strengths that will give optimum results.

He has already infected a control herd of 20 deer at In-

vermay with the worm parasites so that he can closely monitor the worm life cycle, an essential part of the programme if true drenching recommendations are to be formulated.

Dr Watson said that research work in Austria had diagnosed a hind leg paralysis that was attributed to tissue worm. The symptoms of this problem were similar to a copper deficiency. Therefore it was possible that where an animal shows signs of copper deficiency on copper deficient pastures, it could in fact be due to tissue worm and may need to be treated as such.

Dr Watson believes the only other countries at present carrying out major parasite research were Austria and Sweden, where reindeer were under study.

He has found the idea of farming deer for profit an interesting concept. Dr Watson said it intrigued him that it is so easy to bring feral deer on to a farming situation where they adapt so readily.

Permits Could Be Cancelled

Permits could be cancelled if helicopter poachers continue to persist with their illegal activities, Mr Chris Main, of the New Zealand Forest Service's Southland conservancy, said yesterday.

With the arrival of spring, helicopter deer hunting activities increased and with it the number of operators who encroached into forests they did not have permits for or on to private property without the owner's permission.

While a number of poachers had been prosecuted in the past, the biggest fine imposed was \$400.

That was only worth about two deer and not at all a deterrent, Mr Main said.

Asked what an effective deterrent would be, he said: "With persistent poachers we're going to consider cancelling their permits for Crown land."

It took a lot of time and trouble to prosecute an illegal

operator and it had to be worthwhile.

Decrease

Mr Main said a decrease in deer numbers was responsible for a lot of the poaching. However, the number of poachers was not as high as it once had been because the number of helicopter operators had declined.

Only 20 permits had been issued this year and he did not expect many more applications. Last year 37 permits were issued.

While 20 was a good number, Mr Main said the operators would still have their work cut out for them.

"They will have to really work for those animals — their overheads are so high."

Removal to Wapiti Area Unwise

The proposal to bring the wapiti herd out of the Fiordland National Park and restock the area with takahe was not in the public interest, a member of the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board, Mr Jack McKenzie told other board members, yesterday.

The destruction of kakapo by cats on Stewart Island had thrown into sharp relief the role of the predator in the destruction of native birds, Mr McKenzie said.

It must give added strength to the opinion of bushmen, deerstalkers and prospectors that stoats in Fiordland were much more a threat to birdlife, particularly flightless birds, than deer ever would be.

"While I am aware of research being carried out on stoats, I doubt if the seriousness

of their activities is being appreciated," he said.

As arguments over the effect of deer on native bird populations had raged, kakapo had all but disappeared from Fiordland, even from those areas where deer never existed.

"It seems as though the takahe will suffer a similar fate," Mr McKenzie said.

Either methods to eliminate the predators had to be found, or the vulnerable and endangered birds should be shifted to a safe refuge, Mr McKenzie said.

"A proposal to shift takahe to the wapiti area would be an act of the utmost folly."

Apart from the climatic conditions, there would be no relief from predation, he said.

It has always seemed strange that deer come under savage attack for being responsible for the decline of the takahe, Mr McKenzie said.

"It seems quite evident that many people have been fooled

by people, such as Government deer killers and commercial hunters, both with a vested interest in the continued vilification of deer."

Mr McKenzie said he had been one of the very few deerstalkers who would listen to arguments in favour of the relocation of wapiti.

He said he considered the wapiti affair something of a national disgrace and the establishment of them in another area might alleviate it.

"However, I accept it under compulsion. The wapiti herd is being wantonly destroyed and their value as an attraction for those who want an outlet for hunting instincts and spirit of adventure is being lost — to me the utter antithesis of conservation."

"I believe the final outcome of the proposal to bring the wapiti out and to stock the wapiti area with takahe is not in the public interest," Mr McKenzie said.



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Dr Ken Drew, head of Invermay's Animal Nutrition Unit, with some of the research stations red deer and N.Z. wapiti stags.

Deer packing house venture

Christchurch (PA). — T. J. Edmonds Ltd is to take a 40 per cent interest in a deer slaughter and packing house to be built at Ashburton, the general manager, Mr P. J. Morrissey, told the annual meeting.

The new company, called Canterbury Venison (N.Z.) Ltd, had yet to be registered, and because it would be centred at Ashburton tremendous regional development incentives were available, he said.

The remaining 60 per cent interest would be held by farmers.

Besides processing farm deer, the facility would also handle frozen lamb carcasses supplied from a freezing works, he said.

The deer slaughtering and lamb carcass facilities would be completely separate.

Work would not begin on the site for another three months, and it was hoped

that the deer slaughtering premises would commence working next April, Mr Morrissey said.

At the last annual meeting, the chairman, Mr C. W. Evans, said he had referred to the moving of machinery from Christchurch to Auckland.

The northern manufacturing unit had now duplicated the diversity of production made in Christchurch, and more than 90 per cent of production (excluding Oxo) required for the top half of the North Island was packed in Auckland, and 48 per cent was destined for the southern North Island.

This represented a significant saving in ever-increasing freight costs, he said.

During the first three months of the new financial year group sales have shown a slight improvement.

Excellent sales increases were made in the basic commodities and manufactured products, although group sales had shown an increase of only 8.4 per cent, reflecting the downturn in game meats.

The genetic advantages of Canadian wapiti

The introduction of Canadian wapiti or elk, will add a strength to deer trial work at Invermay Research Station which would not have been possible with the N.Z. wapiti, because of its uncertain genetic background.

Initially Invermay's Animal Nutrition Unit considered the possibility of importing Wapiti semen from Canada, but unit leader, Dr Ken Drew said his team came up against problems when considering this move.

The artificial insemination of deer was an unknown field. It was an untried technique and needed a lot of basic research before any success could be assured. The preservation characteristics of deer semen were unknown, and could be like that of sheep, for which semen could not be frozen, only chilled and used quickly. There was a big difference between the storage ability of species.

Last year 18 deer were artificially inseminated and all the suspected problems showed up. In this sphere there was no comparison between the A.I. operation on a cow and that on a deer. Of the 18 inseminations only two hinds conceived.

It was during this time

that the prospect of importing live deer was suggested, and found to be feasible. The greatest hurdle was the need to comply with very stringent animal health regulations. The source was to be the Elk Island National Park in Canada.

MANAGED HERD

Dr Drew said although the park had a range of wild animals, their numbers were carefully controlled. For the Wapiti, the management programme included a round-up every two years. All animals surplus to requirements were given away.

As the parks were seen as part of the national heritage, the animals were never sold but donated. This could be to the other 200 parks, or zoos.

Invermay approached the park authorities, on the basis of purchasing wapiti for research. The request was granted, and 30 calves were allocated. The animals were to be a donation from the Canadian Government to the N.Z. Government.

Dr Geoff Moore, from the Nutrition Unit went to Canada to help with the capture and feeding and management during quarantine. The deer were quarantined for four weeks in Canada, and for 60 days in N.Z.

The Canadian authorities worked through the Ministry for the Environment and offered

every assistance. The park was in Alberta and had the advantage of being near Edmonton International Airport.

CAPTURE PROBLEMS

The capture operation did not go as well as hoped. The round-up depended on hard winters bringing the wapiti down to the lower country where they could be fed and eventually driven into yards. Unfortunately the Canadian winter was mild and the numbers were never caught.

Eventually 23 Wapiti were quarantined for N.Z. — 14 males and nine females.

Although yearlings had been sought, to make up the numbers there was a mix of one and two year-old animals. All 23 deer arrived at Invermay on June 10.

He said the deer had been wintered in the covered-in yards, as they still had their summer coats, having come from a northern spring. They were recently shifted to a pine plantation, where there was good shelter. Concentrates and hay were still being fed out.

Dr Drew expected them to be mated about March 1982. If they were still in Canada, they would be mating about November. The first year or so would be spent getting the herd established, then the trials would begin.

COMPARISONS

The programme will be to compare Canadian wapiti against the N.Z.

wapiti, in crossbreeding trials with red deer. This will probably begin in 1983.

He said that in order to evaluate one bull, it would have to be mated with 30 hinds. This would then give enough progeny to make full comparisons.

It would be necessary to have five bulls for each breed type, so between the N.Z. wapiti and the Canadian wapiti, the full trial would add up to at least 300 animals each season. As Invermay could not handle this number along with other deer experiments, these trials would be carried out off station.

The trials would be to assess meat and velvet production, and would be the same as those already in progress. The Canadian wapiti would be crossed with red deer, but not with the N.Z. wapiti.

"While commercial importations will no doubt be used for up-grading the N.Z. wapiti, this is not the intention of our operation. Because the animals were donated from the Canadian Government, we have undertaken not to sell to commercial operations."

"We intend to honour this commitment. In the future as the purebred herd increases, these offspring may have to be sold or slaughtered. But with nine does, this prospect could still be ten years off. Where there are off-station trials some of the wapiti/red deer cross animals will be left with property owners. But these will not be purebred animals."



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Packing House Interest

(PA) CHRISTCHURCH

T. J. Edmonds Ltd is to take a 40 per cent interest in a deer slaughter premises and packing house to be built at Ashburton, the general manager, Mr P. J. Morrissey, told shareholders at the annual meeting yesterday.

The new company, called Canterbury Venison (NZ) Ltd, had yet to be registered, and because it would be centred at Ashburton tremendous regional development incentives were available, he said.

The remaining 60 per cent interest would be held by farmers, mainly deer farmers.

Besides processing farm deer, the facility would also handle frozen lamb carcasses supplied from a freezing works, he said.

The deer slaughtering and lamb carcass facilities would be separate.

Work would not begin on the site for another three months, and it was hoped the deer slaughtering premises would start working next April. Mr Morrissey said.

No Decision Yet On Wapiti Herd

A decision on the relocation of the wapiti herd in Fiordland has yet to be made.

Late last year, the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr V. S. Young, called for proposals from wild animal recovery operators and deer farmers for the capture and farming of wapiti.

Two of the 14 groups or organizations that submitted proposals were asked to come back to the Minister with further details by August 31.

The Minister's press secretary Mr Gyles Beckford, said yesterday the two departments concerned (Lands and the Forest Service) were looking at these two proposals. The departments' recommendations would be put to the Minister.

When this would happen was the "\$64 question," Mr Beckford said. He could not predict the date.

DEER TRAP LINE

FOR personal reasons I wish to sell my deer trapping business consisting of 29 traps in the Doubtful Sound area. I would prefer to sell the business as a going concern. Assets include 29 traps still operating. One SWB hardtop Landrover, situated on the Wilmot Pass Road. A 16"6" Wattsline Aluminium runabout with 115hp Johnson and 10hp Honda auxiliary. Realistically the plant already mentioned plus the 9 radio transmitters and other spares should be worth at current market rates around \$12,000.

The traps are still catching steadily but must be sold so the best offer over \$12,000 will be accepted. 23/10/81 45806

Meat production principals the same for deer

25/9/81

Venison Company Restructured

26/11/81

Two new partners have taken up shares in the Mossburn-based Southern Lakes Game Foods Ltd, which is also to change its name.

Southland Farmers Co-op Association and Wrightson NMA Ltd will each hold 24 per cent of the shares of the company, which is being restructured, under the new name of Southern Lakes Venison Packers Ltd.

The ownership of the balance of the company, 52 per cent, will be held by the present partners, Wilson Neill Ltd and Alpine Helicopters Ltd.

The restructuring of Southern Lakes Game Foods Ltd has been implemented at a time when feral deer production, although stable, has declined from former high levels, and farm deer production is about to start in volume.

Directors of the new company are confident that the existing game packing house facilities and the nearly-completed

deer slaughtering premises which are adjacent to, and part of the packing house, will provide an excellent service industry to deer farmers in Southland and Otago.

Farmers in these areas will have the option of having their deer handled by anyone of three shareholder companies. Wrightson NMA, Southland Farmers Co-op, or Wilson Neill Ltd. These companies will arrange for stock to be delivered to the plant, slaughtered, processed and then sold on owners' account.

The deer slaughtering premises are almost completed and the first slaughtering trials are expected to take place within the next 10 days. Commercial slaughtering is expected to start in the middle of next month, with an official opening ceremony scheduled for late January or early February.

The meat production aim of using small female breeding animals to produce offspring that will be larger than they are, applies to deer farming, as it does to other branches of the livestock industry.

The head of Invermay's Annual Nutrition Unit, Dr Ken Drew said: "The cost of feeding female breeding stock was a substantial part in the final cost of any meat production operation, whereas the upkeep of two or three sires was relatively modest. Thus, the object of the breeding trials with red deer and the N.Z. wapiti, was to test the feasibility of the larger wapiti sire over the smaller red deer females."

The efficiency of turning grass into meat and velvet, were important considerations for the future of deer farming, and it was hoped Invermay would be able to come up with answers to the questions farmers would eventually ask.

The N.Z. wapiti had obvious superiority in size both in terms of body weight and in velvet antlers over the red deer. The trials were designed to determine the advantages of a cross between the wapiti and the smaller red deer.

Red deer were ideal as a breeding base, especially if their hybrid offspring retained some of the wapiti sire's size. If on the other hand, a herd of wapiti hinds was used the carrying capacity of a property could be halved.

The wapiti was really just a big red deer and this was one reason why inter-breeding had occurred so readily in the past and could be continued.

It had been estimated that, of the food intake, needed to produce a 27 month red deer or N.Z. Wapiti 38 per cent was taken up by the mother, during the gestation and lactation, period. But with the hybrid (the smaller mother and larger offspring), the mother's share was reduced to about 33 per cent. This meant more feed was available for the growing calf.

PROGRAMME

The breeding programme had been divided into three sections — red hinds mated to red stags, red hinds mated to N.Z. wapiti bulls, and N.Z. wapiti hinds mated to N.Z. wapiti bulls. All groups were fed under similar conditions with three bulls to 60 cows.

The programme aimed to keep all the males until the second year of velvet-ing. Half of the animals would then be slaughtered for meat production studies. The remainder would be kept through the third and fourth antler velvet season.

Results to date were far from conclusive and were based on the averages for the last two years. Calving was the same for all three groups, at about 90 per cent. Calf mortality over the

two years showed the red deer at 5 per cent, the wapiti/red hybrid at 15 per cent and the wapiti at 10 per cent. This was the mean average of two years, and for some unknown reason the death rate in the second year for red deer carrying hybrid calves doubled. About 5 to 10 per cent would have been acceptable. Because of the two conflicting results, the answer was uncertain, and more trials would be necessary.

Dr Drew said the hinds experiencing difficulties were smaller, and next season only the larger animals would continue in the trials. Another possible cause of birth problems was overfeeding. As all deer in the Southern Hemisphere calved in late November or early December, there was an abundance of high quality feed. In future trials, grazing would be carefully controlled.

As different bulls were used each year, there could have been a sire defect. This would not be unusual, especially where the genetic background of the animals was unknown.

GROWTH

When weaned the red deer weighed about 50kg, the hybrids 56kg, and the wapiti 75kg.

As yearlings the red deer were up to 95kg, the hybrids grew 20 per cent faster and made 106kg, while the wapiti reached 138kg.

Dr Drew said the wapiti/red deer hybrids, performed better in the first year, being 40 per cent ahead of the red deer. This again suggested a sire defect and only further trials would bring positive answers.

VELVET

It was essential that deer farming should be dual purpose and this meant the production of quality velvet. While demand outstripped supply all velvet sold well with the top rices reaching \$250 a kg. With the intervention of the Chinese in the velvet market, supply was lifted, and the prices dropped.

Demand was still there for quality velvet and this could be harvested from the wapiti stags. Generally, the bigger the animal, the better the product, although the Chinese over the years had successfully bred a deer smaller than the wapiti, producing a top quality velvet. It was thought that China would be a long term velvet competitor.

Velvet trials with the three groups at Invermay would not be completed for another two years. But it was hoped the hybrid would produce a good quality velvet, capable of competing with the Chinese product.

Deer Seminar Next Month

25/9/81

A co-ordinated nation-wide lecture tour on deer farming will be conducted next month by a team of five speakers drawn from the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, agricultural consultants and Wrightson NMA Ltd.

They will utilize the known basic facts of deer farming and present them in a package designed to hold the attention of the audience.

Scientific data will be presented by Invermay scientists Dr Ken Drew and Dr Peter Fennessey, assisted in the South Island by MAF farm adviser, Mr Mike Harbord. In the North Island they will be assisted by Ruakura researcher, Mr Geoff Asher.

Marketing and production of venison and velvet will be discussed by Mr John Scandrett of Wilson Neill Ltd and Mr Dick Hughes of Wrightson NMA Ltd.

The profitability and share-farming of deer will be the topic of a private farm consultant specializing in deer, Mr Peter Floyd of Hamilton.

The most comprehensive and up-to-date film yet produced on deer farming has been made for the tour and this is considered to be a must for new, established, and intending deer farmers.

The film has been produced by Mowbray Productions of Auckland for Wrightson NMA Ltd and covers the basic principles of farming deer for profit supported by scenes ranging from the intensive farming methods of the Waikato to the extensive farming practices in Canterbury and Southland.

Electric fencing and supplementary feeding are also featured.

Investigations at Invermay and Ruakura Research Centres are looked at in the film, and a close look is taken at the processing of velvet in the Invercargill processing plant of Wrightson NMA Ltd.

TV personality Mr Tom Bradley is the narrator and Mr Peter Floyd — the co-ordinator of the national programme — the technical director.

This is not the first time that Mr Floyd has been involved in a national extension campaign.

During the period 1975 to 1977 he took a major part in three programmes aimed at the dairy industry, conducted in the main dairying regions of the country.

The Invercargill seminar on deer farming will be held in the State Insurance Theatre on Tuesday, October 20 beginning at 12.30pm.

Board Looks At Helicopter Access

The Southland National parks and reserves board has been asked to reconsider its decision to allow anglers to be flown into Fiordland National Park by helicopter.

However, rather than do this, it decided at its meeting yesterday that the only operator authorized to fly fishermen in, Alpine Helicopters, should be approached with the aim of changing its licence to exclude the Arthur and Clinton rivers and tributaries, and Lake Ada. This would also help avoid the problem of aircraft noise in the Milford track area.

The board also recommended its policy relating to helicopter operators within the park be made public so that people were aware of the restrictions that applied.

As well, it reaffirmed its previous decision to monitor the aircraft and fishing situation in the park.

Letter

The board had received a letter from Mr Gerard Hall-Jones asking it to urgently review the matter of helicopter access, as the new season opened tomorrow.

It should not be deferred for discussion as part of the National Parks and Reserves Authority's general review of aircraft use in national parks, Mr Hall-Jones said.

"Fly-in" anglers would

doubtless find it difficult to appreciate the effect they had on the angling resource and the frustration they caused foot-anglers' expeditions, Mr Hall-Jones said.

Helicopter access for anglers had a definite effect on the resource, in spite of the "catch-and-release" arguments to the contrary.

Those who favoured helicopter access did so for their own commercial purposes or for tourist promotion, Mr Hall-Jones said.

Critical

He was also critical of helicopter operators who had been involved in illegal fishing in Fiordland for many years.

"A firm policy and a warning of enforcement by licence suspensions and fines would stop these activities," he said.

The board's chairman, Mr C. J. McFarlane, pointed out only one commercial operator, Alpine Helicopters, was permitted to carry passengers into the park. It was excluded from carrying them into wilderness or special areas and had to notify the chief ranger of daily movements.

The park's management plan

made no provision for private helicopter operators. As well, no commercial operators engaged in venison recovery, live capture or stocking and maintaining huts were permitted to carry passengers, fare-paying or otherwise.

Board member, Mr D. Wilson, said it appeared permission on helicopter access for anglers was 20 against and 11 in favour. He felt the submissions should be given more consideration and suggested a sub-committee be set up.

Motion Lost

However, this motion was lost. Mr R. A. Excell said he had broken the submissions down to 15 against helicopter access, nine in favour, and seven subject to various requirements. The majority of the latter were in favour rather than against.

