

THE DEERSTALKER

October 2005



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October 2005

NSW Deerstalkers Association

COMMITTEE FOR 2005 - 2006

Formed: 7th June 1972

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Bob Penfold
Wayne McPhee
Jack Boswell

Affiliated To:

Australian Deerstalkers Federation
Game Management Council (Australia)
Inc.

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Advertisements:

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

Cover Photo:

Mark Isaacs & Fallow Trophy from 2005

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FROM THE EDITOR

My thanks, as always to those members who have sent in any contribution to this issue. It doesn't matter if it is a major article, a photo or a snippet from the internet, your effort is much appreciated.

The trophy display photos in this issue were supplied by Steve & Mark Isaacs. Unfortunatley, we cannot reproduce images in colour, excepting on the cover.

As many will know, there is a review of the firearms regulations in NSW, the aim of which is to make them more workable for everyone. Closing date for submissions is Friday November 4th 2005. Submissions can be emailed to gunreg@police.nsw.gov.au, or posted to;

*The director-General
Ministry for Police
Level 13, 201 Elizabeth Street'
Sydney NSW 2000.*

Copies of the proposed regulations can be obtained by ringing the Police Ministry on (02) 8263 6200

Game Licences in NSW.

If you are in a scheme, then please ensure that you obtain your game licence before you hunt.

As reported in the press, the CEO of the Game Council, Ross McKinney, was sacked by the Council, for alleged "non performance". Until another CEO can be appointed, Robert Borsak (Game Council Chairman) will be acting CEO, with a senior officer from the Lands Department in Orange keeping a daily eye on things. At a Game Council "casual hunters dinner" I attended recently Rob Borsak stated that the release of public land would not be "soon". However, since the departure of Ross McKinney, Brian Boyle, the Operations Manager, has told me that he hopes that all the training manuals, & instruction of trainers & testers will be ready for November 05, so that R-licenses would be available for the 2006 deer season.

Like it or not, game licenses are here to stay & by ignoring the new system hunters risk losing out "big-time", as shown by the loss of the Queensland Duck & Quail seasons. As you may well guess, many more people than the approximately 300 license holders in that state shot ducks & quail. No doubt they still will do

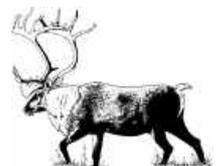


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**4th Meeting
5th October at 7:30pm
German Austrian Club**

**5th Meeting - Christmas Party
Sat 19th November at
10:30am
Peach Tree Inn - Penrith**

.....
so illegally & will tell you that the loss of the season is unimportant. However, in the bigger scheme of things, this loss will be followed by others, unless we hunters do the clever thing & make our presence felt. The greenies represent a significant force in both state & federal politics, & punch well above their weight. They stop at nothing to attack hunting, which they want to shut down completely. Unless we hunters keep up our official numbers, the politicians will conclude that we are no longer a big enough voting block to be concerned with, & the axe will fall, on one part of our sport after another. Once lost, it will probably be impossible to

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



Notice to all NSWDA Black Fallow Scheme Members; Deer Ageing Workshop

get anything back.

We saw the UK government take away pistol shooting when pistol shooter numbers became too small. We've just seen Qld axe duck & quail shooting for the same reason.

We saw in NSW the stopping of duck shooting except for pest management because the green vote became more important than the shooter vote.

We have to maintain large numbers of firearms & hunting licences in NSW for hunting & shooting to have a future.

Unfortunately there is a financial penalty to pay for regulation, & it brings with it a big element of risk if we don't support it. We hunters & target shooters need to be more pro-active in getting younger people into the sports & keeping the older ones.

We need to buy licences & actively support our shooting clubs & larger organisations if we are to maintain our political clout.

Dal Birrell.

While antlers provide a rough guide to a buck's age, only teeth give correct ages. I've been ageing jaws for the scheme's records, & as most stalkers are interested in knowing the ages of the deer they take, I've decided to run an optional workshop on ageing. This will be either at the pre-season meeting around Christmas, or at the end-of-season meeting in 2006. Neil Brown will write to all members shortly with final details. Ageing from teeth is a lot easier than scoring a head, let me tell you! This workshop will take from approximately a half hour, to as long as any member wants to continue examining jaws. All printed materials will be provided on plain paper, or laminated (currently \$6), if required.