Referring to illegal activity, he said if this was going on it should be brought to the attention of the park staff.

A petition put to the board objecting to helicopter access was not received, Mr Excell said there had been an opportunity for everyone to make submissions. If the board received the submissions it would be denying others the same opportunity.

A chance to comment further would be made available when the general policy was reviewed.

Charges Against Helicopter Pilot Dismissed

14/10/81

It was "not unknown" for helicopter registration numbers to be falsified, for the illegal hunting of deer, the Invercargill District Court was told yesterday.

Forest rangers, giving evidence in the trial of a pilot charged with hunting in the Hokonui state forest without authority, confirmed yesterday that this practice did exist.

At the end of the trial Judge Reid dismissed the charge laid against Mervyn Carter Frisby.

Witnesses had seen a helicopter at about 9.10pm on December 22 last year, flying around the forest area. They had heard shots and had seen the helicopter carrying at least one animal carcass.

Two men identified the helicopter as having the marking EJ, which indicated it was the aircraft generally flown by the defendant.

Log Book

However, he denied any involvement in hunting in the forest, where foot hunting only is permitted, and produced log books and a pilot diary which recorded that the aircraft had flown only from Eastern Bush to Ryal Bush, earlier that day.

Mr Robert John Waldie gave evidence that he had been at a pre-Christmas party with Frisby from 2pm until about 7pm or 8pm in Invercargill, and that the defendant had then been dropped off at his Invercargill home.

Mrs Waldie said they had both been "fairly drunk."

The defendant said in evidence that he would not have considered flying in the condition he was in.

The only explanations the defendant could give for the witnesses' identification of the helicopter were that either another pilot had used it after him, and not recorded the flight, or that another helicopter, with altered registration markings, had been used.

Left Keys

The helicopter owners occasionally engaged other pilots to use it, and it was normal practice to leave the keys in the aircraft.

Forest ranger trainee, Mr Ronald Burns Hinton, gave evidence that he saw a helicopter, at about 9.10pm while he was on a private hunting trip east of West Peak.

The nearest it came was about 50m away, and he identified the markings, through binoculars, as EJ. The letters could, at one point, be seen with the naked eye, he said.

The helicopter at one point disappeared from view, but Mr Hinton heard the motor die down, which led him to believe that it had landed.

He later saw the helicopter leaving, after a period of about an hour.

Carcasses

"I saw very clearly that there were animal carcasses slung underneath it."

Another witness, Mr Russell

Morris Blair, a forest ranger, said he was also on the hunting trip, and also identified the helicopter's markings through binoculars.

Forestry officer Mr Christopher Main gave evidence that he interviewed the defendant some time after the sightings.

"His reply was that he couldn't remember where he was flying that day. He did say he was permitted to hunt on private properties . . . adjacent to the Hokonui."

Alteration

All three prosecution witnesses agreed with a suggestion from defence counsel, Mr C. E. French, that it was "not un-

known" for registration numbers to be falsified.

However in his summary of the case, his Honour said he did not think he should concern himself with the alteration of registration numbers.

He said the defendant had given evidence as to his movements on the day, and that these had been substantiated by various records, which had been filled in either on the day or very shortly afterwards, and showed that the helicopter was used only for 30 minutes.

His Honour accepted that as far as the defendant was concerned, the records accurately reflected the movements of the helicopter.

Escaped With Bruises

21/11/81

Two men climbed out of a crashed Hughes 500 helicopter with only bruising, after it went out of control in the Big River — Lake Hakapoua area yesterday morning.

The pilot, Mr Mark John Hollows, of Te Anau, and his passenger, Mr Elvin (Sam) Shaw, of Manapouri, were returning in the Alpine Helicopters machine from a deer recovery operation in southern Fiordland when, according to Mr Hollows, "something went wrong."

"I don't really know what happened, whether it was anything mechanical or not," he said last night. "It happened very fast."

Mr Hollows was able to reduce the speed of the helicopter before it hit the trees. Then, he said, "it was all over."

The helicopter came to rest on a slight ridge on the valley floor. Unhurt, apart from bruising,

the two men lit a fire and waited.

The crash happened about 8.30am, and about three hours later the men were spotted by a Mount Cook Line floatplane, piloted by Mr Greg Rutherford, of Te Anau.

They were taken to the Te Anau Medical Centre and treated.

The helicopter suffered substantial damage, and will be examined by an inspector of air accidents.

No Trophy Shoot

31/10/81

The Southland National Parks and Reserves Board will not reconsider its decision against holding a wapiti trophy shoot next year.

At its meeting in Te Anau yesterday, the board received a request from Mr J. Murray, of Winton, asking that it reconsider its decision.

The Ministerial ban on shooting in the wapiti area was only for a period of six months which ended in January, Mr Murray said.

There was no reason the board should anticipate that the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr V. S. Young, would require an extension of the ban or that the trophy shoot would interfere with any relocation programme.

If no trophy shoot was held, poaching would be rife, Mr Murray said. Past experience had indicated the apprehension of poachers was very difficult.

Trophy party leaders' reports on animal numbers and vegetation recovery had in the past made a valuable contribution to the knowledge of the area. It would be desirable for this source of information to continue, he said.

Benefit

However, the Commissioner of Crown Lands, Mr J. P. Harty, said he believed the decision not to hold a trophy shoot next year would be to the eventual benefit of all parties concerned.

After the Minister had announced the spelling of the wapiti area, a number of inquiries from within New Zealand and overseas were received. It became obvious a decision on whether or not to hold a trophy shoot next year would have to be made promptly, he said.

"I subsequently decided that no trophy shoot would be held."

This decision was supported by the board, Mr Harty said.

Uncertainty

The reasons for the decision included the uncertainty as to the nature and timing of the wapiti relocation programme and what undertaking the Minister may have already given to the operator involved.

It was the Government's wish that the animals be removed alive for use in the breeding and relocation programme.

The killing of animals by trophy shooters would be directly opposed to this, Mr Harty said.

The proposed capture, breed-

ing and relocation programme was a major undertaking which must be given all the support possible if it was to succeed.

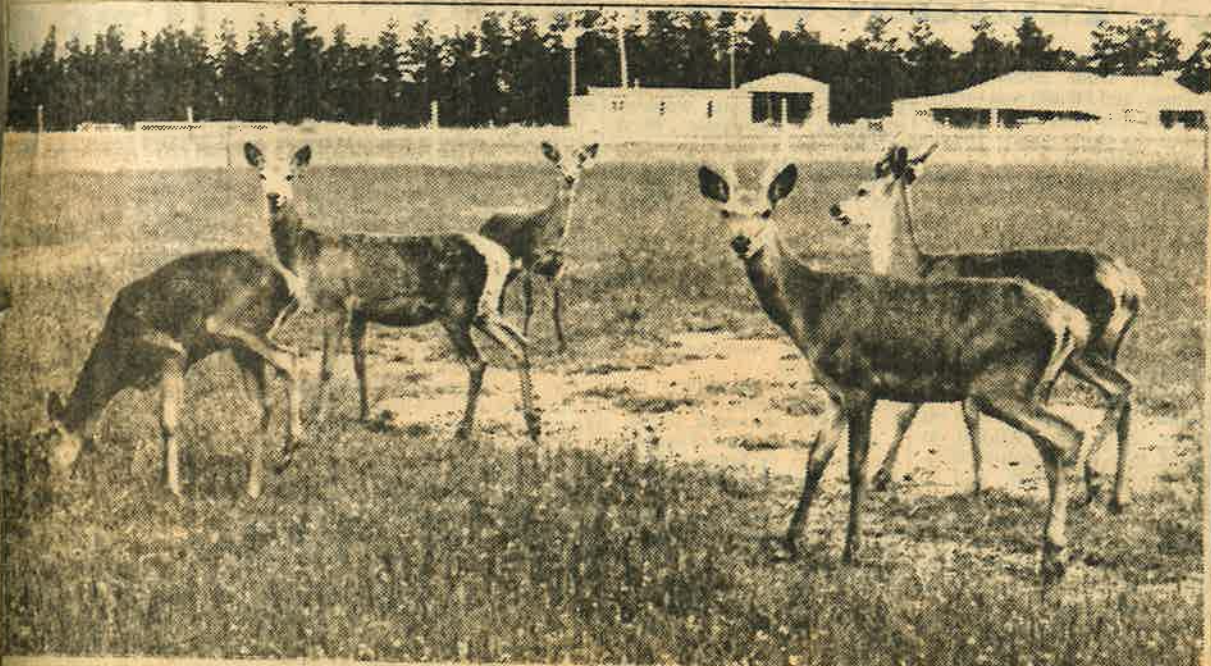
Mr Harty said he did not accept that it could be inferred the blocks would be opened for shooting once the spelling period was over.

"Indeed, if this was so then there would have been little point in the area being spelled," he said.

In moving that the board not reconsider its decision, Mr Jack McKenzie said it was a "fait accompli."

Letters had already been sent out informing people there would be no trophy shoot.

Mr McKenzie said he had had reservations and had argued against it in the past, but he would have to go along with the board's decision at this stage.



Parasitology studies of commercial deer herds could hold the key to further increased profitability for the New Zealand deer industry.

Hunters hunted

AIRCRAFT have been hunting deer poachers in Urewera National Park.

Prosecution of at least one helicopter pilot appears likely.

The Lands and Survey Department put a helicopter and a fixed-wing plane into the air for two days.

Cameras clicked as the secret operation took rangers over the park.

The rangers' quarry was heli-

copters which have been operating illegally in the park.

"In the past, the department has had limited facilities for action against helicopters," said chief ranger Mr John Blount.

The aerial operation followed criticism that the department was not doing enough to combat poaching.

"It was a worthwhile exercise," Mr Blount said. "We will look at carrying it out again."

Copter pilot before court

2/12/81
A HELICOPTER pilot denied 10 charges in Whakatane Court.

Wellwyn Harris Collins, of Opoiki, was charged with breaches of the civil aviation regulations following incidents at Ohope in November.

Judge G. P. Monaghan adjourned the case until October 1.

Collins was accused of:

- Operating a helicopter in a manner where avoidable danger to life or property was likely to ensue.
- Two counts of flying too low.
- Flying aerobatically at a height of less than 3000 ft.
- Landing without approval at a place which was not a licensed aerodrome.

A senior investigating officer from the Ministry of Transport in Wellington laid similar charges after another incident two days after the first.

5/12/81



WHIRINAKI STATE FOREST MANAGEMENT PLAN

THE approved management plan for this forest is available for public perusal at all Forest Service conservancy offices and district offices.

G. M. O'Neill
Director-General of Forests
60405

More Poison Wanted To Control Deer

2/12/81
The use of 1080 deer poison on Stewart Island could be extended, if a recommendation of the Wild Animals Advisory Committee is accepted.

At a recent meeting, members moved that the New Zealand Forest Service be asked to extend its 1080 poison operations to take in a further part of the south-east area of the island.

They expressed concern at the state of the vegetation there and the lack of regeneration.

Earlier this year, a 1080 poison trial was undertaken on the coast between Ocean Beach in the north and Port Adventure in the south. The results of this are still being determined.

The Southland conservator of forests, Mr K. W. Prior, said yesterday he would be giving some thought to the recommendation.

Consumed

It was quite true the vegetation in the area concerning the committee was in a very unsatisfactory state. All palatable species had been consumed by deer.

The trial was one that was to be analysed over a period of five years. It could be argued it had

already clearly demonstrated poisoning was an effective means of deer control and indications were the vegetation was coming back, Mr Prior said.

What concerned him, he said, was that the trial was over a very limited area and there was still an extensive part of the south east coast that was being subjected to heavy pressure from deer.

Opposition

There was a good deal of opposition to the poisoning from both deer stalkers and local people living on the island, he said.

There was also tremendous concern from the environmental sector about the state of the vegetation and hence the recommendation from the committee.

Mr Prior said he did not have the authority to extend the poisoning but, no matter how sensitive the issue, he felt obliged to direct the attention of various people to the unsatisfactory position on the south-east coast.

He would also point this out to the recreational hunters and invite them to try to improve it by lowering the deer numbers there.

Meeting

He said he would also consider meeting with all interested parties to discuss the matter.

Mr Prior said the recommendation could be a little premature because the trial was still at a very early stage. This point must also be made.

The committee's comments

followed the receipt of a report on the trial operation carried out earlier this year. It was presented by Dr C. N. Challies of the Forest Research Institute, Christchurch.

The trial provided for the removal of deer from a limited area with an in-depth study of the natural bait poisoning method and an assessment of the status of the deer population.

Aim

Reduction of deer numbers was aimed at, allowing a study of the effectiveness of a poison operation on white-tailed deer in terms of vegetation response, Dr Challies said.

Longer-term changes and differences in the vegetation in areas where deer had been left at high numbers, others where they had been reduced and those where they were completely excluded would be monitored.

The main objective was to assess the efficiency of natural bait poison as a means of deer control on the island.

It was estimated that, about three months after the poison was laid, 93.4 per cent of the deer were killed in the block where there was a low density of baits and 98.9 per cent in a high density block.

In the block where there was no poison control, 30.7 per cent were killed.

Comparison

The "effective" kill on the three blocks will be made by comparing the areas as they were before the poisoning and as they are one year later, in February 1982.

Systematic searches of deer were made during immediately after the poisoning.

Of the 240 carcasses were in or adjacent to density block and 163 in the vicinity of the high-density block.

Birds

No evidence had been found to suggest birds were being poisoned during the operation, Dr Challies said.

Until the monitoring was completed, in 1982, no definitive statement could be made.

The evidence available confirmed the conclusion that natural bait poison was the most practical and efficient means of controlling white-tailed deer on Stewart Island, Dr Challies said.

DEER SHOOTERS

REQUIRED

IN the Lake Pouteri, Waitutu State Forest. Boats, Meat Safe, Radios and Transport all supplied. Good kills assured. Top men only need apply to

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38782

Deer Carcasses Well Presented

15/12/81
Two deer were trial slaughtered at the Southern Lakes Venison Packers' new slaughtering house at Mossburn yesterday.

The company's manager, Mr R. D. Brady, said the trial run went well, and the two carcasses ended the process well presented.

Last month the company changed its name from Southern Lakes Game Foods and took two new shareholders; Wrightson NMA and the Southland Farmers Co-op Association each with a 24 per cent shareholding.

At that time it was hoped that slaughtering could have started before Christmas. Yesterday Mr Brady said a holdup in a number of "bits and pieces" meant the slaughterhouse would probably begin killing towards the end of January.

Mr Brady believes there will

be a good demand for the facilities from farmers in Otago and Southland. He also thinks farmers in parts of Canterbury will send their deer to be killed at Mossburn.

Farmers have a choice of having either Wilson Neill Ltd, WNMA or Southland Farmers Co-op handle their stock.

The only other slaughterhouse in the South Island which will provide competition for the Mossburn plant will be at Hokitika. This plant is still under construction, and Mr Brady said killing should begin there in February.

Killing charges have not yet been set at the Mossburn plant. Mr Brady said this was because a new award was being nego-

tiated to incorporate the slaughtering side of the business.

"Until now the men have been members of the Game Packers' Union under the Meat Workers' umbrella," he said. "We weren't slaughtering them then though so there's a new award being drawn up."

Killing charges would be tied to labour costs, and Mr Brady could not make an estimation of what this might be.

Mr Brady hopes the plant will begin by killing from 50 to 100 head a day. He said processing would be much quicker and cleaner with slaughtering on the premises.

"There won't be any bullet holes to contend with, and that speeds up the process."

Helicopter Hunting In Catlins

1/12/81
Three helicopter deer recovery operators will start working a small area of the Catlins State forest park from today.

The New Zealand Forest Service has granted them permits to operate in a restricted recovery zone. This takes in the north west Maclellan area, including the headwaters of the Maclellan river and the Ajax swamp.

Forest Service officer, Mr Chris Main, said yesterday the area was a very fragile one, with unique plant associations. Animal numbers had to be kept down to protect it.

The operators who would be working it already operated on some adjacent private properties and had an unblemished hunting record, he said.

While there was no major problem with deer in the Catlins, numbers were building up. The Forest Service wanted to ensure this did not happen, Mr Main said.

Wild cattle had already been exterminated there.

The area the operators would be hunting in was quite good for helicopter recovery work, as it contained clearings. It was also isolated and few ground hunters ventured there.

Private helicopter operators had not been permitted in the Catlins before, although the Forest Service had carried out its own operations on occasions.

In other parts of New Zealand, it was not unusual for helicopters to be allowed in forest parks.

It was not being opened up to all operators because of the small size of the area concerned. The three operators would be there on a trial basis.

The Catlins was different from the normal run of forests in Southland, Mr Main said.

Most of them had had deer in them for many years, but the animal was only just starting to establish itself in the forest park.

He said he did not expect much adverse reaction from recreational hunters.

There was a lot of bush within the park and a lot of good hunting within those areas.

The area the helicopters would be operating in was a scrub zone and deer were difficult to see from the ground. Access was also difficult, as there were no roads or tracks in the area.

The helicopter operators would not be allowed to hunt there during the Christmas, New Year and "roar" periods, Mr Main said.

Fiordland To Lose Wapiti Herd

The Fiordland wapiti herd will be removed from the national park and relocated over the next three to five years.

Initially, several hundred wapiti will be captured and relocated near Te Anau. But, eventually, the herd may be shifted to Nelson or Wanganui.

The entire relocation will be a joint venture between the Government and a Fiordland wapiti capture consortium.

The long-awaited decision on the future of the wapiti, announced yesterday by the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr Elworthy, was greeted with dismay by recreational hunters last night. They called it "really bad news" and a venture that "smells to high heaven."

Under the terms of the venture, the wapiti are to be captured, cared for and selectively bred by the consortium while Government officials look for a suitable site to relocate the herd.

The consortium includes a Te Anau deer farmer, Mr Evan Meredith, and three local helicopter operators, Messrs Dick Deaker, Jim Kane and Richard Hayes.

It is thought the wapiti will be allocated between the Crown and the consortium on a 50-50 basis and that all the wapiti may be located for up to five years on the consortium's lands.

Only one consortium member, Mr Kane, could be contacted last night and he was not prepared to comment on details of the proposals.

Te Anau Site

However, it is understood Mr Meredith has suitable land for siting the deer near Te Anau.

A site for ultimately relocating the herd is being investigated by a team of Forest Service and Lands and Survey officials, who are inspecting several areas of State forest and Crown land.

Sites that have been suggested are the Waitotara-Wanganui hinterland, the Richmond range in the Mt Richmond State Forest Park, south-east of Nelson,

and the Karamea catchment, in the north-west Nelson Forest Park.

The Government decision on the joint venture and the relocation of the wapiti was aimed at eradicating introduced animals from Fiordland National Park, and preserving the deer as a recreational hunting herd, Mr Elworthy said yesterday.

"Over the years, the pure wapiti strain has become rarer as they have interbred with the more aggressive red deer. If this continues, then wapiti deer, as a distinct breed, will disappear altogether in the wild," he said.

New Bloodlines

With the capture operation, the herd would be improved by selective breeding and a possible introduction of new bloodlines.

The ultimate relocation would also remove a conflict with other values in the Fiordland National Park, Mr Elworthy said.

There was a requirement in the National Parks Act to eradicate all introduced plants and animals.

In the Fiordland National Park, the takahe habitat adjoined the wapiti area and the removal of the deer could open up new areas for the takahe or other native birds without fear of competition from the deer.

While he was aware of the views of recreational hunters who wanted the wapiti to stay in the park, Mr Elworthy said he could not see how the herd could be kept as a viable recreational hunting asset, given the interbreeding with the red deer, the need to preserve potential habitats for the takahe and the conflicts with the National Parks Act.

No Foundation

But recreational hunters disagreed with these claims last night.

The reasons given for taking the wapiti out of the Fiordland National Park were "totally without foundation," said Mr Warren Taylor.

He thought the joint venture decision "smells to high heav-

en" and was "a monstrous taxation swindle" on the part of the wapiti recovery operators.

"Southland people regard the wapiti as their herd," he said. "They want them to be left alone. There is no reason why they cannot be maintained in Southland."

Mr Taylor said one of the relocation sites suggested, Waitotara-Wanganui, was a dairy farming area and was certainly not a suitable site for relocating wild animals. The other two sites were not much better.

"I am highly suspicious of the venture and I believe the deer farmers are the only ones who are going to profit out of this," he said.

Closed

What worried Mr Jack McKenzie, of Waikaka, was the spin-off of removing the wapiti from their area in the park and introducing takahe there.

If this was done, a large area would be closed to the public, he said, and it was doubtful if such a move would in any way help to arrest the decline in takahe numbers.

Mr McKenzie said the takahe would not flourish in the wild wapiti country.

He also expressed concern that no firm decision had been made on a relocation site for the wapiti.

"I feel very suspicious that no area will be found as suitable and the wapiti will be retained by the deer hunters," he said.

If that happened, he said, Southland stood to lose everything — an area of its park, its takahe and the wapiti.

Pleased

However, the chairman of the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board, Mr C. R. McFarlane was pleased with the relocation venture.

The general concept of such a venture, he said, had been recommended to the former Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr Venn Young, by the then Fiordland National Park Board.

The need for removal of the wapiti and selective breeding of the herd was part of that recommendation.

Mr McFarlane said the wapiti area had been closed for some time and the capture operation would probably mean continued closure to other deer and venison recovery operators.

He was aware that deerstalkers were resisting the idea of relocating the wapiti until a suitable alternative site was found, but he was not prepared to comment on their attitude.

Introduced 1905

Wapiti were first liberated in Fiordland on March 3, 1905, at the head of George Sound.

Ten wapiti had been presented to the New Zealand Government by President Theodore Roosevelt, on behalf of the United States, and a similar number were bought from H. E. Richardson, of Brookfield, Massachusetts.

Only 18 were alive when they reached New Zealand, and one died near the place of liberation.

The Fiordland National Park wapiti herd is the only one of its kind in the Southern Hemisphere.

Stoats Main Enemy Of Takahe

Saving the endangered takahe is no justification whatsoever for the removal of Fiordland's wapiti herd.

That is the opinion of Dr G. M. Orbell of Invercargill, who discovered the takahe population in Fiordland and is perhaps New Zealand's best authority on that group's behaviour.

Asked yesterday if removal of the wapiti would give the takahe any better chance of survival, he said he did not think it would as the wapiti were not the birds' major enemies.

"I'm not saying the deer aren't doing any damage, not at all," he said. "You can see even now where the bush has come back because the numbers of deer has lessened."

Stoats

"But as far as the birds go the wapiti are not affecting them in any way. The problem is stoats. Everyone makes a huge fuss about the effects of the wapiti because you can see them but you can't see a stoat."

Dr Orbell is a life member of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association. He first went into the takahe valley area in 1929, and believes all species of birds there had declined markedly

since that time because of stoat predation.

"You could see up to a dozen wekas at river mouths then," he said. "Now if you see even one you've been lucky. There are far fewer weka these days."

"I spent 15 years, virtually single handed, trying to keep the deer and stoats out of the valley," he said. It was only in recent years that Government departments had begun to look at the takahe predation problems.

"It is admitted, I think, by the department that stoats are the cause of the problem. But I don't think the public know just what they are doing about it."

Behaviour Study

Until about a year ago the stoats were trapped, killed and the stomach content was sent for examination. Now Dr Orbell said a programme of trapping and tagging was taking place to study the stoats' behaviour.

"They tag them and let them go to kill a few more birds," he said. "They would be doing the takahe a huge favour if they

trapped and killed them."

Dr Orbell believed the takahe population could grow to pre-Maori numbers if there were no stoats. He could not see the takahe moving to areas vacated by wapiti.

"It would take them 10 years to get to where the main wapiti herd is," he said. "Of course there will be talk of catching and liberating takahe into these areas."

"If they do it will just be more tucker for the stoats. Those birds are territorial all their mated lives."

"No takahe is going to move out and go to the wapiti areas just for the joy of walking for years," Dr Orbell said.

Keeping the wapiti in Fiordland had been a "lost cause" since before World War II, he believed.

"It's only taken them this long to make a decision that was first raised before the war," he said.

Velvet Theft Denied

(PA)

NAPIER

A Napier man was found guilty of receiving 66 pieces of deer velvet in the High Court in Napier.

Colin Gary Christoffersen, aged 35, a self-employed tyre white-waller, pleaded not guilty to stealing more than 100 kilos of deer velvet worth about \$16,300 from the locked freezer of a deer farm at Ohinepaka Station, near Wairoa on November 23, 1979, and receiving 66 pieces of deer velvet between November 23, 1979 and February 26,

1980.

The jury of seven men and five women deliberated for five hours before returning the guilty verdict on the receiving charge and the acquittal for the theft.

Mr Justice Prichard presided over the trial which lasted five days.

Scientists

The prosecution called 13 witnesses, five of them scientists with the DSIR. The defence also called 13 witnesses.

The 66 pieces of deer velvet were found in a freezer in Christoffersen's Napier home on February 26 while police were searching the property on an unrelated matter.

Christoffersen said in evidence the velvet was his and he had obtained it while hunting for velvet over two hunting seasons.

The Crown claimed the 37.5kg of velvet found in Christoffersen's freezer was part of the haul taken from Ohinepaka Station.

Christoffersen was remanded on a \$1000 bond with a similar surety and a twice weekly reporting clause for a probation report and sentence at Auckland on December 18.

Breakthrough in Wapiti Breeding

An international breakthrough in wapiti breeding has been made this week by a member of the proposed Fiordland wapiti capture consortium, Mr Evan Meredith.

The owner of a wapiti park at Te Anau, Mr Meredith, artificially inseminated 40 of his wapiti cows with Canadian wapiti bull semen earlier this year and the first three calves have now been born. More calves should be born this month and in January with an anticipated 50 per cent reproduction rate.

This is the first time that Fiordland wapiti have been crossed with an overseas strain, and the births mark a major breakthrough in wapiti breeding.

ing after two years of research work.

Mr Meredith hopes the artificial insemination method will now be used to upgrade the wapiti herd which is to be captured by the consortium from Fiordland National Park, and relocated by the Government at a future date.

He said yesterday this would be a much better alternative to importing expensive Canadian wapiti.

When breeding of wapiti was begun in Te Anau in 1980 little was known of the deer's reproduction rates.

On investigating the subject in late 1979, Mr Meredith found out artificial insemination of deer had been carried out only once before, in Poland, and then not very successfully.

It seemed the most extensive

insemination work had been carried out on dairy cattle.

Mr Meredith then contacted a trained technician from the Dairy Board, Mr Max Cooper, and an Otago University biochemist, Dr Ian Forrester, and these men were to play a major role in the breeding programme.

In March-April, of 1980, experiments were carried out taking semen from a range of wapiti bulls in the park. A large number of cows were inseminated and two calves were born in December that year.

Mr Meredith was pleased with this success and the allied births of two calves to red deer at Invermay research station. These births had also been through artificial insemination using Te Anau bull semen.

But he realized that to up-

grade his own wapiti herd an overseas strain should be introduced.

Help was then enlisted from a former chief livestock export manager, Mr Jack Evans, who imported Canadian wapiti bull semen for the breeding programme.

The inseminations were carried out on three batches of cows during March, April and May, the traditional breeding season for wapiti in the wild.

The wapiti gestation period is believed to be between 33 and 35 weeks, so the reproduction rate will not be known for a couple of months.

Early pregnancy testing has not really been an option, as the method used is crude, and the high level of risk it imposes on pregnancies is not acceptable. Put at seven months, detec-

tion can be made of a cow in calf, and on this basis Mr Meredith is hoping for a 50 per cent reproduction rate.

Mr Meredith's present herd of wapiti numbers 100 and was built up from animals he was allowed to capture in 1972.

The wapiti relocation venture will mean the capturing of red deer, crossbreds and wapiti by the consortium.

There will not be a 50-50 split of the wapiti between the Crown and the consortium, Mr Meredith alleges.

While the Crown intends to select the best of the wapiti for its relocated herd, detailed agreements on allocations have not yet been worked out.

A meeting between Government officials and consortium members may investigate that issue next week.

12 The Southland Times, Friday, December 18, 1981.

Holiday Hunters Still Allowed

Helicopter deer recovery operators working in a small area within the Catlins State Forest Park recovered between 25 and 30 deer during their first 10 days of operation.

This information was received by the park's advisory committee yesterday.

Three helicopter operators were granted licences to hunt in a limited area of the MacClenan forest within the park. They began on December 1.

Some of the deer they had recovered could have come from adjoining private land which they were also permitted to hunt, the committee was told.

The operators will be banned from the area between December 24 and January 4 to allow recreational hunters in.

Extension

However, committee member, Mr Bob Scott said he would have liked this extended by another week.

"If we are going to have any deference to recreational hunters we have to go beyond that (the December 24-January 4 period)," he said.

The Southland conservator

for the Forest Service, Mr Keith Prior, said this period was a standard practice which was adopted widely throughout the country. It had not been arrived at lightly, and was considered the most appropriate.

There were always those who thought it should be extended, and those who wanted it reduced.

The purpose of the closure was to keep helicopter operators out and allow recreational hunters in, Mr Scott said.

Holidays

These hunters only had two or three weeks holiday and he thought they should be allowed in for this.

Forest Service officer Mr Keith Marshall said foot hunting pressure in the area concerned was not particularly high, and he did not think it was penalizing the recreational hunter by allowing the helicopter operators in.

The committee decided to

leave the closed period unchanged for this season, and look at it again later, if necessary.

Query on Wild Animal Committee

Sir, — Through your column I would like to ask the Forest Service who the people are who represent the Wild Animal Advisory Committee and what organization they represent? Also how are these people put on to this committee?

It is nice to see in your paper that the Forest Service is listening to the people of Stewart Island and the recreational hunters and not just to those who want to see one of the two remaining herds of white tail deer in all of New Zealand destroyed.

Keen Island Stalker

Mataura

[Asked to comment, the conservator of forests in Southland, Mr K. W. Prior, said: "The Wild Animal Advisory Committee members are nominated by the following organizations: New Zealand Forest Service, Southland Catchment Board, Otago Catchment Board, Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, Dunedin, Fiordland National Park, Lands and Survey Department, Invercargill, Lands and Survey Department,

Alexandra, Department of Internal Affairs, Federated Farmers, Southland, Federated Farmers, Otago, Federated Mountain Clubs, Southland United Council, NZ Counties Association (Southland), NZ Deerstalkers Association (Otago), NZ Deerstalkers Association (Otago), Royal Forest and Bird Protection Society, National Parks and Reserves Board.

"The committee meets annually at venues chosen for their topical interest in animal control. Forest Service staff from throughout the Southland conservancy outline both the past year's work and the coming year's programme. The meeting includes a field inspection and members make comment and recommendations on progress and proposals. We value the contribution made by the members who represent a wide range of interests."

Wapiti Decision Condemned

The history of the Fiordland wapiti is a "tragedy of mismanagement and bureaucratic apathy."

This week's decision to relocate the herd was "the greatest confidence trick ever to be pulled on New Zealand sportsmen," an executive member of the Southland branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association, Mr W. A. Bell, alleged yesterday.

Mr Bell deplored the timing of the decision, after the election, as a "typical shabby ploy," designed to avert the wrath of the 7000 association members at national level.

The association he said, had striven in vain for years to preserve the status of the wapiti herd and to get it some official recognition, but all it had got for these efforts was "some pie in the sky" promise of a relocated herd.

From past experience, it seemed likely this promise would "founder as a logistics exercise or be diluted beyond

being worth-while for the usual political expediency."

Mr Bell said commercial interests had plundered the wapiti herd mercilessly for years and yet when it came to deciding the deer's fate they "got the cream" and the sportsmen were not invited to participate.

Offers of areas of land to keep the wapiti until their fate was decided had been made by farmer members of the association, but these had been ignored in favour of commercial interests, with no thought for anything but profit.

"The pity is the herd is being lost not only to Fiordland, with which it is synonymous, but also to Southland," Mr Bell said.

If the Government was genuine in its concern for the wapiti, it could as easily have found a place to locate them in Southland as anywhere else in New Zealand.

But, instead, it had used the

National Parks Act "as an excuse" to remove the wapiti.

"We have effectively lost the only wapiti herd in the Southern Hemisphere, in the most spectacular setting in the world," Mr Bell said.

Deerstalkers had been prepared to accept a reduction in the size of the wapiti area if that smaller part of Fiordland National Park could have been given status as a recreational hunting area for the management and improvement of wapiti.

But although association members were unanimous in their recommendations to keep the wapiti in Fiordland, when submissions were called for, "they might as well not have wasted their time."

Mr Bell ruled out arguments about relocating the wapiti to preserve the takahe habitat as "so much rubbish."

"Takahe are historically doomed and now an important

recreational area of the park has been lost for ever for effective use — it may as well be towed out to sea and sunk," he said.

The history of the wapiti in New Zealand could only be seen as "a tragedy of mismanagement and bureaucratic apathy."

Until New Zealand had some game laws and management approval its sportsmen were outside the law and any agencies that promoted the country as a sportsmen's paradise were "just wishful thinkers or on false pretences."

"This action goes a long way back, and the deliberate run-down of the wapiti has been so complete that there is little left to salvage," he said.

The relocation venture now to be undertaken was "a fait accompli by the anti-recreational hunting lobby, and the mighty dollar combined," Mr Bell said.



WAKATIPU RECREATIONAL HUNTING AREA DRAFT WILD ANIMAL CONTROL PLAN

- Copies of this draft plan may be inspected at:
 - Forest Service offices at Christchurch, Invercargill, Dunedin, Queenstown, Tapanui and Tuatapere.
 - Public libraries at Christchurch, Dunedin, Invercargill, Timaru, Ashburton, Oamaru, Alexandra, Balclutha, Bluff, Queenstown and Cromwell.
- Copies may also be bought from the Conservator of Forests, Invercargill, at \$2.00.

The public are invited to submit their comments to the Conservator of Forests, NZ Forest Service, Private Bag, Invercargill by February 12, 1982.

G. M. O'Neill
Director-General of Forests

5810

Pig hunters cash in on export trade

15/12/81

By KEVIN J.
WHITELAW

THE SUCCESS of New Zealand's unique game meat industry is commercial history.

For 20 years, feral deer venison has been exported by enterprising speculators. Hard won markets throughout the world have brought about a secondary primary export earner.

Processors and traders of wild game meat diversified to cater for demanding and lucrative foreign markets. Chamois and thar have consistently been landed on continental markets, and the lowly chamois has remained a good money spinner for one South Island exporter.

Venison remains the solid source of overseas funds, followed by wild pig meat. France and Japan import feral pork to satisfy discerning diners at leading restaurants and hotels.

Packing houses and processing companies depend on the expertise of professional and casual meat hunters to stock agents' freezers. Experienced ground hunters recovering wild pig meat generally rely heavily on teams of trained dogs.

It is a dangerous occupation, in which the dogs scent, trail and bail the quarry. The beast is then swiftly despatched by knife or rifle shot.

Helicopter operators slaughter pigs using keen-eyed riflemen. Packing houses receive steady tallies from aerial hunting forays. High costs of helicopter missions searching for depleted deer herds has made the pigs a target for operators trying to work profitably. But ground hunting is far more successful.

The animals reside throughout vast tracts of back country. Constant effective hunting pressure has altered their behaviour patterns.

Wild pigs shelter a lot during daylight, usually feeding after darkness. Contrary to popular belief, pigs don't travel long distances. Generally, run-holders welcome commercial operators removing pigs from their properties.

This stems the chance of transmitting TB to domestic stock, rooting up vast areas of ground in search of food, or killing and marauding lambs. Poaching and careless hunters who own troublesome dog teams, however, have adversely effected genuine hunters.

Once slaughtered, pigs are gutted, vital organs requiring Government inspection are left attached to the diaphragm, and the beast is recovered with head intact.

Packing out the carcass is done by every imaginable mode of transport, but in view of the fact that pigs are scrub dwellers, invariably they are carried out on a hunter's back.

Agents buy the hunter's quarry for spot cash, after which a game packing house takes over.



THE HARD PART . . . bringing out the kill.

France, the major importer of wild pork, accepts the product boned out with hindquarters intact, while Japan insists on boned meat only. New Zealand merchants and hotels also take quantities of the product.

Hides are highly marketable for leather manufacture, while boars tusks are retrieved for jewellery purposes.

At present hunters receive \$1kg for the carcass. With wild pigs averaging 40kg and 100kg not uncommon, on a good day big money can be earned by hunters recovering mobs of pigs, but the toil is hard.

Prices fluctuate and many hunters are unhappy with a tax-take of 25c in the \$1. Canterbury pig hunter Winston McGregor considers that inflated recovery costs today don't inspire hunters. Ten years ago prices were much better with pork fetching 55c a lb.

Meat packers and exporters might consider the hunter's plight. In recent years the winter months have been lean, with declining tallies, but a constant supply of pig meat has kept the processing factories viable.

Indications are that demand for wild pork in foreign and local markets is increasing.

Hunting Area Criticized

Concern that the Greenstone-Caples area in the Lake Wakatipu vicinity had been gazetted as a recreational hunting area was expressed yesterday by a member of the Otago Catchment Board, Mr Wallace Ramsay.

He was speaking at a meeting of the Wild Animals Advisory committee at Te Anau.

The board objected because of the area's proximity to retired lands on the Greenstone Station, he said.

It had just completed the retirement of the high country immediately above the State forest area. Domestic stock had been taken off so the vegetation could recover.

The Forest Service had made the area adjacent to the Greenstone Station a recreational hunting forest.

The board had no objections to recreational hunting parties going in, providing they were organized by the Forest Service, Mr Ramsay said.

It was most unhappy to see it declared a recreational hunting area like the Blue Mountains.

Plan

Senior ranger with the Forest Service's Southland conservancy, Mr Kerry Mawhinney, said a draft management plan was being prepared for the Greenstone-Caples recreational area and this would be available for public submissions.

The animal-vegetation relationship was in a reasonable balance there and the Forest Service was confident deer

numbers were under control.

The Forest Service was responsible for the area's management and, if deer numbers could not be contained by recreational hunters, other control methods would be used.

Mr Ramsay said the vegetation on the high country would have to be monitored to ensure deer were not wandering on to it.

Wapiti Plan Attacked

(PA) CHRISTCHURCH
The Government's planned relocation of Fiordland's trophy wapiti herd has been labelled a "commercial arrangement" by the chairman of the New Zealand Recreational Hunting Council, Mr J. B. Henderson.

Mr Henderson was commenting on last week's statement by the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr Elworthy, that wapiti would be removed from Fiordland for relocation at one of the three suggested areas — Mount Richmond near Nelson, the Karamea catchment in Buller, or Waitotara-Wanganui in the North Island.

Mr Elworthy said the capture and relocation of the wapiti over a three to five-year period would preserve the herd for recreational hunting.

Commercial Arrangement

"No sensible hunter will be fooled into believing the removal of wapiti is anything other than a blatant commercial arrangement which will present certain privileged people with deerfarming stock worth well in excess of one million dollars," Mr Henderson said.

He said that the Government, with exclusive opportunity to remove deer from the Takahe area of the Murchisons in Fiordland, had had "spectacular lack of success."

"Stoats, opossums, many species of introduced birds and plants flourish without hin-

drance in parks and reserves throughout the country," Mr Henderson said.

Eradication policy was invoked only when profit motive was involved.

He suggested that over the course of the relocation, hunters would be denied access to the 180,000 hectare wapiti area of the park, so there would be no disturbance during capture.