Guns & Game have kindly given permission for me to send out as pre-reading, Brian Murphy's article on ageing Fallow, published in Guns & Game April/June 1995. However, this is in "Acrobat" (.pdf) only. To read this, you need a computer & a (free) copy of "Acrobat Reader". I strongly urge anyone intending to do the workshop to get a copy of Brian's article & read it carefully beforehand, as it explains the method & the necessary jargon. The cost of reprinting this article in colour on paper is prohibitive, & in black & white too much detail is lost. The computer alternative keeps the colour, but unfortunately it is too large to email. The printed course materials I'll supply are based on Brian's article, but are more user-friendly than the article itself.

I can post you a CD (please specify PC or Mac) with all the materials on it for \$3, payable when you see me. You can print out the workshop notes yourself, or I will bring a copy along for you on the day. Let me know if you want a plain or a laminated copy.

I'd really appreciate it if all members could keep the jaws from all the deer they take this coming season. We need them for the



workshop. We don't have any fawn or yearling jaws, or doe jaws at present. I particularly want to get hold of as many doe jaws as possible to see whether does & bucks wear their teeth at the same rate. I'll leave some black cable ties in the cupboard to put on all doe jaws you leave in the quince tree to dry. Jaws can be left fairly rough. As I will need to section the front (incisor) teeth to establish age, make sure you keep all the teeth.

If you intend to do the workshop, please drop me an email, with your requirements, at dbi93465@bigpond.net.au, or by snail mail. Guns & Game have also given permission for me to distribute to members, an "Acrobat" copy of Brian Murphy's article on Quality Deer Management. I will include this on any CD I send out.
Good hunting.
Dal Birrell.

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Secretary's Report cont.

Insurances

I have included in the magazine a copy of the Club's Public Liability Insurance Policy. Please read and note the details that could affect your cover e.g. driving vehicles on properties, etc.

In the next magazine I will provide details of the personal injury insurance held with the NSW Shooting Association (our Gold Member card).

Please note that the next Club meeting is Wednesday 5th October 2005 at the German Austrian Club at 7.30 pm.

Good Hunting.

Greg Haywood

Free Floating Barrels

Dal Birrell

I came across an interesting piece in an old 1976 "Gun Digest" lately about free floating versus upward pressure on barrels. It has always intrigued me that the major rifle manufacturers persist with upward pressure on sporter rifles, when it is absolutely clear that generally speaking, their accuracy is markedly inferior to free floated barrels. This was again demonstrated lately when dealing with a new Ruger 77/22, which was supposed to be "perfectly bedded" out of the box, but which shot groups with marked vertical stringing. On packing under the front of the action to roughly see what would happen when the barrel stopped touching the for-end, the groups magically became round!

Anyway, it seems that some time prior to 1976, Winchester decided to put out a batch of Model 70 centrefires with free floated barrels. The accompanying advertising material explained how these rifles were more accurate because of the floated barrels. Unfortunately, many influential gun writers didn't read the advertising materials, & roundly criticized Winchester for their slack metal to wood finish, especially around the barrel! Some even went so far as to suggest the readers buy other brands. Added to this, the wood selected for these stocks was inferior & some warped enough to touch the barrel, causing accuracy problems.

Winchester discovered that buyers prefer good fit rather than accuracy pretty quickly. That model lasted less than two years, & the exercise has never been repeated. A bit sad really. It also demonstrates the vacuum of knowledge which sometimes lies behind the face of some gun journalists. I've seen some pretty plain rifles that shot brilliantly, & some very pretty ones that shot badly. What's the old saying, "the only interesting rifle is an accurate one"?





Secretary's Report!

Hi,

It's been some time since the last magazine and update to members so the following covers the main points of interest.

Annual General Meeting

This was well attended and Wayne McPhee after many years as our President retired from the role and Steve Isaacs a past president has taken up the challenge again. On behalf of the members I thank Wayne for all the work and leadership he has brought to the Club and he has always put the Club first and very proud of what we have achieved. In his own words with more regulations and politics being forced upon the hunting and shooting clubs he felt that it was time to allow others to handle and fight the cause. As a good mate – well done and thank you.

Committee 2005/2006

President – Steve Isaacs
Secretary/Public Officer - Greg Haywood
Treasurer – Nalda Haywood
Senior Vice President – Terry Burgess
Junior Vice President – Darren Plumb

Christmas Function

The Christmas Function will again be held at the Peach Tree Inn – Penrith on Saturday 19th November 2005 starting at 10.30 am. It is a Trophy Presentation day and based on last year this was well received and the quality of heads on display were a credit to the owner, who also shared their hunting experience with us.

This is a family day and we have a room on our own and a grassed area where children can play. There is also a games room for the older children.

Shooter of the Year Award Dinner

This will be held on Friday 2nd December 2005 and if you are interested in attending please contact me as I will be putting a table together.

Game Council NSW

It's now 12 months since the General Licence was available and they are sending renewal notices with your details shown to make it easier to renew. Remember our Clubs Agent number is 7185 so that we get the 10% commission. The Restricted Licence is still not available as yet. We are an authorised Club with the Game Council and are waiting on the Training Guidelines so that we can process the Restricted Licence.

They are still negotiating public lands for hunting so I expect that the release of Public Land for hunting will coincide with when the Restricted Licence will be available.

NSWDA Website (newsouthwalesdeerstalkers.org.au)

At the last meeting Steve Isaacs put forward the initiative of having our own website and this was passed by the members present. The website name has been registered as above and Steve and I are working on the content to be included.

If you have any ideas please contact Steve.

NSW Shooting Association

They have formed a Target Club to promote shooting as a family sport and you may have noticed that they are currently advertising in the papers to encourage people to try shooting under controlled conditions before they obtain their licence.

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President's Report

After 15 years or so since I was in the chair last, I am honoured once again to be representing the NSWDA as President.

In accepting the position of President I would first like to give a strong and heartfelt thank you on behalf of the members to the outgoing President Wayne Mcphee and his past committee who have given up their time over many years to keep the NSWDA on track. The members appreciate your efforts and your dedication to Deerstalking has not gone unnoticed.

To the committee who have decided to stand without change I fully appreciate your acceptance of the committee positions again and trust we can deliver strong leadership and keep the club moving ahead with the times.

To start my first report for the club I would like to echo the past president Wayne Mcphee's praise of long standing Secretary Greg Haywood, Wayne made the comment that Greg was the real catalyst in the constant development and running of the club and has given many hours of his time to keep the club ticking along smoothly, not to mention Greg's wife Nalda and the family for looking after the little things we take for granted such as the wonderful sandwiches and suppers they put on for General meetings of the club.

The NSWDA has a strong and rich history, being formed by a group of dedicated deerstalkers in Newcastle over 30 years ago there have been many highlights during the clubs History and one of the requests I would make to the members is for them to look back to those early days and put pen to paper with

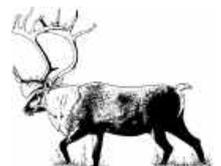
some short stories that the younger and newer members would like to hear. E-mail or just mail your story to the Editor.

It is fantastic to read the many stories that go into the Deerstalker, written by members with a flavour of adventure we all share. The majority of members are amongst the best hunters in the world and represent the values of Hunting well.

In fact one of the initiatives I am hoping to kick off with the committee is to gather a list of photos and score cards of members Trophies. Members of the Deerstalkers have taken some magnificent Trophies over the years, it would be great to see these Trophies published in the Magazine and then an ongoing list of say top 20 trophies of each of the deer species in Australia taken just by members.

Those members who have access to the Internet will also be pleased to know that the club will be engaging the services of a Web Master to build and maintain a Web site. The NSWDA Web site will have lots of information about the club, a contact E-mail, a photo gallery and news and information about current events including links to interesting Web Sites.

In this issue of The Deerstalker you will find photos of the last Christmas party and each of the trophies that were on display, with a report on the owner and size of the Trophy. It was decided at the last general meeting that the future of the Christmas Party would be better served by having a Trophy Exhibition rather than any form of competition. Members that exhibit their trophy will be honoured with a photo of the trophy in the next edition of the



Video Library

Free hunting videos for members to borrow for one month if picking up video's at a meeting. Members must pay postage by registered mail back to the club in carton supplied. You can phone or write for videos to be posted to you, however the member must pay postage both ways. When returning videos to the club within one-month members must include cost of postage to them in stamps inside the box.