Break Covenant

This would break the covenant of guaranteed public access to national parks, and allow wapiti and red deer to breed in sanctuary for the benefit of "six or so very fortunate deer farmers."

The Government said relocation at one of the three stated areas would prevent inter-breeding with red deer, but two of the three localities had been red deer territory for "around 100 years."

Mr Henderson urged Mr Elworthy, a new Minister, to reconsider before implementing the policy so there could be opportunity for the council to discuss with him the complicated aspects of the whole question.

Wapiti Shoot Planned

20/12/81
Opposition to the relocation of the Fiordland National Park wapiti has led to a meeting with the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr Elworthy, in Te Anau today.

On another front, a Wanaka recreational hunter has decided to ignore the cancellation of the 1982 wapiti trophy shoot and to organize his own shoot.

The meeting with the Minister has been arranged by the MP for Wallace, Mr Derek Angus, and a recreational hunter, Mr Warren Taylor.

It will also be attended by

three executive members of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association and two Te Anau people.

A wapiti trophy shoot next year is being organized by Mr Alan Rodger, who inserted advertisements in five newspapers on Saturday to gauge national support for the shoot from recreational hunters.

Mr Rodgers claims he already has backing from eight Wanaka recreational hunters, who will turn out for a shoot during the last week of March and first week in April.

Joint Venture

The double-pronged opposition to the relocation of the wapiti herd follows on the joint venture announced this month between the State and a Fiordland wapiti capture consortium.

Under the terms of this venture, several hundred wapiti, crossbreds and red deer, will be captured in the park by the consortium, selectively bred at a wapiti park in Te Anau, and a share of the wapiti ultimately relocated by the State.

Sites suggested for the relocation are the Waitotara-

Wanganui hinterland, the Richmond range in the Mt Richmond State Forest Park, south-east of Nelson, and the Karamea catchment, in the north-west Nelson Forest Park.

Mr Taylor said last night today's meeting in Te Anau will discuss the relocation venture, its timing and the commercial interests involved.

Committee

The Minister will be requested to set up a joint consultative committee of recreational hunters and New Zealand Forest Service research staff.

"We are also going to ask the Minister to attend a public meeting in Te Anau and to stop any commercial operations within the park until this meeting takes place," Mr Taylor said.

The Te Anau community, he said, was "surprisingly irate" at the proposed joint venture. It was a "disgusting situation."

The Wanaka recreational hunter, Mr Rodger, is hoping for 90 to 95 per cent backing from other recreational hunters for his shoot.

"Hopefully, we will show a force that will be something to be reckoned with," he said last night.

Democracy had not worked for recreational hunters in New Zealand, he said. They were disillusioned with the failure of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association's fight to retain the wapiti.

Mr Rodger said he felt Southland people had not "dug in their toes" since the announcement of the wapiti relocation.

The shoot would now go ahead, and, if it caused trouble, "the more trouble we run into the better."

'Good Luck'

"My reaction would be good luck to him," an executive member of the Southland branch of the Deerstalkers' Association, Mr W. A. Bell, said when asked to comment on the shoot last night.

"I don't blame anyone for go-

ing in and having a go. There has been a fair amount of talk, and I wouldn't be surprised if some members were interested."

Mr Bell said he doubted that the association would act with "any degree of severity" if members took this course.

"We have tried to stick within the law and got no thanks for it," he said.

The wapiti situation had been lost, Mr Bell said, and if members now wanted to "use their consciences" they could go ahead.

No Permits

But the chairman of the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board, Mr C. J. McFarlane, said last night if hunters went into the wapiti area next year they would be in breach of the park's bylaws.

The area was closed, and no rifle permits were being issued.

Mr McFarlane said any action to be taken in the event of the proposed wapiti shoot would be the responsibility of the Commissioner for Crown Lands, Mr Joe Hart.

Deer Killing May Help Protect Takahe

25/11/81
Successful hunting operations have reduced the number of deer in the Murchison Mountains, Fiordland, but further controls will be considered.

It is in these mountains that the endangered, flightless, native bird, the takahe, lives and breeds.

The area came under the scrutiny of the Wild Animals Advisory committee, yesterday and on Monday.

Committee members including the Southland Conservator of Forests, Mr K. W. Prior and Southland's Commissioner of Crown Lands, Mr J. P. Harty and Forest Service, Lands and Wildlife Service staff, walked the Takahe Valley on Monday and followed it up with discussions, yesterday.

Finance

It resolved that the Forest Service was to make sure adequate finance was available to maintain animal control in the Murchison Mountains and to expand on this if necessary.

One suggestion made by Mr Harty was that deer capture pens be used as well as helicopter and ground hunters.

In moving the resolution he said he did not want to hear that Forest Service staff could not install capture pens because there was not enough money.

Competition

The takahe is a very specialized feeder preferring only three plant species. Deer compete with them for food, hence the necessity to remove the deer from the takahe's habitat.

Opossums are also a threat to the bird and the committee moved that the Forest Service be asked to undertake research into the need for their control in the Murchisons and to seek adequate funding for this.

In a report to the committee, forest ranger, Mr J. R. von Tunzelman said ground hunting operations by staff had destroyed 39 deer for 293 man days in the past year.

Two experienced hunters were now operating in the Murchisons. It was hoped they would stay as there had been

difficulty keeping less experienced hunters because of the few animals remaining.

Flying

Airborne hunting over the area had seen 55 deer removed for 39 hours' flying.

Although this gave a return of 1.4 deer per flying hour it had to be remembered the area was not subject to constant coverage by helicopters, as with other areas, Mr von Tunzelman said.

The Murchisons were hunted only when it was thought results would be achieved.

Dr Jim Mills, a scientist with the Wildlife Service, specializing in takahe, said the hunting operation in the Murchisons was really quite a success story in terms of what had been achieved.

Deer numbers were extremely low and there were few signs of them.

Dr Mills suggested that natural bait poison was something he would like to see on a trial basis.

While the Murchison Mountains covered quite a large area, that actually inhabited by the takahe was quite small. Within that again, only a proportion was suitable for breeding purposes.

Elsewhere in Fiordland, there were a few places where takahe had once lived and could live again. These included parts of the Kepler and Sutar (the wapiti area) mountains.

Control

Dr Mills said he would like to see these subject to deer control so they could be managed as a suitable habitat for the takahe.

Forest Service staff will look at this and make reports on it, Mr Prior said.

Referring to opossums, Dr Mills said it had not been established what threat they posed for the bird.

Poisoning them was too much of a risk but he would like assistance to research their diet and to see whether in fact some form of control was necessary.

Wapiti Herd

Sir, — It looks bad for the wapiti this time. The Deerstalkers' Association should have settled this years ago. Plain greed is setting in. This herd is away in the back of beyond in no man's land. If it comes to a showdown, every New Zealander has as much right to this land and the herd as the Government. The only trouble is we haven't got the guts to fight and they know it. Surely New Zealanders are entitled to a fair share of the country and its game. It's just a miserable trick, especially when the land-grabbing government has 18 other national parks throughout the country and more than 150 State forests all tied up.

New Zealanders should not let this tragedy slip through their fingers and they need help from the hunters. They should do something drastic and then the Government may take heed. We want this herd to stay where it is and be put in the charge of some association. Don't let this case be another Stewart Island.

24/12/81 D. Hawkless

Bluff

Manapouri Man Forced To Crash-land

21/12/81

A Manapouri helicopter operator and member of the recently-announced Fiordland wapiti capture consortium, Mr Jim Kane, crash-landed his Hughes 500D helicopter in Nelson, last week.

Mr Kane was forced to land his machine in the rocky bed of the Wanapeka river on Friday, after its engine failed.

On landing on the uneven surface it toppled over, causing substantial damage.

Mr Kane and his two passengers escaped injury. They walked to the nearest road and were able to telephone for assistance.

The helicopter has since been lifted out and transported to

Dunedin. Insurance assessors will examine it.

Mr Kane said yesterday they were returning from a venison recovery operation when the accident occurred.

Unlucky

It was unlucky the engine had failed over rocky ground. If the surface had been flat, most of the damage would not have occurred, he said.

The only danger, once he realized the engine had failed, was

picking the country to land on. The landing itself was successful.

Standby Aircraft

Mr Kane said the loss of the helicopter would not affect his operation. He had another helicopter which was on standby for emergencies such as this. It would be used until a replacement machine could be obtained, hopefully by the end of the month.

It is also understood a helicopter belonging to the Thompson brothers, of Te Anau, crashed in southern Fiordland on Friday.

It too was a non-injury accident and the Hughes 300 involved has been recovered.

Case Put For Wapiti

30/12/81

Groups opposed to the relocation of the Fiordland National Park wapiti herd were yesterday invited to make written submissions on their case by the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr Elworthy, who said he was prepared to meet the executive of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association.

TE ANAU

An informal meeting in Te Anau yesterday with the groups opposing relocation had "given me more to think about," Mr Elworthy said afterwards.

The points of view put by Deerstalkers' Association representatives, recreational hunters and private individuals had been "frank and outspoken," he said. It was obvious that they were "sincere and genuine" in their objectives.

Mr Elworthy said a request to set up a consultative committee between recreational hunters and the New Zealand Forest Service research staff should be put in writing.

The same stipulation applied to a proposal for a public meeting to be held in Te Anau.

Mr Elworthy said he had been responsible for the decision to set up the joint venture between the State and a Fiordland wapiti capture consortium.

Although the groundwork was done by his predecessor, Mr Kenn Young, "the decision was made by me and the project was

authorized by me," he said.

The grounds for the decision were the preservation of the wapiti as a species.

The venture was also seen as enabling the park board to carry out its policy on introduced animals.

Takahe were only a "very minor consideration" in the venture.

Mr Elworthy said he objected to remarks in yesterday's Southland Times about a 1982 wapiti trophy shoot. He hoped the person responsible would dissociate himself from the comments as it would not be possible "to work under threat."

An executive officer of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association, Miss Patricia Howitt, said her association also wanted it known that this idea had not originated from it. The person responsible was not known to be a member.

Submissions

Miss Howitt said the association now intended to follow a double-pronged approach.

Submissions on the wapiti would be made by branches and members to the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board and the national office would be trying to arrange a public meeting with the Minister.

Miss Howitt alleged there was a precedent for keeping the wapiti in Fiordland National Park, in a decision made on rusa deer in the Urewera National Park. That decision treated the deer as an exceptional case to the policies usually followed with introduced species.

The decision resulted from a recommendation by the park board to the national authority after strong submissions from the Deerstalkers' Association.

The national vice-president of the association, Mr John Bamford, echoed this view. He thought if the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board was prepared to accept the wapiti in the Fiordland National Park, then the Minister would accept this recommendation.

'Bit Upset'

The MP for Wallace, Mr Derek Angus, admitted to having been "a bit upset" when the first he heard of the wapiti venture was what he read in the paper.

He described yesterday's meeting as "very successful" and said as far as he was concerned "the only way I would support a proposal is if the wapiti could be relocated in Southland. Personally, I would like to be able to go and hunt them, as I have done in the past."

The wapiti decision should go right back to the grassroots, to the people of Southland, a recreational hunter, Mr Jack McKenzie said. He called for public participation, and said it was the responsibility of the

park board to revalue its own policies and management plans.

This responsibility should not be pre-empted by a Ministerial decision.

Narrow-minded

Mr Alan Harrison, of Queens-town, alleged the park board had a narrow-minded attitude.

If the board was elected by the people rather than through selection, the whole game situation would be rectified, he said.

Mr Alan Bradley, of Te Anau, said he felt "very very sour" about the relocation of the wapiti.

"The few remaining animals should be left in the area, where they are reasonably safe," he said.

"What is the point of taking them out of one national park to put them into another?" Mr Bradley asked.

Mr George Stuart, an executive member of the Southland branch of the Deerstalkers' Association, said if the wapiti were taken out, no place would be found to relocate them.

Poaching

Mr Warren Taylor, a recreational hunter, said the herd would be of better quality than it was now with proper game management techniques and selective culling.

The reason for the herd being in its present state was the "rather blatant poaching," that had taken place in the past, he said.

Parks should not exclude people, said Mr Wilson Campbell, of Te Anau.

An alternative suggestion was made by the president of the Southland branch of the Deerstalkers' Association, Mr Des Popham, who thought the wapiti area might perhaps be excluded from the park.

22 Wapiti Taken

1/1/82

After two days of active operation, the wapiti capture consortium has brought 22 animals out of Fiordland.

A consortium helicopter began the joint venture recovery operations in the wapiti area on January 1 and continued the next day.

However, the commissioner of Crown lands, Mr Joe Harty, said last night there had been no deer captured yesterday because operations had been "rained out and blown out" by Fiordland weather.

Work would continue as soon as the weather was favourable, he said.

On the first day, which marked the beginning of the relocation of Fiordland's wapiti herd, seven animals were captured by mid-afternoon and a further eight were brought out after an evening search.

Of the 15, six were chosen for

the Crown wapiti herd to go forward for reselection, two were kept for the Crown's deer farming herd, and seven were passed on to the consortium, for the member's own use. The consortium and the Crown are partners in the recovery and relocation of the herd. The deer are selected on the purity of wapiti blood, the best quality animals going to the Crown herd which will eventually number 300.

Seven more animals were captured on Saturday, of which two were selected for the wapiti herd, and five were passed on to the consortium operators.

The captured animals were being held on the Ohai property of consortium member, Mr Jim Kane, Mr Harty said.

More Concern Over Fate Of Wapiti

9/1/82

New Zealand habitat, even if this means changing the National Parks Act for the wapiti area.

Sir, — The Gore and districts branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association deplores the recent action of Fiordland National Park Board in removing wapiti from the wapiti area of the Fiordland National Park.

The NZDA aims to provide hunting sport for members and their families and for the future generations of New Zealanders. With the recent actions taken by a few bureaucrats, these hopes are quickly fading into the past.

Before the elections a local MP stated that there were no wapiti worth removing from the park. Now we find that 12 good wapiti have been removed, not counting the 200 or 300 wapiti that have been poached over the past few years.

If we are to believe our MPs, where is the ghost relocation point (if there is one?) We must know this relocation point, before any more animals are removed from the park.

Therefore all interested people of New Zealand, to whom the wapiti were gifted should join forces with us and try to retain the wapiti in their original

G. P. Milne
President
J. A. Meikle
Secretary

Gore

11 Wapiti Kept For Herd

More than half the wapiti brought out of Fiordland so far have been passed on to the capture consortium as unsuitable for the Crown herd.

More than 30 animals have been captured since the consortium began operations on January 1 and 11 have been selected for the Crown herd, on the grounds of purity of wapiti characteristics.

The Commissioner of Crown Lands, Mr Joe Harty, said yesterday the proportion of animals suitable for the Crown herd was "about what we expected. . . . Somewhere about one-third will be reasonable sort of wapiti and two-thirds will be more leaning towards red deer."

However, he said at this stage it was too early to tell, as the Crown wanted 300 animals, and only about 32 had been brought out so far.

The animals passed on to the consortium served as payment for its part in the joint venture with the Crown for the capture and relocation of the wapiti herd.

Seven Wapiti Captured

The relocation of the Fiordland wapiti herd began yesterday as members of the wapiti capture consortium brought out seven animals during the day and continued their search last night.

One helicopter, operated by capture consortium members, moved into the wapiti area west of Lake Te Anau early yesterday morning, and seven wapiti had been brought out by mid-afternoon.

The recovery and relocation of the herd — a joint venture between the consortium and the State — involves the capture of several hundred wapiti, to be initially relocated near Te Anau.

Recovery operations would probably continue today, if the weather was suitable, the Commissioner for Crown Lands, Mr Joe Harty, said last night.

However, an increasing north-westerly wind in the area could adversely affect the work, as it is difficult to operate helicopters in high winds.

Best Types

"The idea is to bring out as many wapiti as possible and then select them," Mr Harty said.

Of the captured animals, the most desirable to the Crown were those showing the most wapiti characteristics.

As there was a considerable amount of hybridization with red deer in the Fiordland herd, "the Crown is wanting those that are as near to pure-bred wapiti as possible," he said.

The Crown wanted a herd of 300 of the best wapiti for relocation, with a desirable proportion of 75 per cent females and 25 per cent males.

It also wanted a further herd of 200 good crossbred animals, of which 180 were to be female and 20 male, for its own deer farming purposes, he said.

The wapiti will be graded in three categories, according to quality. The purest bred ani-

mals will be selected for the Crown's herd, to be relocated, and those of lesser pure quality will form the farming development herd, under the Department of Lands and Survey.

Those not suitable for either of these herds will be passed on to the consortium, and "they can do what they like with them," Mr Harty said.

Five Retained

Of the seven animals captured yesterday, five were retained by the Crown for further selection, and the other two animals were passed on to the consortium.

The four consortium members are all Te Anau people. One is a deer farmer, and the other three are helicopter operators.

Over the two-year recovery period, the herd of 300 would be continually selected so that the Crown would never own more than 300 deer, Mr Harty said.

"If better animals come in, there will be a continual upgrading of the herd, and the lower quality animals will be passed on," he said.

"The consortium has undertaken to upgrade the herd by breeding, with the introduction of pure wapiti blood from overseas."

However, this would not happen this year. The mating season is about April and the females would not have had time to settle enough to receive artificial insemination, he said.

AI Breeding

The females would be mated naturally to good wapiti bulls, some of which would be supplied by consortium member, Mr Evan Meredith.

Mr Meredith, the owner of a

wapiti park at Te Anau, last year conducted a programme of artificial insemination which was considered an international breakthrough.

Forty of his wapiti cows were artificially inseminated with Canadian wapiti bull sperm, and some calves have already been born.

Mr Harty said if the unauthorized wapiti trophy shoot, planned for March and April by Wanaka hunter Mr Alan Rodger, went ahead, it would create a "difficult situation."

"The recovery of wapiti is not an easy exercise," he said, "and to be successful the consortium has to be given every opportunity to succeed."

"The good animals are really wanted by the Crown for relocation, which does not want them shot by other people."

"We don't want a crowd of people in there stirring them up over a period when there is high activity by helicopters," he said.

Ground Capture

The consortium was looking at the possibility of using ground capture methods as an alternative to helicopter recovery.

This would involve ground hunters getting animals, using tranquilizers, which was easiest during the roaring season, he said.

If the bulls were bugling properly, the best bulls could be located, tranquilized and brought out.

However, the roar, in mid-April, coincided with the trophy shoot. The shooters, who were also after the good bulls, found this period most attractive for the same reasons as the recovery operators, Mr Harty said.

The consortium's recovery operation will continue for two years, with a right of review by the consortium or the State for a further year's extension.

It would continue right through, if weather permitted, Mr Harty said.

"Fiordland weather can turn nasty and stay nasty for a long time," he said. "There could be months at a time when they can't do anything because of high winds, rain or mist."

"The secret of successful helicopter operating in Fiordland is to get out when the weather is right," Mr Harty said.

Three Methods

Standard procedure for live animal capture is being used by the consortium. Three methods are used by helicopter operators, depending on conditions.

The first line of capture is with a net fired from a net gun by a crewman in the aircraft, which entangles the animal.

If the animal is in bush conditions, tranquilizer darts with radio transmitters can be used. If the deer runs under cover, it can be traced by the transmitter.

Small deer, or those stuck in scrub, can be bulldozed by a crewman, who jumps from the helicopter on to the animal's back.

Concern Over Removal Of Wapiti

Sir, — Surely to goodness a Minister of the Crown has more important duties which should be carried out rather than the unnecessary relocation of the wapiti species from the national park they are accustomed to, to a substitute to which they would not be.

The Southland Times 30.12.81 had a very interesting front page article which quoted the newly-elected MP for Wallace as being "a bit upset" when he first heard of the venture.

Has he not done his homework beforehand, fought to keep the Fiordland National Park and realized that Sections 32, 33 (2) and 63 of the National Parks Act 1952 are included in the insidious National Development Act 1979?