If members are to lend these video's to fellow members, remember that the original person who borrowed them from the club will be held responsible if they are not returned within due time. As these videos are the property of the club, you are expected to look after them. If you loose or damage a video you will have to pay the replacement cost. If you don't return them after 4 weeks you won't get anymore.

To borrow a Video contact:

Terry Burgess

Ph: (02) 9909 1267

P.O. Box 80

Cremorne Junction NSW 2090

Library List

1. Black Death, Cape Buffalo, Lion
2. Capstick, Botswana Safari Buffalo, Lion
3. In the Blood, Capstick, Rhino
4. Zambia Safaris
5. Whitetail, Mule Deer, Pronghorn, Late Season Elk
6. Monster Elk, Horns of Plenty, Hunt Exotics 1 & 2
7. Hunting Bugling Elk, Big Muleys, Caribou
8. North American Big Horn Rams, Greatest Whitetail, Wild Hogs of Texas
9. Col Allison Hunters Home Video, Big Bears, Russian Boar, Whitetail
10. North American Mixed Bag, Big Horn Rams, Whitetail
11. Great Trophy Bucks Mixed Bag, Big Horn Rams, Whitetail
12. Wild Boar Pig Hunting Down Under Part 1
13. Hunting Sheep, Goat & Moose in B.C.
14. Big Rams Brooks Range, Big Horn Rams, Mouflon
15. The Bow Hunter, Whitetail Deer
16. Big Rams, North American Big Horn Sheep, Mouflon Sheep
17. North American Big Horn Sheep, Big Rams Mixed Bag
18. Mouflon, Bow Hunting Elk, Whitetail, Mule Deer etc.
19. Challenge of the Mountain Monarchs, Thars, Mouflon Sheep, Red Deer in Qld



20. Pig Hunting in Qld, Wild Goat in Qld, Mouflon
21. Pig Hunting in Qld, Red Deer in Qld
22. Hunting in Spain, Pig Hunt in Tunisia, Red Deer in Scotland
23. Hunting Fallow in Scotland, Red in Scotland, Kiwi Hunts North West Territories
24. The Wildlife Bow Hunter, Deer, Pigs, Foxes, Mountain Hunting NZ, O'Rourke's Deer, Chamois, Thar
25. Mountain Hunting N.Z., Deer, Thar, Chamois, Red, Sika, Bow Hunter
26. N.Z. Hunting, Sambar in Victoria, Red Deer in France
27. Hunting N.Z. Red Deer, O'Rourke's N.Z., Chamois in Europe
28. Bowhunting Red Deer in N.Z., Bugling Red Deer Rifle
29. Fox Shooting at its best-Volume 3 & 4
30. The Ultimate Whitetail Hunt
31. Sambar Hunting, Mountain Hunt N.Z., Thar in N.Z.
32. Caping Demo by NSWDA
33. Roar Red Stags, Shadows in Scrub, Great Trophy Bucks
34. Hunting the Elusive Wild Dog, Hunt to outsmart Wild Dogs
35. Dark Continent
36. Red in Qld, Dingo, Fox, Fallow, Hog etc., Sika N.Z., Cape for Trophy Mount
37. How to cape for a Trophy Mount, Shoot the Bull, Hunting QLD Red Deer, Deer Attack
38. Hunting African Lion, Hunting Cape Buffalo
39. Big Horn Rams, Nth American Mixed Bag
40. Shadows in Scrub, Red Deer - Clark McGhie
41. Sambar Stalking 1 & 2 - Reg Gordon
42. Bucks & Bulls, NZ Chamois, Thar, Whitetail, Sportsmans Paradise, Pigs, Barramundi, Tusk Versus Tooth, Pig Hunting with Dogs
43. Bucks & Bulls, NZ Chamois, Thar, Whitetail, Hog Deer in Victoria
44. Bucks & Bulls, NZ Chamois, Thar, Whitetail, Sambar Stalking 1 & 2 - Reg Gordon
45. Dogs, Guns & Grunters, Tusk Versus Tooth, Lifes a Boar NZ
46. "How To Load From A Disk" Ballistic CD-Rom
47. Huge Hogs of Aust. North Part 1 & 2
48. Sambar Safari Vol 1, SHIKARI
49. Venison Hunters, Hunting Northern Cape, Hunting NZ Southern Alps.
50. Hunting the Zambeze Delta, Trophy Seekers, Trophy Seekers Shadows End
51. NZ Hunting, Hunting Safaris Vol 1 & 2, Rusa Hunting



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deerstalker.

Over the next 12 months the members will see many new initiatives presented to the club by the committee to help both regular meeting participants and members at large to have closer contact and input into the club.

On the subject of Game Licences, I would encourage all members hunting in NSW to apply for a Game licence. Yes there has been issues regarding the Licence system and some of the ways the system has been implemented. The fact is however that it is now legislated and a requirement that if you are not a landowner hunting on your own property you will require a licence to hunt Deer in NSW. If you wish to have the legislation changed or altered in any way then bring your suggestions along to a general meeting and our delegates to Game Con will pass these on to the Game Council.

The Game Council are also sending what appears to be Quarterly magazines out to all licence holders to keep Hunters up to date with Game Council activities. The more aware we are of the activities of the Game Council the more we can help improve our form of recreation.

Once again I look forward to serving the club and members to the best of my ability and hope you can help me to continue to make this organisation the envy of the Deerstalking fraternity. I hope you enjoy this edition of the Deerstalker.

Steve Isaacs

Fallow Deer Colours.

By Dal Birrell.

Over many years of observing & reading about Fallow, I have become very interested in their colours. Fallow have a greater variety of colours that any other deer species, widely believed to be the result of long semi-domestication. It is probable that the Phoenicians were responsible for transporting Fallow around the Mediterranean, & possibly as far as Britain. The Romans certainly continued to spread the species throughout Britain & the Continent. Fallow are less aggressive & are generally thought to be more attractive than other deer species. They are also more easily transported than other deer, all of which undoubtedly explains their popularity. While it is difficult to find European records of colour varieties going back much further than early medieval times, all four of the common colour varieties were then present in England. There was a fascination for white animals, with many herds of this colour set up in deer parks in England, Europe & America, up even to the present day. Probably this colour allowed the deer to be more easily seen, especially in deer parks, which have been popular from medieval times. The medieval parks served to get around the Forest Laws of the time, allowing their noble owners to hunt & to obtain venison, which has always been a preferred meat. There are records of Fallow of various colour varieties being sent to & from England during the middle ages.

A recent revision of the taxonomy of Fallow deer of the world holds that all are the same species, with the single exception of Mesopotamian Fallow, which are classified as sub-species. Variations in colour, size, coat length & antlers are generally regarded as having been produced by selective breeding in different localities.

In some well-researched mammal species, coat colour genes control the expression of just two hair colour pigments. I think it is likely the same two pigments are responsible



for deer coat colours.

The genetics of coat colour in mammals (including humans) is very similar, being controlled by just a few genes. Each gene usually has two or more forms, properly called “allelomorphs”, or alleles for short. Each individual has only two alleles for every gene, & different individuals may have different alleles for the same gene. Each of these alleles is affected by the other. One may dominate the other i.e. only its characteristic is developed. The dominated allele is called “recessive”, meaning hidden. Other pairs of alleles may both be expressed, either producing a combined colour in every hair, or some hairs having one colour & the remainder have the other colour. “Roan” animals are the result of the latter combination.

A full range of alleles for any one gene can only exist in a population of many animals. One significant difference between mammal species is that each has some colour alleles not present in other species. This explains why coat colour varieties in each species are different.

Despite spending some time on the Internet looking for some detail of deer coat colour genetics, I have had little success. This contrasts with what can be found for other species, in particular the common mouse, whose genetics has been very extensively researched for use in medical applications. Dog, cat & horse coat colour genetics are quite well researched (although still incomplete). Domestication of a species affects its genetics in several ways. These effects include some protection from the elements and greater inbreeding. In a wild population, a single colour pattern may be almost universal. House mice are a perfect example. However, the same mice, kept by fanciers, can be obtained in many colours & coat varieties, with more appearing every year. In the wild, predators would find these more conspicuous individuals easy prey, which accounts for their rarity. All the colour alleles have probably long existed in very small proportions in populations, masked by dominant “normal” colours.

Domesticated herds are usually relatively small. Some inbreeding, either deliberate or unavoidable occurs. For instance, medieval English deer parks frequently held many does, but only a couple of bucks. Under these circumstances, with close relatives mating, the chances of two recessive alleles for a colour gene (or any other gene) coming together in a new individual is much higher than normal, & becomes progressively higher each generation. Of course, this is the basis of “line breeding” where a stud attempts to breed for desired characteristics by inbreeding related animals & selecting out the best of each generation from which to breed the next one. The existence of so many colour varieties of Fallow deer is evidence of deliberate line breeding over the centuries.