A very good question was asked by Mr Alan Bradley of Te Anau: "What's the good of taking them out of one park and putting them in another?" Frankly it was not answered properly.

As for poaching, surely there are laws regarding that sort of illegal activity and if not why?

For goodness' sake the Government should realize what they were elected for — responsibility to constituents. If they cannot do so, they should not be holding office.

Keith J. Williamson

Dunedin

Sir, — About the wapiti herd in Fiordland National Park, on reading American College Dictionary interpretation of national park, it reads "Area of scenic beauty, historical importance, or the like maintained by national government for the use of people."

On the grounds that the wapiti is a gift from an American President should be treated as a historical park the park.

What right has the Lands and Survey Department got to take a gift to a people of New Zealand and farm the like sheep? If that is not bad enough they are giving half the herd to a consortium.

If the Government can build a power station in the park, then they can build a fence around the wapiti block and maintain the herd within. The wapiti are a gift and nobody has the right to take them from the park.

Hacked Off

Wapiti Herd

Sir, — Would it be possible for every person connected with the removal of wapiti from our own democratically run park to write their personal reason for removing a gift that was meant to last and be enjoyed by all for years? Then the Times could publish. We, the poor abused people could maybe accept or reinstate a democratic park board. Come on park board committee, show you are individual persons and not overrun by bureaucracy. Show guts. Politicians should do something even if Rob won't, and not follow like lambs to slaughter.

5/1/82 Hunter Medley

Removal of Wapiti Questioned

Fears for the survival of the takahē and for the hybridization of the wapiti with red deer were only excuses for removing the wapiti herd from Fiordland, it was claimed last night.

Te Anau recreational hunter, Mr Warren Taylor, questioned the motives of the Government and the Southland Parks and Reserves Board in their support of the herd's removal.

Mr Taylor said the park board had been opposed to having any animals in Fiordland National Park for years and was only using the takahē and hybridization to "confuse the issue."

Deer farming people, he said, would be pressurizing the Government to get the animals out of the park for financial reasons.

Conservation groups were opposed to having introduced animals released anywhere in New Zealand, and were influencing the thinking of the parks board.

Suspicious

Because a relocation site had not been decided on, he could see a situation where there would be 300 to 400 wapiti sitting on a property with nowhere to go. He was suspicious that these

animals could then be sold.

Mr Taylor said he had not expected the recovery operation to start so soon.

"We were told before the election that the decision was many, many months away because of the complexities of the situation," he said.

The start of recovery operations had served to strengthen opposition to the relocation plan.

A meeting between the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr Elworthy, and the national executive of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association would, hopefully, be held later in the month, he said.

Decision

It would not be difficult for the Government to pull out of the joint venture, he said. The Minister had to make a decision, and there had to be a reason for his meeting with the executive.

The Government announce-

ment of the venture was an example of "political cowardice," he said.

"Clearly, the decision to delay the announcement until after the election was politically motivated."

"If the full facts had been exposed three to four weeks before the election, to give us the chance to express our opinions, it would have affected the Clutha and, particularly, the Awarua electorates."

Mr Taylor said that since the new Southland Parks and Reserves Board had been appointed, there had been no re-appointment of a Recreational Hunting Advisory Committee to advise on recreational hunting over the whole park.

"It makes me wonder whether the board really cares about recreational hunting at all," he said.

"The board wants a pristine type of park, of no interest to anyone except themselves."

New Method of Wapiti Breeding Proved

Eight calves have been born to wapiti cows after a breakthrough in artificial insemination techniques at a wapiti park in Te Anau.

The breakthrough in breeding has been made by Mr Evan Meredith who, for the first time, has crossed Fiordland wapiti with an overseas strain.

Mr Meredith artificially inseminated 40 of his wapiti cows with specially imported Canadian wapiti bull semen early last year.

The inseminations were carried out on three batches of cows during March, April and May, the traditional breeding season for wapiti in the wild.

The gestation period for wapiti is still in doubt, but is believed

to be between 33 and 35 weeks.

Mr Meredith said yesterday he believed the eight births would be the final number. The calves were, he said normal and in healthy condition. It was not known whether they were male or female as they were not being disturbed.

Sexing would be carried out when the calves were weaned at the end of May.

Confidence

Mr Meredith said the eight births had given him great con-

fidence for future breeding programmes.

"I may even look at breeding from a commercial point of view, in supplying semen to other farmers in New Zealand with cross-bred or wapiti deer."

Mr Meredith, in his capacity as a member of the Fiordland wapiti capture consortium, will be working to upgrade the Crown's wapiti herd through selective breeding.

Female wapiti will be mated naturally to good wapiti bulls, some of which will be supplied by Mr Meredith.

Wapiti Capture To Start Tomorrow

31/12/81

The Fiordland wapiti capture consortium has been given the go-ahead to begin lifting wapiti out of Fiordland National Park, by the Commissioner for Crown Lands, Mr Joe Harty.

The wapiti capture and relocation operation, a joint venture between the consortium and the State, is expected to be under way tomorrow.

Responsibility for overall control of the operation in Southland will be held jointly by Mr Harty and the Southland Conservator of Forests, Mr K. W. Prior.

At a local level in Te Anau, Mr John von Tunzelman, of the New Zealand Forest Service, and a national park ranger, Mr Ted Atkinson, will oversee operations.

The agreement between the consortium and the State is for a two-year period of operations with a right of review by both parties, for a further year's extensions.

Shoot Cancelled

Meanwhile, the wapiti area is to remain closed to recreational hunters and the 1982 wapiti trophy shoot has been cancelled.

Mr Harty warned last night against a proposal by a Wanaka recreational hunter, Mr Alan Rodger, to organize his own shoot.

This would be an "illegal activity," he said, and the illegal use of firearms was "a very serious matter."

However, Mr Rodger said last night he was definitely going ahead with his shoot.

This was also in spite of an appeal by the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr Elworthy, in Te Anau on Tuesday. Mr Elworthy called on Mr Rodger to withdraw the comments he had made in that day's Southland Times, as he said he could not hold discussions "under threat."

"Rights"

"I am not threatening the Minister," Mr Rodger said. "I am just telling him that we are not going to sit back and be denied our rights and our heritage."

Mr Rodger said he has already received six letters of support and four or five telephone calls since the insertion

of his notice about a shoot in five newspapers last Saturday.

Asked if he was worried about the penalties of holding an illegal shoot, Mr Rodger said "not particularly so."

Recreational hunters had been "pushed into a corner" by Mr Elworthy and his heads of departments and they had to stand up for their rights sooner or later.

Mr Rodger said he was pleased the Minister had opened the way for submissions on the wapiti issue this week. He intended to make an individual submission, that the existing wapiti area in Fiordland National Park be set up as a special area for the management of wapiti.

26 Deer Retained For Crown

9/1/81

After a week of operations, the Fiordland wapiti capture consortium has brought 60 animals out of the park.

Of these, 17 deer have been allocated for the Crown's wapiti relocation herd, nine are to go to the Crown's deer farming herd, and 34 have been passed on to the consortium operators.

The joint venture between the Crown and the consortium is going well, according to the Commissioner for Crown Lands, Mr Joe Harty.

Improved weather in recent days was assisting the helicopter capture operations, he said last night.

The operation to bring out the wapiti, crossbreds and red deer is being undertaken by three consortium members, Messrs Dick Deaker, Jim Kane and Richard Hayes, on a rotation basis.

The fourth consortium member, Mr Evan Meredith, a deer farmer is to upgrade the

Crown's wapiti herd through selective breeding, before its ultimate relocation.

System Changed

The present capture operation in the wapiti area has forced a change in the helicopter deer recovery block system in the rest of Fiordland National Park.

A condition of the joint venture was that the three consortium helicopter operators should be allowed to retain areas they had in other parts of the park.

Before December, the deer recovery was a six-block system, with two helicopters operating in each block, and the blocks being rotated monthly.

It has now reverted to a 12-block system, two of the blocks being in the wapiti area, which covers 10 per cent of the park.

The three consortium operators are in charge of deer capture in this area and they have retained a block each in other parts of the park.

The other seven blocks have been allocated to Alpine Helicopters (3), Thompson Bros (1), D. Cook (1) and Avenger Helicopters (1).

All 10 blocks outside the wapiti area have been issued on a company-helicopter per block basis, with blocks rotating monthly.

Reduced Area

The decision to revert to a 12-block system, which was last used in September, 1980 was made to condense all the companies into a reduced area, the senior ranger in charge of helicopter operations, Mr Ted Atkinson, said last night.

The system was introduced in view of the previous year's operations and after submissions had been received from the companies, he said.

Mr Atkinson understood that capture levels this year were comparable to the December-January period in 1980.

The emphasis, he said, had now shifted back to live animals because of a strengthening in that market.

Live deer at present accounted for about 20 per cent of the total catch.



As part of the Fiordland wapiti relocation venture, deer are being flown out of the wapiti area to an inspection point near Te Anau. Here, a Fiordland National Park senior ranger, Mr Ted Atkinson (left), removes a net from a deer, with the help of Mr Mark Hayes. The deer was later chosen for inclusion in the Crown's breeding herd.

Minister of Lands lauded

THE DECISION to move the wapiti out of Fiordland National Park has won acclaim for the new Minister of Lands and Forests, Jonathan Elworthy.

Elworthy announced his decision only days after taking over the two portfolios from the controversial Venn Young. Conservationists say they are agreeably surprised by Elworthy's first move as Minister.

Guy Salmon of the Native Forests Action Council said the decision was one which conservationists had been awaiting for a long time.

"It has been a thorny problem because many deerstalkers still believe the wapiti herd could really survive in the long term amid the red deer in Fiordland National Park.

'Commitment'

"They also feared that taking the wapiti out of Fiordland would mean the end of wapiti in the wild altogether.

"The Government's firm commitment to establish the wapiti herd somewhere else is what has made it politically possible to take the animals out of Fiordland," he said. "We will have to look closely at the areas now being suggested for wapiti, but there is no doubt that a suitable area will be found for them."

All New Zealanders would be pleased that the decision taken greatly improved the survival chances of the takahe, he said.

'Priority'

"The takahe is a native bird and is unique, while the wapiti is an animal that is fairly common in other parts of the world.

"National parks are for our native plants and animals first and foremost, and it is important that the takahe should have priority there, while another home is found for the wapiti."

Mr Salmon said conservationists were also concerned that restrictions on commercial hunting in Fiordland's huge wapiti area were leading to a big build-up in numbers of both wapiti and red deer.

'Hammering'

"The vegetation in there has been taking a real hammering — whole series of plants are just disappearing because they happen to be like ice-cream to some imported animals."

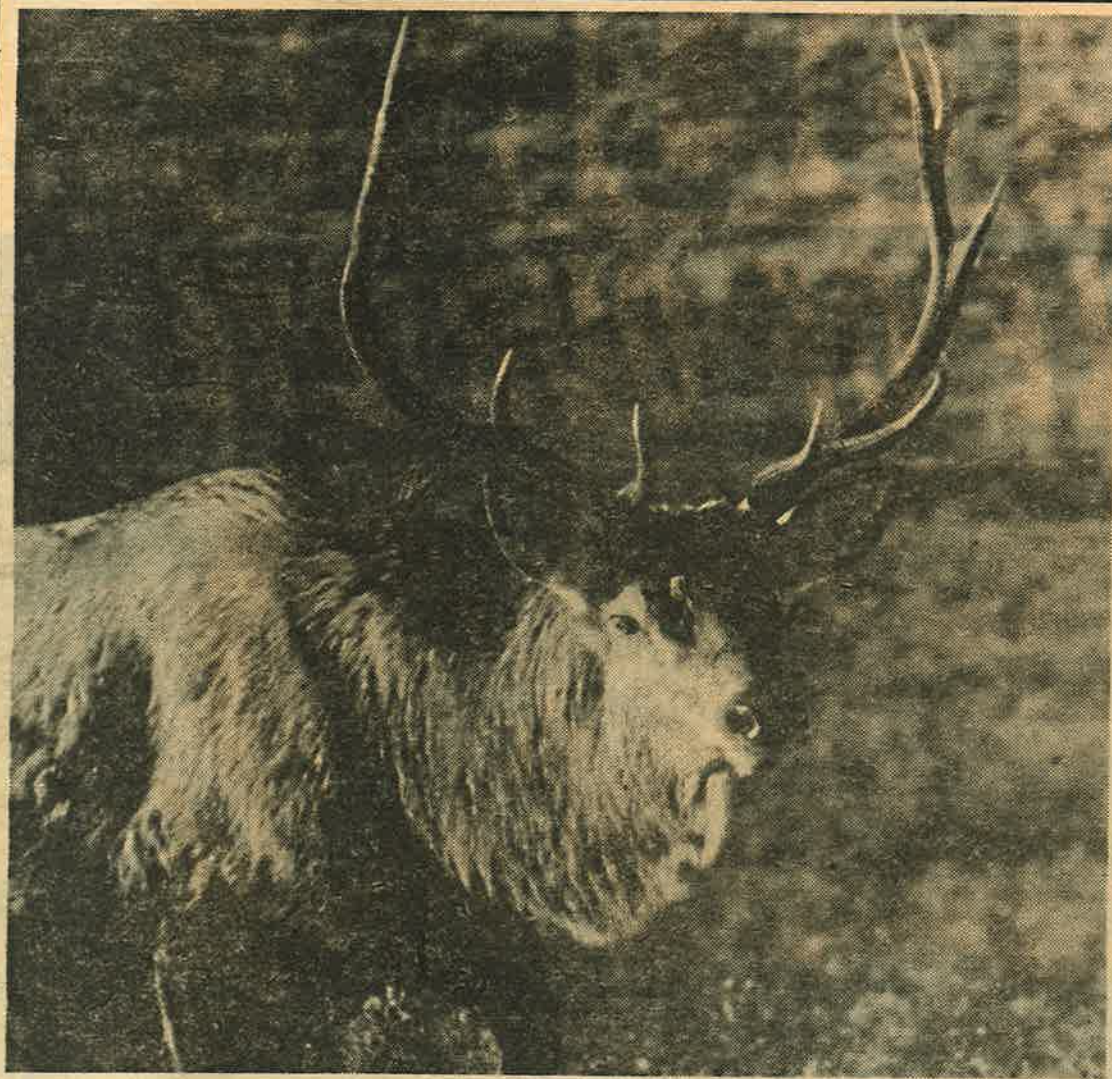
Conservation organisations say they will be holding discussions with deerstalkers as well as with the Minister of Forests about the suitability of the three areas now being looked at as future wapiti areas.

The three areas are the Wanganui-Waitotara hill country, and two areas near Nelson: the Richmond Range in the east and the Karamea catchment in the west.

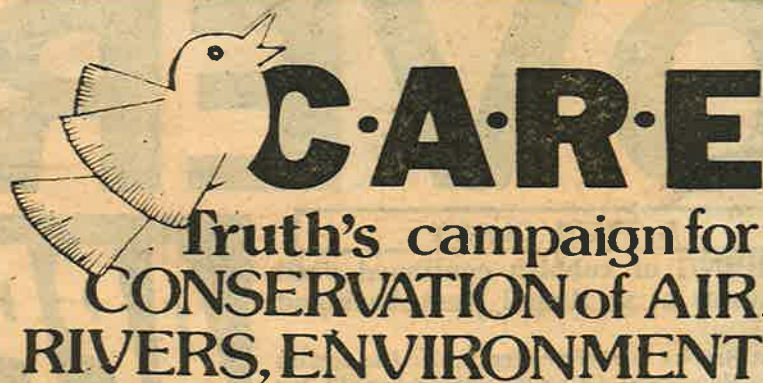


WITH the removal of the wapiti the takahe will have less competition on the tussock range.

WAPITI RESCUE BID



INTERBREEDING is proving the wapiti's downfall.



THE WAPITI are to be rescued from Fiordland National Park.

Wapiti, or North American elk, are heavyweight deer with spectacular antlers. The only New Zealand herd runs wild in Fiordland.

Much sought after by trophy hunters, they have been in danger of extinction as a separate species in Fiordland, because of interbreeding with red deer.

Now the wapiti herd will be airlifted out of Fiordland for eventual relocation elsewhere in New Zealand, the Government has announced. The search is on for a

new home for the wapiti.

The aim is to find an extensive tract of territory in which the big animals can roam freely, and where deerstalkers can pursue their greatest prize.

A team of Forest Service and Lands Department officials are studying areas that might be suitable in both North and South Islands.

Long term survival of the herd will depend on finding a habitat in which red deer are absent. Aggressively interbreeding red deer have vir-

tually swamped Fiordland's wapiti population, hybridising them into welterweight weaklings with puny antlers.

This situation has convinced scientists that the wapiti will not survive in Fiordland National Park in the long run.

The wapiti herd from Fiordland is now to be upgraded by selective breeding and possible introduction of new bloodlines from America, before being released into a new wild habitat. Deer farmers will also benefit from the breeding programme.

The Winners In Wapiti Wrangle

THE BATTLE of the wapiti continues. The four-man deer capture consortium continued its operations this week. Recreational hunters continued planning for a wapiti shoot later in the year.

It's pretty easy to see who is on the winning team.

The organizer of the illegal shoot, Mr Alan Rodger, said the authorities could slam him in gaol if they wanted to.

While that's unlikely to happen, it would hardly help his cause if he was.

But that's about as far as the story has progressed.

The New Zealand Deerstalkers Association's national executive has got no further with arranging a meeting with the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr Elworthy.

It appears he is busy familiarizing himself with the areas that fall into his new portfolios.

One of them, of course, just happens to be wapiti.

Velvet Not So Deer

DEER VELVET has been in abundance this year with vast quantities being exported to Asian countries for use as a medicine.

A Korean buyer, Mr J. B. Hong, was in Invercargill this week buying some 700kg of dry velvet from Wrightson NMA on behalf of a co-operative association of herbal medicine dealers in his country.

The market for velvet within New Zealand has stabilized this year after reaching an almost unrealistic peak two years ago when velvet was being bought from hunters and farmers at up to \$260 a kilogram.

This year, prices are on a par with last year with top grade velvet fetching \$110 to \$120 from dealers.

All velvet entering Korea from new Zealand is taxed 150 per cent on its "check price" of \$450 whereas the superior Russian product is taxed at a level of \$670 a kg.

Last year, it was predicted that better quality velvet would be on the mar-

ket in New Zealand this year as farmers culled out poorer quality stags. However, the absence of suitable slaughtering facilities prevented large-scale culling.

A deer slaughterhouse will soon be operational at Mossburn and its benefits should be noticed next year with the production of smaller amounts of a better quality product.

CRIFFELS 1st BREEDING STAG SALE

THE quality of Criffel bred weaners is known throughout New Zealand. Such quality is the result of careful selection of breeding sires.

Specially selected sale offering of 25 NZ Wapiti and Wapiti red hybrid stags 3-4-6 year old. 20 6-year-old red deer stags, Criffel born and bred, to be held Friday January 22, 1982 at Criffel selling yards, Wanaka beginning at 1pm.

The history of these breeding stags, their live weights and velvet weights are all available. Their velvet may be inspected at the Luggate GPHM on the morning of the sale.

THE SELECTION OF TOP BREEDING STAGS TO MAXIMISE PRODUCT RETURNS HAS BECOME INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT WITH THE SLAUGHTER OF DEER GETTING UNDER WAY.

MAKE YOUR SELECTION AT CRIFFEL

Viewing on sale day or prior to the sale by arrangement with your stock firm.

Wanaka Lions will provide a light luncheon.

Sale conducted by Wrightson NMA Ltd
8029 Alexandra

AH N. J. Dowling 7654

and Southland Farmers Co-op Assn Ltd Invercargill 81-929
AH G. Erskine 78-097

30/12/81

WILL AID TAKAHE

Notornis left to wasteland

by Truth's
environment writer

SURVIVAL chances of an endangered native bird will take a big step forward when the wapiti herd is removed from Fiordland National Park.