This is not the end of the story however. Every individual begins its existence as a single fertilised egg, with a single set of genes. Have you ever thought about how it is that as this cell multiplies into millions, there is a differentiation into different sorts of cells; hair, skin, bone etc? Similarly, as every hair follicle gets the same set of coat colour genes, how does the coat pattern develop & why also does the coat change from summer to winter? It is not surprising then that we see “intermediates” between the “classic” Fallow coat colours. Red deer & Elk also exhibit intermediate colours.

A few years ago, Jack Boswell published a short article outlining the basic genetics of “red” (currently called “coloured”) & black Fallow deer coat colour. In this article Jack pointed out that “coloured” is dominant over “black”. He also pointed out that any “coloured” deer might be carrying two “coloured” alleles, or one “coloured” & one “black” allele. Both combinations of alleles produce animals that look the same. Common or menil coloured does carrying the recessive “black” allele which breed with a black buck have a 50/50 chance of producing a “black” fawn. These black fawns breed true to their colour.

The following descriptions of the colour



varieties of Fallow in Australia are adapted from several sources, but principally from Chapman & Chapman. NSWDA parlance calls all non-black animals “coloured”. This is a rather unfortunate term because it causes confusion, as does the failure to carry over the British terms of “buck” & “doe” for male & female Fallow. Calling Fallow bucks “stags” gets them confused with Red deer, especially in any area where both species are present. I have been at meetings where some hunters thought they were discussing male Red deer, while others used the same term (red stag) to mean a “common” or “menil” coloured Fallow buck. Some “odd” management discussions resulted!

I personally would like to see the ADA, & NSWDA, as the premier deer organizations in NSW, formally adopt the traditional British names for males & females of all deer species, as the deer farming industry in Australia has done. Making sure we consistently use “buck” & “doe” for Fallow would be a great start. We are after all, referring to introduced species, with a written history using these names, going back more than a thousand years. Our ancestors imported these animals, because they valued their traditions of keeping & hunting them in the “old countries”, as do we.

Descriptions of the “classic” Fallow deer colours.

common The summer coat is a rich fawn with prominent white spots & a black stripe along the back. The tail is black on top & white beneath. The belly and inside of the legs are white to beige and there is a white bum patch (also called a rump patch, but actually under the tail around the anus & fanny) with a black, curved line just inside the white border. The winter coat is a duller brown-grey with less obvious spots. This bum patch is the “clincher” when deciding whether an animal is “common” or “black” colour variety.

menil This colour variety is similar to the “common”, but lacks the black markings of the common fallow, and the coat has a lighter hue. These animals have distinct white spots throughout the year. At a distance, in poor

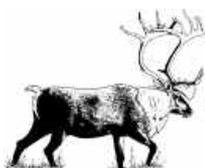
light, these animals can appear to be white. The back stripe is darker than the body colour & the tail is not black above.

white These animals have a white or creamy coat (similar to a white goat) with spots that may be difficult to see. Fawns are a light gingery colour. The eyes are pigmented but the hooves are brown rather than black. The whiteness of the coat increases with age, with sun bleaching having something to do with it. Albino white Fallow are rare. Their poor eyesight is a major problem in the wild.

black This variety has a black, or dark chocolate coat with spots that may be inconspicuous. There is some variation in this colour variety. Rarely, individuals may be completely glossy black (back, sides & belly) like a black Labrador dog, while others are much lighter & some have a coppery or whitish sheen, depending on the light. In most animals there is a distinctly lighter (fawn) belly & inner legs with a well-defined line separating belly & back. There is no white hair in this colour variety. The patch under the tail & around the fanny is lighter than the back, but never white.

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Those wanting to investigate the genetics of



coat colour further should search the internet. Articles abound on the coat colours of mammals in general, mice, dogs, cats & horses. An understanding of simple Mendelian inheritance is essential. There are some good articles on Mendelian inheritance on the net, which explain the basics. The huge research effort into understanding the human genome has produced many articles that help to explain how genes actually work. An Internet search will turn up some that are too complex for any non-specialist to understand, but also some of a more general nature, which can make fascinating reading.