The 180,000 hectare wapiti range overlaps with the habitat of the takahe or notornis, a flightless native bird that was thought to be

extinct until it was re-discovered in Fiordland in the early 1950s. Takahe and deer eat the same food plants, competing with each

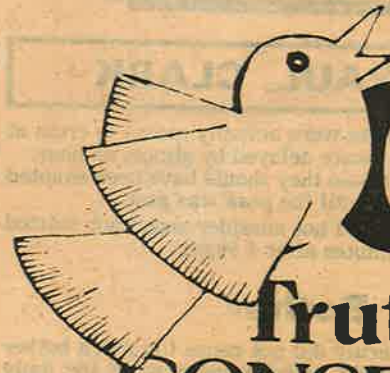
other for survival in the mist-swept mountain tops of Fiordland National Park. Takahe numbers are declining steadily. This unique bird is now fighting for survival in the park's Murchison Mountains.

Policy

Meanwhile deer numbers are high in the adjoining wapiti area, because of a government policy which restricts commercial hunting in the area.

Wildlife Service scientists have drawn up a plan to help the takahe towards long-term survival.

Trials of sprinkling fertiliser on im-



CARE

Truth's campaign for
**CONSERVATION of AIR,
RIVERS, ENVIRONMENT**

poverished tussock lands have given takahe nutrition a boost, and improved the bird's breeding success in one area. Stoat trapping also helps.

Crucial

But a crucial part of the survival plan is to move part of the takahe

population out of the Murchison Mountains into other parts of Fiordland.

The hard-pressed wildlife scientists don't want all their takahe eggs in one basket — especially such a cold, unfavourable basket as the Murchison Mountains. They hope to find more favourable habitats for

the endangered bird elsewhere in Fiordland.

But before the takahe can be moved into a potentially suitable habitat, the deer population has to be greatly reduced.

Removing the wapiti to another part of New Zealand will clear the

way for a crackdown on skyrocketing red deer numbers, whose intensive browsing of food plants wrecks the chances of takahe survival.

With the wapiti and red deer gone, the takahe can be moved in and Operation Survival will have a real hope of success.

30 Interested In Joining Shoot

Thirty recreational hunters have now expressed interest in joining Mr Alan Rodger, of Wanaka, on his proposed illegal 1982 wapiti trophy shoot.

Mr Rodger plans to go into the wapiti area in the last week of March for a two week shoot.

He said yesterday he would be insisting that all hunters on the shoot carried radios, and that he had written to the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board to ask if park board staff at Te Anau would accept radio calls.

Mr Rodger still held the belief that the hunters could not be physically stopped from going into the park. But he said he would not tolerate violence from anyone as he wanted the shoot to be a peaceful one.

Mr Rodger has replied to letters from the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr Elworthy, and the Southland commissioner of Crown Lands, Mr Joe Harty, which asked him to call off the shoot.

Submission

He has sent a submission outlining his views on the relocation of the Fiordland National Park wapiti to the park board.

In the meantime, the relocation operation by the four-man consortium continues.

Southland conservator of forests, Mr Keith Prior, said yes-

terday that good weather during the past few days had helped the venture. The operators had been able to go into the western area, in the vicinity of George and Bligh sounds. The quality of animals appeared to have improved.

Of the 18 animals caught on Saturday, seven were suitable for either the Crown's relocation or farming herds.

Adverse conditions earlier on had restricted operations to the frontal area of the Stuart Mountains. It was anticipated better quality animals would be found further in.

13/1/82



These wapiti twins, believed to be the only ones in New Zealand, were born on a farm just north of Riversdale recently. The owner, Mr G. L. Orr, believes the two bull calves are unique in that they are the only wapiti twins to be born here. They are about 12 days' old, and are by a pure-bred wapiti bull and cow. The cow was one of two purchased by Mr Orr at the first wapiti sale at Manapouri a few years ago. They were the first two wapiti hinds sold at auction in New Zealand. Mr Orr said he could not put a price on the twins, but said at this stage he thought he would keep them. Including recently born calves, Mr Orr has 120 deer on his property. He has been farming deer since 1978.

Wapiti Herd

Sir, — The remarks by the Minister of Lands, Mr Elworthy's on the news recently in regard to country people whom he says should be encouraged to continue with the good work they do, are about as meaningful as his earlier assurance that he would listen to the recreational hunters' deputation in Te Anau in connection with the wapiti out of Fiordland fiasco. The "Fiordland Pirates" struck at dawn on New Year's morning and all the departmental offices were closed down tight with no avenue of protest available.

The wapiti were given to the people for pleasure and recreation, not to be plundered for profits. The report of the success or failure of the extraction of these animals from the people's park in the daily morning press is a most depressing start for the day by the people who have contributed so much in the past to their survival. That the Commissioner of Crown Lands would be a party to a group that can remove hinds from their fawns at five weeks of age, subject

males in velvet to the hurly burly of capture and being dumped into some large wire cage is rather contrary to a farmer's attitude towards his animals.

The re-location of the wapiti has been dreamed up by some Government departmental people, egged on by commercial people and also parks authorities, who hate deer of any description. Besides the commercial people want the final dividend. But what about the re-located herd? What a target.

If the recreational hunters think they will ever derive anything from this disgusting affair just turn back the pages and that will assure you of nil.

One of New Zealand's most highly respected MPs once remarked at the Blue Mountains branch annual dinner that the Deerstalkers Association was one of the most worth-while organizations in this country. "You don't come running to the Government for handouts or subsidies, you train young people and assist in search and rescue work, besides this function is a credit to you all." Membership then 140, today, 40.

Messrs Henderson and Collett's rubbing of Mr Warren Taylor is typical treatment in today's society of a genuine sincere man who sees both sides of the problem and wants it solved to both's satisfaction. Their quotation of 300,000 visitors to the park who were not interested in deer is ridiculous. Few, if any, reached the wapiti area. Many slept in buses en route to Milford, thousands so fast in cars they couldn't take their eyes off the road, and trout fishermen that never left their boats or the lakes.

I have hunted the wapiti or elk in Fiordland and I've watched them graze peacefully nearby as I fished for the native cutthroat trout in Yellowstone Park. So I have a little knowledge of what I demand by right to see retained for the youth and hunters of tomorrow, as it was retained for me by my elders of yesterday. For Mr Rodgers, of Wanaka, who wants to go hunt a trophy, I ask that this small request be granted, for myself nothing.

A. H. Harvey

McNab
[Abridged. — Ed]

Sir, — The typical narrow-minded attitude displayed last week by Messrs Collett and Henderson is the underlying reason why, over the past 30 years, we are now seeing the demise of our small wapiti herd in Fiordland. These people have not even tried to represent the majority view of endeavouring to accommodate the interests of people who have the inherent right to their recreational pursuits. Instead the outcome of their

efforts is that they have promoted and preserved the commercial interests at the expense of the rights of the genuine real park users. History will recall that the administration must be held solely responsible for this current despicable state of affairs of not transmitting the genuine interests of real park users into a coherent policy for them.

The present conflict of opinion clearly illustrates that individuals are always the losers when State agencies are run by undemocratic means. Special interests prevail that attach no special value to individuals' recreation. It allows the whole administration process to be pre-conditioned by their own reflexes instead of what is good and proper for that of the individual.

The result is that here we have repeated again where the Minister in Charge, Mr Elworthy, is trying to be on both sides. Government civil servants are working full time trying to devise plans and costly advertisements to keep themselves in jobs to promote a Ministry of Recreation and Sport. In the same building other civil servants and park board administrators equally dedicated to recreation and sport are working full time spending park users' money to deny them their right of recreation and sport.

The situation would be ludicrous if it were not so serious. These independent agencies are literally out of control because they are not democratically run.

This autocratic system has been freely granted to people like Messrs Henderson and Collett simply because this Government has, contrary to all other public administrations, steadfastly refused to grant elected representation to a public organization. They think that central government agencies, one promoting recreation and sport and the other equally expensive agency exterminating it, know more about what should be done than so-called uninformed voters paying for such self defeating and destructive policies.

Nobody can claim the success of their policies is to be found in the figure of 300,000 people visiting Fiordland. Such useless figures miss the essential point. These people who travel in buses and cars are not real park users — they are park-seers and mostly come from abroad and pay no taxes for the privilege. By comparison the people who penetrate the park and use its rock bivvies and hunt its animals are the real park users. They pay taxes for its administration and have the absolute right to enjoy its recreation and sporting pursuits accordingly.

What these administrators are saying and carrying out with policy is that all

the people who are the real park users should be forced to pay taxes for administrators to adopt and preserve in perpetuity a policy that brings about the extermination of their own best interests.

Wiping out wapiti from the area only removes the animal — not the public objection. The only real course of action is to re-establish a pure-bred selected imported herd back into the area for the real park users again using all the modern aerial techniques and hunting methods to control numbers like other enlightened world game administrators would do.

Alister McDonald

Dipton

Helicopter Men Found Safe

A Manapouri helicopter pilot and his shooter were last night wondering at their mixed blessings, after surviving their second crash in a month.

Mr Jim Kane, aged 34, the pilot, and Mr Michael Mitchell, aged 25, were found safe and well yesterday at the head of the south-west arm of George Sound, after a cold night in the bush.

While rescuers wondered at their luck to be found alive and well, the two men were not so sure.

Having experienced their second crash in a month — both because of engine failure — Mr Kane said they could not decide whether they were lucky or not.

The pair left Te Anau on a wapiti recovery trip on Monday evening, but did not return as scheduled.

Search

A search and rescue operation began at first light yesterday, and by early afternoon, hopes of finding the two men alive were dwindling.

Three privately-owned helicopters and an RNZAF Friendship scoured the rugged Glaisnock Wilderness area — where the missing Hughes 500D had

last been sighted — during the morning, but saw no sign of the two men.

But just before 2pm they were spotted, waving furiously from a beach at the head of the arm, and were picked up by a helicopter piloted by Mr Bill Black.

Mr Kane later described their night out as long, cold and tiring.

The helicopter's engine had cut out soon after 8pm, and he had been forced to put it down into the icy waters of the sound.

Swam Ashore

There was no time to rescue the helicopter's emergency beacon, and the two men had to swim 100 metres to shore.

There, they found two drums, which they used as rafts to make their way up the sound, in the direction of a hut they had seen before landing.

After a gruelling 10 hours of paddling, they beached their drums, and plunged into the bush to spend the night.

"It was pretty cold out there — but not as cold as it might have been," said Mr Kane. "It would have been much worse higher up."

The men began tramping through the bush first thing yesterday morning, and arrived at the hut about 10am.

There, they met a tramping party who had camped the night, and were given a welcome cup of tea.

"From then on there was no problem," Mr Kane said. "The only thing we were worried about was that we couldn't tell anyone we were safe and sound."

Lucky

A spokesman at the Search and Rescue Co-ordination Centre, Squadron Leader David Geddes, said the men had been extremely lucky to escape without injury, and to find their way back to the hut.

Fiordland's notorious weather

had treated the two kindly, and they had been fortunate to find drums to help their trip up the sound.

Having lost their emergency beacon, they could have been lost for days, he said.

But the two men last night did not want to chance their "luck" again.

Their first accident, which happened in Nelson, was on December 18 — exactly a month before the Fiordland crash.

They were not planning to be flying on February 18.

"We will be spending that day in the pub," said Mr Kane.

The men were working as part of a four-member wapiti capture consortium which was set up last month to work with the Crown in a joint wapiti relocation venture.

Offers of help flooded in to Te Anau yesterday, especially from Fiordland helicopter operators, who were willing to take part in the air searches.



Mr Jim Kane, the pilot of the crashed helicopter, who says he will not be flying on February 18.



Tired, but pleased to be home... Mr Michael Mitchell, the shooter from the missing Hughes 500, at Te Anau Airport yesterday.



WORKS MANAGER

Game and Meat Processing
Ashburton

CANTERBURY VENISON (NZ) LTD is a new public company recently established to undertake the slaughtering and processing of farmed deer, and the further processing of lamb for export markets. The deer will be drawn throughout the South Island areas, and will be processed to comply with the highest world marketing standards. Frozen lamb carcasses will be drawn from an associated meat export company. Development of the operation has so far proceeded to the point that tenders will shortly be called to commence construction of deer slaughter premises, a game packing house and a meat packing house on acquired land 5 miles from Ashburton.

The Works Manager will report directly to the Managing Director located in Christchurch and will be responsible for the site supervision of the operation from its inception, drawing on the available general management engineering and meat processing expertise within the company as appropriate. It is important that applicants, in addition to meat industry experience have a practical appreciation of production related engineering, and are skilled in developing and maintaining harmonious labour relationships. It is unlikely that the required levels of experience and authority would be found in someone aged under 28 years.

The position will have strong appeal to an energetic, logically thinking manager who has the capacity to accept wider responsibilities as the company grows. Employment conditions including remuneration, will be negotiated at the level necessary to attract the successful candidate.

Initial enquiries should be directed in confidence to Murray Rodgers phone (03) 50-913 Christchurch or by writing to him at PO Box 391.

McDougall Rodgers Associates Ltd
Management Consultants

10th Floor, BNZ House, Cathedral Square
PO Box 391 Christchurch Phones 50-913, 67-026





Helicopter pilots Mr Richard Hayes (left) and Mr Bill Black discussing search tactics before taking off from Te Anau airport yesterday to search for the missing helicopter.

11/1/82 Wapiti Herd

Mr. — I wonder how many different parties and associations, different meetings, conferences and so on have been held over the years trying to get control, of or to protect, our beautiful wapiti herd. And they have all been defeated. But still they come back. This year, 1982, I see two more powerful hunters are interested. I wonder how far they will get. I like their approach — tough.

I think the whole situation could be cleaned up inside of two weeks if the hunters and others putting in their claims throughout New Zealand got down to business. They have got to move now as the Government is more or less forcing their hands. It's do or die.

So how do the hunters force the Government's hand? It cuts both ways. Someone should point out to the Forest Service and the Fiordland Park Board that there are a lot of people called New Zealanders who live in this country with as much right to the wapiti and Crown land as they have. It's all part of our heritage. And while we're at it, fight for all our animals and birds. Don't let this hunting ground become another Stewart Island. Rally round Southlanders and help these two hunters.

Bluff

D. Hawkiess



Sorting through deer velvet at Wrightson NMA's deer factory in Invercargill yesterday was a Korean buyer, Mr J. B. Hong (right), who will be taking home about 700kg of dried velvet this trip. He is helped by the assistant factory manager, Mr Barry Irving (left), and the processing factory manager, Mr George Too.

Deer Velvet In Good Supply

Deer velvet has been in plentiful supply so far this season and many dealers have filled their orders.

Most had filled their orders before Christmas, paying prices comparable to last season.

Prices for velvet stabilized last season after the highs of the 1979-80 period when prices for A grade velvet exceeded \$260 a kilogram.

This year "Super A grade" is fetching \$110 to \$120, A grade \$90 to \$110 and B grade \$50 to \$70.

With the market emphasis being placed on quality this season, there was a limited market for the lower grades, with many dealers not buying them.

Wilson Neill, in Dunedin, bought actively before Christmas and filled all its orders, according to a divisional manager, Mr C. Hartnell.

Mr Hartnell said that there appeared to be fewer bulk buyers of velvet this season, with some possibly being discouraged by the drop in prices last season.

Prices Maintained

However, price levels have been maintained from last year, at a level many buyers see as being more realistic.

Mr Hartnell said that his company is not buying at the moment but will open buying again if the demand requires. However, he said the buyers, mostly Koreans, normally set a quota which they do not exceed.

It was predicted last year that there would be less velvet available this year, with deer farmers having culled out poorer quality animals.

However, the absence of a deer slaughtering facility in the Otago-Southland area prevented any large-scale culling from taking place.

Wilson Neill is part of a joint venture that plans operating a deer slaughterhouse at Mossburn. Mr Hartnell said that a few test animals were killed before Christmas and it is hoped the facility will be in full production next month.

It is expected that less velvet will be available after culling next year, but it will be of better overall quality.

The field manager for Dunedin-based Taimex Trading, which operates a processing factory in Central Otago, Mr John Smith, is also predicting a good season.

"This year it has been brought home to people that if stags are not growing good velvet they should cull them out," he said.

Slaughterhouse

At the end of the month another deer slaughterhouse will open at Hokitika, run by Western Frozen Products, Mr Smith said.

He said the quality of velvet has already started to improve

as stags are held on farms longer and deer farmers are learning correct cutting techniques.

"Compared with three years ago, New Zealand velvet is twice as good," Mr Smith said.

Taimex Trading had reached its quota. The firm's Korean buyer had been over before Christmas and was coming back for more "any day," Mr Smith said.

Mr Smith said his company had been dealing with the one buyer and each year he was buying a little more for his home market.

Christchurch-based Edmonds Game Consolidated Ltd is one of few buyers taking in the poorer quality velvet.

Edmonds' manager, Mr Gregg Brimmicombe, said yesterday that his company had almost reached its quota and he was uncertain how much longer they would continue buying.

Edmonds was paying \$110 for the super A grade, \$90 for A, \$50 for sub-A or B grade, \$22 for C grade, and \$11 for D grade.

Mr Brimmicombe said they were not getting a lot of the lower grades, but they did have it priced which many of the other firms did not.

Edmonds runs its velvet operations as part of a joint venture with the San Francisco-based Ujin Enterprises.

Local Factory

In Invercargill, Wrightson NMA operate a large-scale deer velvet factory undertaking processing under the watchful eye of Mr George Too, a Korean who now resides in New Zealand.

Wrightsons has a number of velvet buyers who co-ordinate buying through normal stock representatives. All velvet bought is transported to the Invercargill factory — Wrightson's only one in this country.

The New Zealand manager for Wrightsons deer marketing operation, Mr Dick Hughes, of Invercargill, said that last year his company purchased some 28,000 pounds of velvet. This year it expects to deal in about 30,000 pounds.

Mr Hughes said marketing deer velvet is a risky business, especially when dealing with the Korean Government, whose laws and regulations can change overnight.

This year new regulations had been introduced in Korea regarding the level of blood in the product. The blood content in the velvet is one of the considerations when it is bought on the Korean market and last year there had been instances reported of the velvet being coloured with chicken blood to fetch higher prices.

Contrary to popular belief, the Koreans do not use the vel-

vet as an aphrodisiac, but as a medicine along with herbs.

Velvet, unlike deer antler which is crushed, is sold in its original form and graded according to its smell, size and colour.

Mr Hughes said that a big antler from a larger animal could be a sign that it is better medicinally than a smaller piece from a smaller animal.

After processing — which involves drying over about 12 days in a controlled oven — the velvet is reduced in weight by about 75 per cent. It is then ready for export.

Korean buyers come to New Zealand every three or four weeks during the season to buy for their home market.

Buyer

One such buyer, Mr J. B. Hong, was in Invercargill this week to buy about 700kg on behalf of the Herbal Medicines Traders Association — a co-operative of Korean herbal dealers.

The dry velvet is sold for about \$450 a kilogram. On entering Korea, it is subject to 150 per cent import tax.

Mr Hughes said that the New Zealand product is about the fourth best in the world compared to the Russian product at \$670 a kg, Chinese at \$600, and United States at \$500. West Germany produces a similar type product to New Zealand and has a check price of \$450 a kg in Korea. The lower quality Alaskan product fetches \$350 a kg.

Mr Hughes said the Koreans are becoming more selective, and the New Zealand product will have to improve "as it is doing."

"With improvements in processing, I believe next year our product could improve to third best, if not second," he said.

More Comment on Fate Of Wapiti

Sir, — So the wild horses of the Kaimaniwa's go free by protective legislation to graze and trample amid native beech and red tussock because someone convinced authority they were not causing any significant environmental damage.

Yet the wapiti in Fiordland are hounded from the air and bulldogged into rocky creek-beds, netted and yanked out of their environment to languish behind wire and the public see some hoary old library photos of unrelated deer damage to convince them the park can't cope with wapiti.