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First Buck

by Ben Donohue

Finally the Easter School holidays were here. I was so excited about going hunting as the Fallow deer rut was almost in full swing. The day arrived and as usual Dad was on my back to get my gear ready even though I had most of it packed .

After saying goodbye to Mum and Nic we were on the road to our hunting destination. One and a half hours past and we were setting up camp as we were camping there for three days.

Soon after we had set up camp and got some firewood. We were dressed in camo and were walking up the hill where the pasture was. About 300 metres up the hill we heard a Fallow buck let out a couple of grunts and that made me get my legs pumping enough to pass Dad for a couple of metres, then he would pass me as I was only walking half the speed of him. Further up the hill we decided to sidle around the ridge as the wind changed direction and the deer would smell us.

When we were about 10 metres into the trees we saw a Fallow doe feeding out of a steep gully, we were just about to the mouth of the gully when we saw a small Fallow buck with one of his antlers busted off half way down.

Dad asked me if I wanted to have a shot at it, but I confidently said no, thinking it would grow bigger for next year, so we got down in a deep drain that gave us enough cover to sneak away from the buck even though he was still trying to find out what we were.

We were on our way to a good little dam where there was often a fair few deer and pig tracks. As we approached the dam wall we could hear the buck grunting even louder. I thought he was on the other side of the jungle (the rainforest) but Dad said that he was in the jungle up the top. Dad thought that if the buck was in the jungle it would be near impossible to get a good shot, as the jungle was so thick and the floor was filled with bracken ferns and vines that would be over a Fallow's back.

As I was so eager to at least get a look at how big he was we chose to stalk in on him hoping he might move into a clearing. We knew we had to move slowly and check the wind direction frequently so we didn't miss or scare anything. The buck was on the move and had stopped grunting so we crouched down to wait until he started to make a noise so we could pinpoint where he was.

As we were sitting down I decided to put my face mask on.

After 2 or 3 minutes he started grunting again so we could tell where he was and he was just about directly across the creek in the jungle from us.

By this time we were only 400 metres away so Dad thought he'd better put his face mask on too.

As Dad turned around he looked funny with his mask on and told me to keep close to him, as he had the rifle with him and he was the one that usually saw everything.

Only 5 metres away from where he had told me to stay close to him a Fallow buck jumped out of its rut scrape where it had been sleeping and trotted a couple of metres away and then stopped. Dad quickly grabbed me and gave me the rifle, and then he pointed at where the buck had gone. I saw the buck's whole body through the sticks on a dead tree but only for a second and could not get a clear shot.

The other buck was still grunting so we tried



to stalk him. The breeze was drifting down the creek so we decided to go straight to the animal, but he stopped grunting & we waited until he started again so we knew where he was. Finally he started grunting again and we realized he had moved further to the right, so we turned around and went back to a fork in the game track and walked the other way hoping to intercept him.

As we crossed the creek he let out a couple of grunts and we knew exactly where he was. We crept up a little rise and Dad could see the buck near a couple of does but I couldn't, as I was looking at a doe which was 20 metres to the left; but when Dad told me that the buck was to the right, I immediately saw him. I realized that

he was much bigger than I imagined him to be as I noticed his two spellers (palm points) were pretty long and looked so nice, which made the buck look big to me.

After having a quick look I decided that he was big enough for me so Dad told me to crawl to a close tree.

I was very nervous as we both crawled along the ground to the tree. When we got to the tree Dad asked me if I could shoot it from there. I said yes, hoping I was right, so I sat next to the tree as Dad handed me the .243.

I asked him if I could stand up but he just answered me with a mumble, so I asked him again. He said "yes, if you can hit it standing up", so I stood up quickly (behind the tree for cover) and got a rest off the tree. I couldn't see the bucks head so I had a look to make sure, then I aimed the cross hairs and squeezed the trigger, BANG!!! He was hit hard and after a few steps

fell onto his side.

After a couple of minutes of watching we decided that he wasn't going anywhere so I went and got my pack and we started to walk towards my first deer and a buck at that. As I turned around, Dad was already standing there with a huge smile, and even a little laugh every now and then, I was so excited that I was the one that

shot the buck and I was still trying to believe it when we were back at camp. When I got close enough to talk to Dad I asked him where I hit the buck and he said that it was a little bit back from the shoulder but still an excellent shot.