The conclusion of the American-NZ Fiordland Expedition 1949, the most comprehensive investigation on the matter, stated that "a moderate population of wapiti need not be a threat to Fiordland forests" (provided red deer were kept in check) and that the area was well suited to the production of a big game animal.

In the early 1960s following requests from HRH the Duke of Edinburgh and Sir Peter Scott for a report, five of the world's top ecologists concluded — "attempts to eradicate wapiti from Fiordland were mistaken and unrealistic — they had attained a balance capable of being maintained by management, and provide important recreation for New Zealanders."

In November 1978, Mr Young told the NZDA: "The animals in Fiordland have reached such low numbers the time is ripe to consider game management," and he would request the National Parks Authority to "review its policy on wapiti with a view to ensuring that a trophy herd continue to exist in the Fiordland area."

Clause 28 of the Act provides for the (local) board with the consent of the Authority to "set aside any part of the park for any specified purpose of public recreation."

Sir, the wapiti in its natural setting is the greatest single hunting attraction in Australasia — the park is 3.5 million acres in extent. If we can't have an administration with the wit and the willingness to interpret the Act in such a way that only one sixth part of that area can be separately legislated as a recreational hunting area (not for "preserving red deer" as Mr Henderson alleges), then it is past time we changed the method of representation to better interpret the public wishes and needs for more varied use of such a vast area.

As we have seen in the Manapouri and mining issues, the Government is not averse to bending the Act when it suits them.

If the takahe can't thrive in the Murchison Mountains with all the encouragement and control effort that has gone into that sector, then it's the takahe that need relocation instead, and along with them the anti-wapiti lobby — preferably as far away as possible.

It is nonsense for Mr Henderson to suggest the public at large are demanding the board preserve the whole park for protection of native fauna and flora alone, without diversification into other recreational possibilities it is capable of supporting satisfactorily.

Seventy thousand mostly local signatures for a short-duration petition surely deserved better than a nil consideration. Can he muster that support in favour of relocation? How many of his 300,000 "visitors" venture into the Wild Native or Wapiti rivers, Lake Marchant, George Sound Tops, or Nitz Creek for example?

I will not accept Mr Henderson's contention that after 75 years without spreading beyond their present area, and with today's control measures that a trophy herd could not be contained by geographical boundaries in a slightly reduced wapiti area as suggested by Mr G. H. Hall-Jones, one of two board members to favour retaining wapiti in the February 1980 submissions. (Neither of these two one-term board members were reappointed.)

Of course Mr Henderson would not consider it economically possible because his imagination doesn't extend to consider game management as practised successfully overseas.

Finally, I do not accept there were no political ploys. Not three months ago, prior to the election, Mr Young assured "no final decision for some time." Yet we now have the precipitate capture of wapiti with no site for the promised "relocation scheme" and against most recommendations except the board itself, even before the new Minister has received new submissions he promised to consider on the matter.

In addition we now find a new party, the Crown, getting in on the deal, setting themselves up in the deer-farming business for another slice of profit off public lands along with the recovery consortium, while the recreational hunter waits for the scraps.

W. A. Bell

Otago

Sir, — Mr Harty the Commissioner for Brown Lands, and the board of the Fiordland National Park should get out and let someone in who knows what they are doing and is interested in all aspects of the park. The stoats have increased in numbers and the bird life is diminishing under their care. They have allowed the taking of wapiti out of the park, millions

of dollars worth. If you have a helicopter you can do anything, but if you are a hunter you are told you cannot shoot wapiti.

There has never been a management policy for our wapiti and how much have we, the taxpayers, received from the wapiti that have been taken? It is an insult to President Roosevelt that they cannot be retained where they were liberated. They must stay and not be relocated. What kind of board can let wapiti out of our park. The Fiordland National Park should be created a special area even if smaller under section 12 of the National Parks Act.

If there is no action from the board very soon I for one will be going into the wapiti area in March, April to keep the wapiti off the flats and tops. Parties of us did this in the early seventies to stop the poachers taking wapiti. I hope many more can do the same. We do not have to carry firearms to do this job. There has been no co-operation from Government and the helicopters in the past, so why should we co-operate with them now?

How can any consortium from Southland work in with a Government that is bent on removing the wapiti from the park and Southland? Words fail me. Please don't say it's for the good of the wapiti and the park. The sooner there's a public meeting the better.

David Mackie
Clinton RD

Concern Over Removal Of Wapiti

Sir, — May I reply to the letter from the members of the Southland Parks and Reserves Board attacking Mr W. Taylor over the wapiti? They say they hope to remove doubts about the availability of public information. The answer is it is impossible to shift people's opinion, and there are always two sides to every story.

Mr Young was shown the wapiti area in September, 1979. The bare ridges were the first thing he was shown, but in all birch bush country throughout New Zealand these bare ridges are prominent. They must be hundreds of years old. I can go back 70 years. The deer have been in New Zealand 80 or 90 years but the deer family are blamed for this.

The Park Board prepared a plan to cover recreational hunting in Fiordland National Park. I don't know what became of it. Just to show how popular this area was, in 1978-79 3612 hunters required permits. At Easter 1980, 300 hunters required permits to enter the park. The members say a report was prepared in November 1979 and com-

ments on it were sought, closing on February 29, 1980, to be forwarded direct to the Minister. That would have been a waste of time because the Government would win in any case.

About February 1980, the Deerstalkers Association got a petition going to save the wapiti herd. A lot of work was put into this. What happened? It was smothered by the Government. The Park board was getting good revenue out of the deer and the wapiti and the people who signed that petition received no consideration.

The board members talk about the takahe birds and again the deer are blamed. But why were 30 stoats released in the national park area in September 1980? They love ground birds. Of the two, birds and wapiti, I think for the good of the country the deer family would be more important. Seeing there are around 60,000 youngsters leaving school every year, we'll have to make them city bound. The board members also talk about the flora and fauna. Who wants to see the flora and fauna away back in the wild animal country? There are thousands of acres of bush closer to the cities for the public to inspect.

According to the board members, the deer are the worst animal pest in New Zealand. That's their version of our deer family. It is not the average New Zealander's view.

Mr Taylor is right about the type of park the board wants. Take the lake and Milford Sound out of the area and the board has had it. Queenstown would do the trade. Do any of the tourists walk up through the wapiti area? As Mr Taylor says, the board wants a pristine type of park. People have been fined for entering the park with a dog and cutting a few small saplings for deer pens away in the back country. Has the Park Board done any good for New Zealand? I suggest we close the park and get the outdoor people out of the cities at the weekends.

D. Hawkless

Bluff

Board Members Reply On Wapiti

Sir, — In Mr Warren Taylor's latest outburst on the wapiti issue, he questions the motives of Government and the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board. He and other deerstalkers interviewed have also made claims of precipitate action; "shabby ploy"; "confidence tricks"; "secrecy" etc. On the contrary, the whole matter has always received maximum media exposure as the following rough diary will confirm and in fairness to Government, Lands and Survey Department and the board, will serve to remove any doubts your readers may have about aspects of availability of public information.

Following representations from recreational hunters seeking the preservation and management of wapiti for trophy hunting within Fiordland National Park, the Hon. V. S. Young, the (then) Minister of Lands and Minister of Forests, inspected the "wapiti area" of Fiordland National Park on September 7-8, 1979.

Following this inspection, a meeting of all the parties involved (ie recreational hunters, the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association, Fiordland National Park Board, Department of Lands and Survey, New Zealand Forest Service) was held in Te Anau. At the conclusion of this the Minister requested that the Fiordland National Park Board prepare a plan covering recreational hunting in Fiordland and more particularly the options for the future of the wapiti herd.

Such a report was duly prepared and, as instructed by the Minister was, in November 1979, made available for public discussion and comment with the

closing date of February 29, 1980. (Note all submissions and/or comments were required to be forwarded direct to the Minister).

About the same time the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association launched a petition calling for the retention of the wapiti herd in Fiordland National Park. (This was presented to parliament on May 21, 1980). (The numbers of signatures are variously stated as being: "more than 30,000" — Southland Times 1.4.80; "more than 50,000" — Southland Times 22.5.80; "about 57,000" — The Press 27.6.80; "nearly 70,000" — Southland Times 5.7.80). The petition was subsequently considered by the Lands and Agriculture Select Committee (a committee composed of members of both parties in the House which makes recommendations to Government), which recommended only that the petition be reported to the Government for consideration — "the weakest recommendation it can make short of rejecting it." (Otago Daily Times 4.7.80). In announcing the committee's decision, the Minister of Lands said that the possible relocation of wapiti away from Fiordland National Park was to be investigated. (Otago Daily Times 4.7.80, Southland Times 5.7.80).

In December 1980 the Government announced its interest in preserving a wapiti population outside Fiordland National Park and called for proposals from wild animal recovery operators and deer farmers for the capture and farming of suitable wapiti animals in a joint venture with the Government, the stated intention being to use the captured herd to breed pure animals for possible future release into an alternative area. (Southland Times 2.1.81).

In June 1981 the Minister asked two

companies which had submitted proposals to submit further details on their proposals to him by August 31, 1981. At the same time he announced the closure of the "wapiti area" to all hunters pending the commencement of the relocation programme. (Southland Times 8.7.81).

In October 1981 it was reported that Alpine Helicopters Ltd had been informed that its proposals had not been accepted which "left the other group, a consortium of four based in Te Anau," one of whom was named as Mr E. J. Meredith. (Southland Times 14.10.81). Later the same month the Minister was reported as saying that "discussions were going on between his two departments and the Te Anau consortium," and that there would not be a final decision "for some time." (Southland Times 22.10.81).

In December 1981 the Minister of Lands and Minister of Forests, the Hon Mr J. Elworthy, announced the decision to proceed with the removal of wapiti from the park and their subsequent relocation. (Southland Times 17.12.81).

All evidence points to the economic and physical impossibility of selecting and maintaining a wapiti herd of worthwhile standards in the Stuart and Franklin Mountains of Fiordland National Park.

On the other hand, the area has, in relatively recent times, been inhabited by the native takahe — in fact, despite the serious and in most areas, critical impact of deer, a few birds remain. Although in the takahe special area, the Murchison Mountains, the annual deer take has dropped from 1200 to 100 animals in 12 years (a rough indication of remaining deer numbers), the slow recovery of bush and other shrubby food producing winter habitat is of serious concern.

However, in areas formerly occupied by takahe in the "wapiti area," recently devised photographic techniques of vegetation assessment have revealed vegetation composition of optimum potential, offering maximum winter value to the birds after removal of deer and subsequent regrowth. It is then assured that, as this area could be successfully protected from deer above the bush line, it will form a significant expansion of suitable winter habitat. These advantages only await the removal of animals and regrowth of vegetation.

What then would the deerstalkers have the board do? The spirit and purposes of national parks under the legislation are clear, as are world standards in national parks control and administration. They convey a clear demand on the part of peoples at large that natural characteristics and flora and fauna are to be protected. All these values, plus an immediately threatened bird species, the takahe, are involved at this point and yet the deerstalkers would have the board abandon its responsibilities and declare itself in favour of conserving red deer, the worst animal pest in New Zealand.

Finally, Mr Warren Taylor claims that the board "wants a pristine type of park of no interest to anyone except themselves." He is answered by upwards of 300,000 visitors to Fiordland

pay hundreds, some of them thousands, of dollars to reach the park, not to shoot deer, but to see the park as the board hopes and plans to keep it, as far as possible in its native state.

L. E. Henderson
D. K. Collett

Members, Southland National Parks and Reserves Board
Halfmoon Bay

Wapiti Herd

Sir, — If the president and secretary of the Gore and districts branch of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association had bothered to read newspapers correctly they would know that:

1. The Fiordland National Park Board ceased to exist on the coming into force of the National Parks Act 1980 on April 1, 1981.
2. The decision to proceed with the removal of wapiti type animals from Fiordland National Park was made by the Minister of Lands.
3. The animals are being removed by a private consortium.

W. J. Cooper

Invercargill

21/1/82 Wapiti Herd

Sir, — As a conservationist I strongly object to Mr Rodgers's statement and other opinions. He stated "I am not threatening the Minister, I am just telling him that we will not sit back and be denied our heritage."

Being concerned for our wildlife I cannot see that the wapiti do anything but threaten our heritage.

Man in New Zealand has a tradition of exploitation — the kakapo, a highly endangered species yet in 1888 (about the time we started to introduce "our heritage") Muir took a photo of some of our noteworthy explorers namely Quintin Mackinnon and Thomas McKenzie with a dead kakapo. A fine example of the proud hunter.

Wapiti were introduced to Fiordland National Park in 1905 yet even before this time certain "unconsidered opinions" stated that the deer species that had been here for less than 15 years were doing irreparable damage to the native bush. Yet our illustrious forefathers persisted in these liberations to ensure that man had recreation and the bush become of secondary concern.

A major step was taken in 1952 to ensure land preservation. The National Parks Act was considered one of the finest pieces of legislative literature in the world and this stated "preserve in perpetuity for future generations..."

Unfortunately I do not feel preservation means preservation of an introduced mammal that has for 76 years glutted itself on our vegetation and trampled out the nests of takahe, kakapo and kiwi.

Yet certain sectors of our hunting fraternity seem to object to anything not in their own interest. They appear not to care about the thousands of people who visit our national parks merely to observe the beauty and use them in a non destructive manner.

It also strikes me as odd that these hunters are objecting to Crown aid. It is relocating "their heritage" and purifying the animals so that New Zealand is still the only place in the Southern Hemisphere with a wild wapiti herd.

stain and not the mongrel hybridized animals they seem to want.

In conclusion, what will my son's heritage be? I hope it will be native flora and fauna and not bare forests, no birds and large numbers of deer as we had in the 1950s — forest that took over 80 million years to evolve and less than 100 years to be devastated by "our heritage."

Conservationist

Auckland

Wapiti Herd 23/1/82

Sir, — What a disgraceful situation the Fiordland National Park Board has helped to create, with the relocation of wapiti, regarded as one of New Zealand's most valuable and famous recreational assets. This is nothing short of minority rule.

The board members seem not to have needed public opinion in this matter, for 98 per cent of the people approached signed the 1980 wapiti petition to retain wapiti in Fiordland.

I understand there is only one board member who is prepared to have wapiti retained for recreational purposes.

On the past record of the present board, I therefore ask the Fiordland National Park Board members to tender their resignations immediately; that Parliament makes an amendment, so that board members can be nominated and elected democratically by the people of this country who own the park.

The appointment of the board members by a portfolio Minister living in the North Island is unsatisfactory.

Peter Glaister

Parewai

[Abridged. — Ed.]

Going Ahead With Shoot

Twelve to 15 recreational hunters are prepared to take part in an illegal 1982 wapiti trophy shoot in the Fiordland National Park, according to Mr Alan Rodger, of Wanaka, who has proposed the shoot for the last week of March and the first week of April.

Mr Rodger recently received letters from the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr Elworthy, and the Southland Commissioner for Crown Lands, Mr Joe Harty, asking him to reconsider his decision to initiate a shoot.

But he said last night he was adamant about going ahead.

"Now I have one group to fill one (wapiti) block, and if the rest back out when the pressure goes on we will still certainly be going in," he said.

Mr Rodger said he had been advised in the letter from Mr Harty that the holding of a shoot would be in direct contravention of the offences provisions of the National Park Act, 1980, and the Fiordland National Park bylaws, and that it would be illegal.

The letter from Mr Elworthy had stated that it would "not be wise" to organize a private shoot for recreational hunters.

Mr Rodger has decided to send a form reply to the recreational hunters who have expressed interest in the shoot.

The letter will inform them of the implications of taking part in the shoot and ask if they are still prepared to go ahead with it.

Mr Rodger's own feeling is that the authorities "can slam me in gaol if they like."

He said he was aware that no rifle permits were being issued for the wapiti area this year, but he hoped to find a way around this problem.

Killing 21/1/82

Shooting a deer on a public road led to three charges against Richard Lindsay Redman, a 24-year-old Gore forestry contractor, when he appeared in the Gore District Court yesterday.

Redman was convicted of killing a deer on land without the authority of the owner, carrying a Savage .22 calibre rifle and discharging a rifle in a public place.

On the killing charge, he was fined \$100. For carrying a rifle he was fined \$75 and for discharging a rifle, he was fined \$100. An application for forfeiture of the rifle was not granted.

Defence counsel Mr H. Barton said Redman had seen a wild deer on the roadway and shot and killed it. A second deer ran down the road. Redman had shot it but it was only wounded and leaped a fence into private property.

Redman had later returned with a torch and killed the deer because he believed he had a moral duty not to leave it in a wounded condition, Mr Barton said.



The chairman of the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board, Mr C. J. McFarlane, passes a line of protesters on his way to a board meeting in Invercargill last night.

Wapiti Hunters Stage Protest

26/1/52

Members of the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board attending a meeting last night ran a gauntlet of protests from hunters objecting to the removal of wapiti from the Fiordland National Park.

About 15 placard-bearing men, representing the Gore and Balfour branches of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association, and recreational hunters, in general, lined the walkway into the State Insurance building, where the board was holding its meeting.

As each board member approached, he was greeted by chants of "We want the wapiti, we want the wapiti."

While the protest took them by surprise, board members treated it with good humour.

The chairman, Mr C. J. McFarlane, commented: "You blokes are persistent."

Open Letter

Mr McFarlane was presented with an open letter to the board from the national vice-president of the Deerstalkers' Association, Mr John Bamford.

In this, Mr Bamford requested the board to reconsider its decision to support the relocation of the Fiordland wapiti.

After all the board members had arrived, the protesting hunters, without placards, sat in for the open meeting.

The organizer of the protest

was Mr George Milne, president of the Gore branch of the Deerstalkers' Association.

There had not been much direct action from recreational hunters to show their concern about the removal of the wapiti, he said.

The protest was one way of giving these people a chance to voice their opinion to the board.

The Gore branch did not feel that the board was running the Fiordland National Park for the good of all Southlanders, he said.

It suggested a management plan for the wapiti area, or the deletion of it from the park, were feasible and favourable propositions.

Mr Bamford said the protest would show board members the concern there was for the retention of the wapiti in Fiordland.

The feelings of the public had not been taken into account.

Asked whether he thought the board had much say in the matter, he said: "I think it has got more than people realize."

The Minister of Lands, Mr Elworthy, had indicated at Te Anau that if the board wanted the wapiti, the Government would "more or less" go along with it's wishes, Mr Bamford said.

Asked what the protest would achieve, he said he hoped it would be a talking point for the meeting, and "milage might be gained from that."

While he had not been expecting the protesting hunters, the board chairman, Mr McFarlane, said he realized they were annoyed about the matter.

Decision Made

However, deerstalkers had had a chance to express their opinions publicly. They could continue to do so, but the process had been gone through and a decision made.

Mr McFarlane said he sympathized with the hunters' concern that a site for the relocated wapiti had not been settled.

While the wapiti issue was on the board's agenda last night, the protesting hunters were not themselves the subject of discussion.

Wapiti Decision Defended

21/1/52

(PA)

WELLINGTON
Criticism of the Government's go-ahead for the capture and relocation of the wapiti deer herd in Fiordland National Park was "unjustified and ill-informed," the Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr Elworthy, said yesterday.

"The agreement with the consortium ensures that the Crown's basic objectives are met without any significant cost to the taxpayer," he said.

"Contrary to what has been implied by some, there is no secret agreement with any specially-favoured group."

"The consortium was chosen after an extensively-advertised invitation to any interested parties to come up with proposals for a joint venture."

Mr Elworthy said 15 proposals had been received, in-

cluding one from the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association, and each had been carefully considered on its merit. The proposal by the consortium was clearly the best from the point of view of the Crown and the taxpayer.

Only Way

The proposals were the only way to guarantee the continued existence of the wapiti for recreational hunting because of the continuing interbreeding with the more aggressive red deer.

Relocation of the wapiti would also remove the conflict of other values within the park.

"Not unexpectedly there has been criticism from some quarters," Mr Elworthy said. "This was to be expected as the wapiti's continued presence in the park has been a contentious issue for many years."

"The Government has received virtually irreconcilable demands for both the removal and retention of the animals."

Premature

The Minister's statement was greeted as being "premature" by the president of the Southland branch of the Deerstalkers' Association, Mr Des Popham, last night.

Mr Elworthy had promised to meet the executive of the association and a date had yet to be set for these talks, Mr Popham said.

"In the light of this, I would like to think he had not prejudged the situation and is leaving room for the deerstalkers and the pro-wapiti groups to come forward with their case," he said.

The national vice-president of the Deerstalkers' Association, Mr John Bamford, claimed that the Minister had failed to keep the association and recreational hunters informed about the wapiti situation.

Closed Doors

The joint venture was being conducted "behind closed doors," he said.

Mr Bamford called for arguments about the wapiti to be addressed to the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board, as well as to the Minister.

The board was not carrying out the wishes of the majority of the people in Southland, he said, but was "hiding behind the fact" that members were appointed and not democratically elected.

Sheep Grazing on Park Land

26/1/52

Sir, — After having read the recent correspondence concerning the removal of wapiti from the Fiordland National Park, I have several questions I hope someone will answer for me through your newspaper.

I realize that the aim of the park board is to keep all introduced animals out of the park, including cats and dogs, so as not to upset the balance of nature. Fair enough. But what are all those sheep doing in the Eglinton valley?

Is the valley not part of the park? In fact, the most commonly viewed part of it, considering the Te Anau-Milford Sound highway runs through it?

Surely the Eglinton is an area for the park board to be most concerned about or is someone trying to pull the wool over our eyes?

Could it be that the sheep are there for the same reason the deer are being removed — money?

What Gives?

[Asked to comment, the chairman of the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board, Mr C. J. McFarlane, said: "Although it is not the normal policy of this board to reply to anonymous correspondents, 'What Gives' raises a matter that was of considerable concern to the previous Fiordland National Park Board and I am pleased to comment on his letter."

"As a result of grazing over a period of many years, going back to early days of farming in this area, the original tussock and scrub cover has been heavily modified and grasses, in particular introduced species such as brown top, are the dominant vegetation over extensive areas of the Eglinton Flats."

"Ungrazed, the long dry grasses represent a considerable fire hazard and it is for this reason that grazing has been continued."

"The Fiordland National Park re-arrangement plan calls for a progressive reduction in grazing with a view to eventually eliminating all sheep from the park."

Commissioning Trials At Mossburn

26/1/52

Commissioning trials take place at the Mossburn deer slaughtering premises today.

The regional meat veterinarian in Dunedin, Dr A. A. Rosenstreich, will check that the premises, owned by Southern Lakes Venison Packers Ltd, comply with the Game Regulations 1975.

An export licence will be issued subject to the satisfactory completion of the trials.

Another factor which could delay slaughtering is the appointment of an MAF veterinarian to the premises.

A veterinarian must make an ante-mortem inspection of deer to be slaughtered for export.

However, Dr Rosenstreich confirmed yesterday there was a problem in posting someone to Mossburn. The MAF did not have enough veterinarians, he said.

Minister Commended On Wapiti Action

26/1/52

The Minister of Lands, Mr Elworthy, was commended by the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board yesterday, on his prompt action in giving the go ahead for the relocation of Fiordland's wapiti herd.

This was combined with an endorsement of the previous Fiordland National Park Board's recommendation to relocate the wapiti outside the park.

At its meeting yesterday, the board received letters from branches of the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association, along with one from the Big Game Hunters' Association, asking it to oppose the relocation of the wapiti.

It also received a report which had been prepared in 1979 by the Fiordland board.

This outlined the wapiti issue and the options that could be taken.

These included the retention of the status quo, the removal of all protection for wapiti, the removal of the wapiti area as part of the park, and wapiti re-

location. The latter option was subsequently adopted as a recommendation.

The chairman of the Southland board, Mr C. J. McFarlane, said yesterday he thought the Government's decision was the only practical solution to a complex problem, and Mr Elworthy's directive to proceed with the relocation operation should be commended.

A board member, Mr Jack McKenzie, said he felt the issue had grown in intensity, and could not be minimized. A suitable area for the wapiti's relocation had not been found, and until it was the top-quality wapiti animals should be retained in the park.

He moved in this direction, but his motion lapsed for want of a seconder.

Another board member, Mrs Blair Robbie, suggested a meeting with the Deerstalkers' Association to discuss the issue. She said she did not fully understand what the hunters were objecting to.

Not Taken Up

This suggestion was not taken up.

Mr Les Henderson moved that the board endorse the recommendation of the Fiordland National Park Board to relocate the wapiti outside the park and commend the Minister of Lands for his prompt action in giving the go ahead.



Deerstalkers Protest

(PA)

WELLINGTON

Huge areas of New Zealand's most spectacular high country will be lost to the public, if runholders are allowed to buy up pastoral leases, the New Zealand Deerstalkers' Association claimed yesterday.

NZDA president John Henderson said after a meeting with the Minister of Lands, Mr Elworthy, about 3.5 million hectares of Southern Alps high country was held by about 500 leaseholders on pastoral leases from the Crown.

Much of the land was now so eroded it was "derelict" and unable to carry stock and the costs of trying to rehabilitate the land was being met by the taxpayer.

At the same time, there were instances where a leaseholder could buy up the land and there were plans to extend the freeholding "of an eighth of New Zealand."

If this happened, the right of access would disappear.

Safari

"The public of New Zealand is going to end up being able to enjoy this stuff only through glossy picture books or by paying to go on some sort of high country safari," Mr Henderson said.

"Once these leases are freeholded, they're going to be sold to the highest bidder and you're going to get wealthy overseas

people coming in. Already there are leases owned by foreigners."

A committee of inquiry into pastoral leases was established last year and a spokesman for Mr Elworthy said the Minister had asked the NZDA to send him its submissions to the committee.

"The Government appreciates their concerns about recreational uses," the spokesman said. "There is no commitment either way."

Mr Elworthy would initially be guided by the recommendations of the committee, he said.

Wapiti

The NZDA delegation also protested to Mr Elworthy about the closing of the Fiordland National Park to all shooting except commercial interests, and the removal of the wapiti herd from the area.

They were asked by the Minister to submit their own proposals on handling the relocation of the wapiti herd and won what they called "a small gesture" in his agreement to reconsider allowing a wapiti trophy shoot in the region this year.

Aghast, and too late, this wapiti cow sights a helicopter with hunters flying towards her. A net is shot out, finds its mark, and Jeff Carter struggles with the captured animal. Assisted by Graham Deaker, he quiets and prepares it for its flight out of the mountains to Te Anau. Weighing in at about 226 kilograms, the wapiti cow was captured this week by a member of the Fiordland wapiti capture consortium, Dick Deaker, his brother, Graham, and shooter, Jeff Carter. She was found at the head of the George river, in the area where the wapiti were originally released in Fiordland. This was the area where the best-quality wapiti animals were now being found, the officer in charge of the New Zealand Forest Service at Te Anau, Mr John von Tunzelman, said yesterday. The wapiti cow was one of the top animals that had been recovered by the consortium. Of the 179 animals captured to date, 30 have gone to the Crown for its relocated herd, 34 for its deer farm, and 115 have gone to the consortium.





In snow-covered terrain an animal unsuccessfully tries to outrun the net which is shot from a pursuing helicopter.



A wapiti cow struggles to get away from shooter, Jeff Carter.

Wapiti Herd

Sir.— How ironical that New Zealand's most elite game animal has become the scapegoat for another bureaucratic blunder in the management of our national parks.

It should be remembered that national parks are for all New Zealanders to enjoy and have a say in what happens to them. They are not to keep a few public servants in a job nor do they owe anyone else an income especially commercial operators.

We are told that the wapiti compete with the notornis for food. This could be true, but let's be realistic, New Zealand has been undergoing massive changes since man first arrived and the notornis has fallen victim to these changes.

Before the great elk is completely removed from Fiordland has anyone considered how much introduced birds compete with native species, particularly the robin, and what about the "native" sheep up the Eglinton? These animals compete with people for the best camping sites!

Five Finger

Dunedin



Graham Deaker (left) and Jeff Carter truss up a captured wapiti cow with a leather strap.

Support Voiced for Park Board

Sir.— I would like to support the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board on their stand on clearing all noxious animals out of our treasured forest in Fiordland. In last Tuesday's Times we saw 15 deerstalkers holding a protest with placards; 10 days ago a group of 30 armed men were going to defy authority and go into the park. I wonder if the Red Squad with their batons will round them up? Just 12 months ago everyone was jumping up and down because law and order was being defied by marchers who had no weapons at all. Why should there be one law for the deer-killers and another for John Citi-zen?

My estimate is that not one in one thousand New Zealanders is a deerstalker. The arguments put up by the deerstalkers are very much the same as when rabbit boards were formed — doing away with the freedom of boys getting pocket money, a weekend occupation. The deer are just as large a threat as the rabbits, if you leave a pair you soon have a hundred. They live on young plants all the year round. Over the next few years millions of people will visit Fiordland and share the rugged beauty of our hills and forests.

I hope all loyal people will support the National Parks Board to preserve forever the grandeur of our forests.

Nature Lover



Discussing which animals are to be retained by the Crown are Fiordland National Park assistant, Chris McMillan (left), officer in charge of the Forest Service at Te Anau, John von Tunzelman and a member of the four-man wapiti capture consortium, Dick Deaker.

29/1/62



Two captured animals await their flight out to Te Anau.

29/1/82



A net is shot out at a deer from a helicopter piloted by consortium member
Dick Deaker.



A yearling stag is strung underneath a helicopter by Jeff Carter. It will be taken to a more accessible area, to be bagged for transportation to Te Anau.

Southland Times photographer Barry Harcourt recently spent a day with a member of the Fiordland deer capture consortium, Dick Deaker, and his team, to discover just how the controversial wapiti are being recovered from Fiordland National Park. On this particular day, eight animals were captured of which only one was considered to be a quality wapiti.

Background Of Discontent

Amid conflict and controversy, Fiordland National Park is losing its wapiti.

One by one, the animals are being removed from the mountainous terrain near Lake Te Anau, where they were introduced 77 years ago.

Eventually, this coveted trophy herd will be relocated elsewhere.

But in the meantime the storm rages.

The row, which had been simmering for about three years, boiled over last month. The Minister of Lands and Forests, Mr Elworthy, announced that Fiordland's wapiti herd was to be removed from the national park and relocated.

The Government had entered into a joint venture with a four-man, Te Anau-based consortium, made up of three helicopter operators and a deer farmer.

While staff from the Government's Lands and Forest departments looked for a suitable site to relocate the herd, the consortium was to capture, care for and selectively breed the wapiti.

Although not unexpected, the announcement caused an uproar. Recreational hunters and deerstalkers, particularly from Southland and Otago, were dismayed to learn Fiordland was to lose its wapiti herd—the only one in the Southern Hemisphere.

They felt they were losing what had become a part of their heritage. The ultimate aim of any hunter was to be able to gain a wapiti trophy head from the park.

In making the decision, Mr Elworthy said the relocation was aimed at eradicating introduced animals from the park and preserving the deer as a recreational hunting herd.

Inter-breeding with the aggressive red deer meant pure wapiti were becoming rare and they were in an area which was a potential habitat for the native, flightless bird, the takahe.

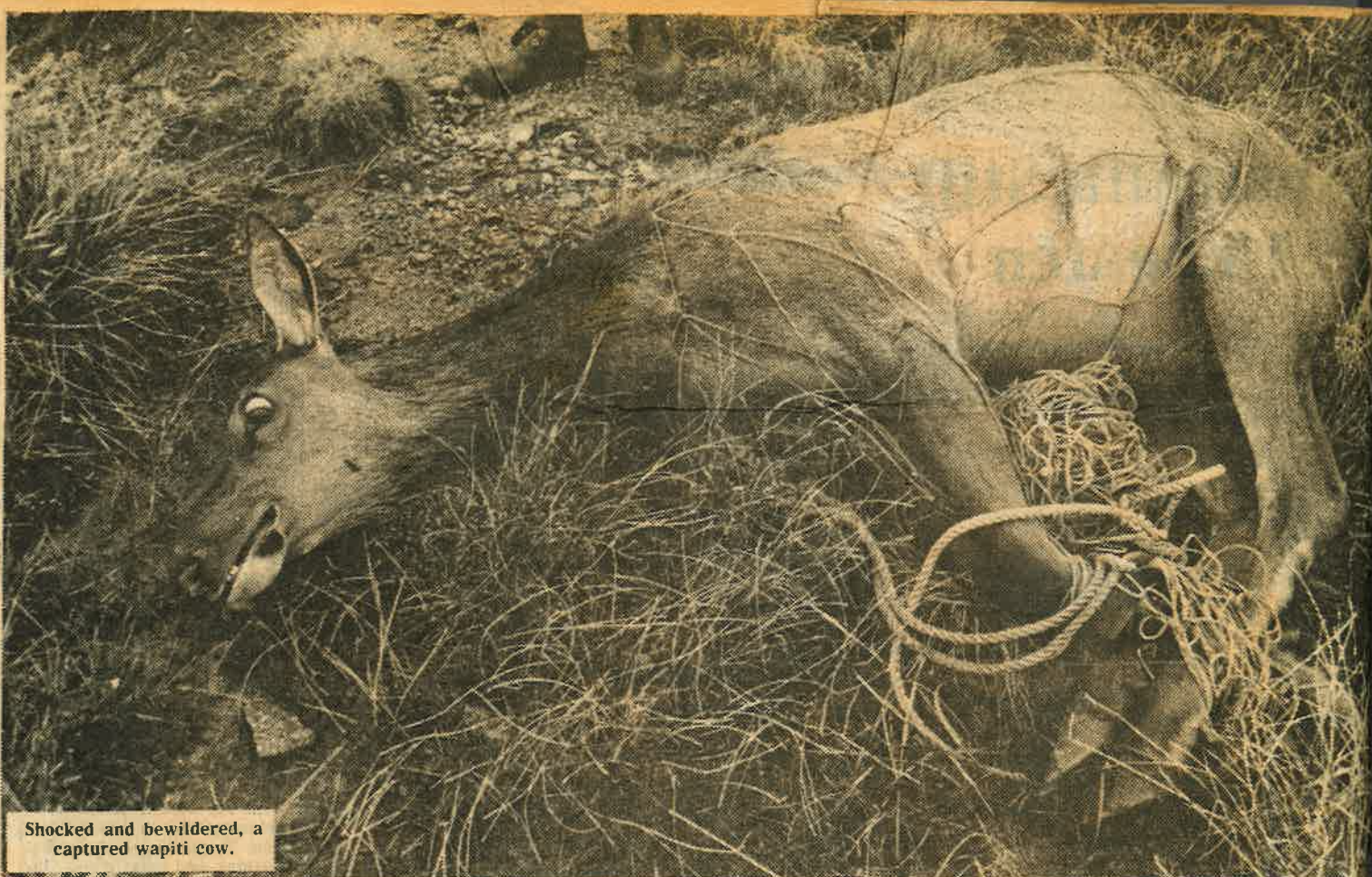
The Minister's decision was endorsed and commended by the Southland National Parks and Reserves Board. The former Fiordland National Park Board had made the original recommendation in 1979 that the wapiti be removed and relocated.

A threat has been made to hold an illegal trophy shoot in the wapiti area, which is closed to all but the consortium, a protest held, claims and counter-claims exchanged.

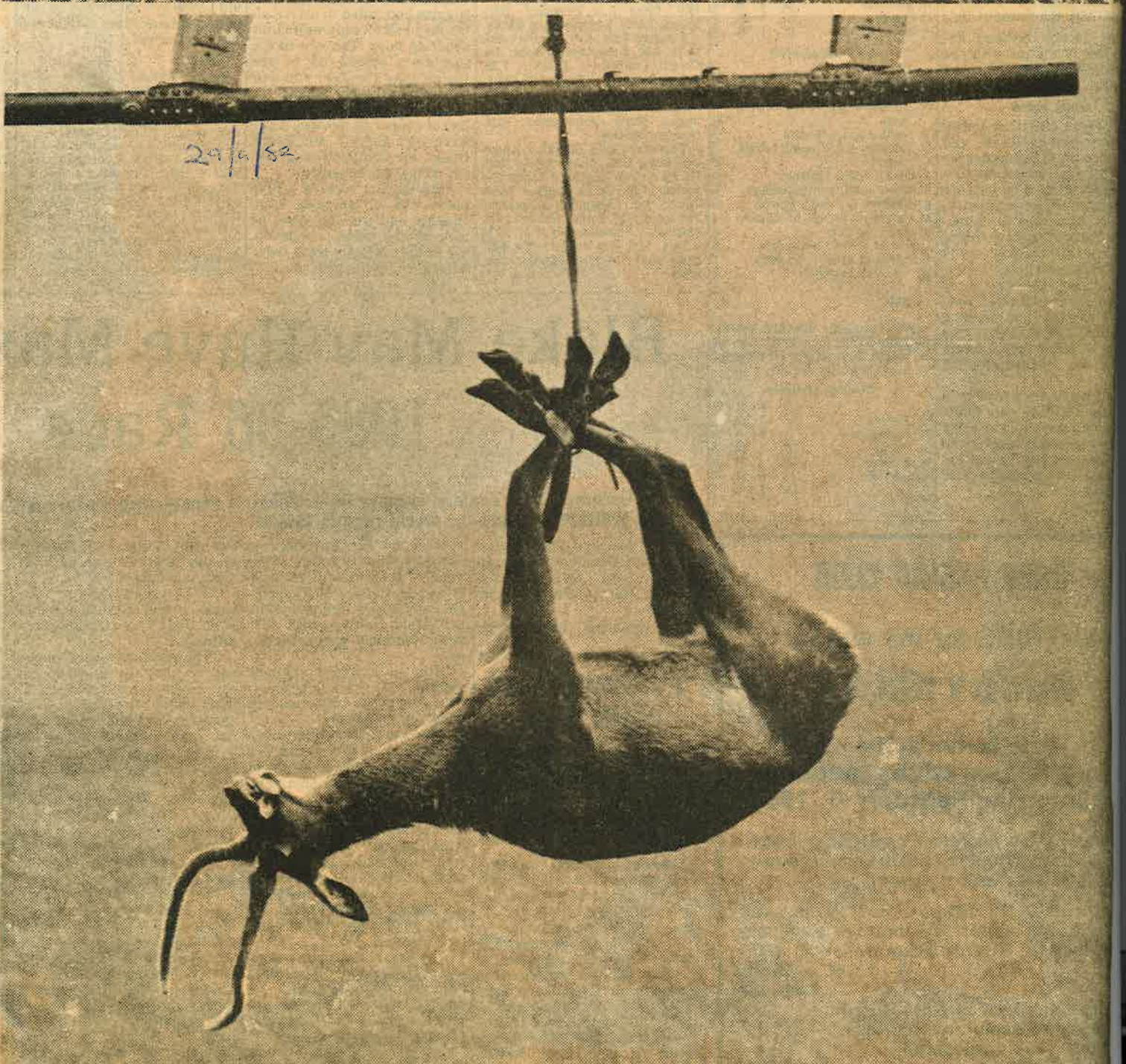
In the meantime, the recovery operation continues.

So far, about 115 animals have been removed from the park. Of these, only 30 were considered to be of the quality suitable for the Crown's wapiti herd, 34 have been selected for its deer farming herd, and the balance has been retained by the consortium.

A suitable site to relocate the herd has not yet been announced. There have been three suggested areas—none of them in Southland.



Shocked and bewildered, a captured wapiti cow.



A yearling stag, slung underneath a helicopter, is taken to an area nearby to be wrapped in a canvas bag and flown to Te Anau.