As soon as I saw the buck close up I saw exactly where I had hit him and it was only about an inch back.



Sitting Bull

By Mark Isaacs

My Dad and I had been waiting a long time for the day to come around for our annual Fallow Hunt. I had missed out last year when I had to have both of my arms operated on and found myself unable to pick up a rifle let alone be able to hunt or shoot.

As it turned out Dad nailed a howler that year going 263 Douglas, but he promised the next shot was mine & had seen a couple of nice trophy Fallow during his hunt that till today had not re-surfaced.

It was now a year later and I was keen to get into the Fallow country again particularly as we had planned it during the rut.

We arrived at the camp to find the rut was in full swing, we unloaded the Toyota and in the late stillness of the night we listened to the hills, grunting could be heard in every direction.

After two tough and quite mild to warm days we had not seen a Trophy in the class that Dad had seen last year and began to wonder if they were there at all. Most of the Bucks were medium quality and hopefully young and would grow a better head next year.

The big guys were proving elusive and it wasn't for the lack of trying. Mum was also expecting prime venison for our favourite sausages, though this was a distant thought at this stage with the main game focused on a full palm Trophy.

I had shot a representative Fallow when only 13 years old and had taken cull heads and does for meat when Dad was out chasing that once in a lifetime buck. The test was now on and I desperately wanted to get amongst those master bucks.

On the morning of the fourth day we once

again headed out of camp with the thought of big Trophies in our heads. A short climb to a well used logging trail found us once again glassing the gullies and high benches. We were pawing over old ground in the pre dawn heading towards more familiar hunting territory.

With the Rut at full peak there was no shortage of magnetic creeks drawing us in to investigate every calling buck.

Reluctantly we pushed on, ignoring the first two throbbing war drum like sounds. I don't know why but after a few hundred metres something told me to re check a creek we had already looked at twice during this trip.

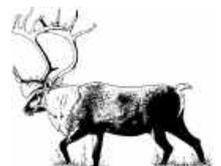
Dad insisted we push on, we only had the morning after which we would be packing up and heading home. The Grunting was now intense with the odd crack of tree and antler, made another look hard to resist.

"It's your hunt Mark, make your decision and I will follow." Dad said. We started the climb into the dark side of the creek until we were just above the level of the main chorus. As we continued we began bumping into small three to four year old stags.

The main Grunting was constant now, like a beating drum the walls of the steep creek echoed the sound. The young stags we saw moved away but remained in the area as we saw one or two slip behind us drawn like we were to the spectacle.

We were less than 100 metres away and could still not see the stag making all of the fuss. I only prayed it wasn't another medium stag. Suddenly up ahead there was movement through the she oaks; deer were running everywhere. The breeze was perfect. Had one of his does seen me?

Dad dropped back and remained in the shadows as I tip toed towards the show. I could only make out the odd flash as animals came



into view out of the side gully that fed into the creek.

I had not been seen, the running animals were does, I had seen this type of excitement before when big bucks hold does at their stand. I looked at my watch 6.45am; it was still quite dark in this deep creek.

I moved closer up the slope opening more view of the gully with each step and seeing more animals, where was he? Just then there was a flash of Acorn coloured limb. With my Binoculars firmly pressed against my cheeks I picked up the buck. In a deliberate prance the big stag was marching around his rutting stand with his head nodding up and down flashing a magnificent mahogany war bonnet, like Sitting Bull doing a War dance.

The Buck was in full voice, crazy with the rut, gaining himself an audience of deer that had found themselves looking on as this fantastic buck proclaimed his right to the harem of does around him.

The buck was strutting his stuff in a circle around 30 meters across, disappearing into the gully and reappearing again to give me just a glimpse as he marched past at a fast pace.

This was a stag worth taking and I signalled to Dad I would take him. I couldn't get any closer so I decided to take a rest against a nearby Turpentine. I couldn't see the stag but I knew he would come around again as I peered through the scope at the opening where I expected to see him.

The tips of the antlers grew into full blades as he came marching back up the hill again. I would only have a second or two to fire, as the intensity of the grunting grew closer. I followed the top line of the stag, the head, the neck, the shoulder came into view. I had less than a couple of inches to take a clearing shot above the scrub; the distance was not more than 50 meters. I squeezed off a round to see the stag bounce away into the thick gully, I

had cleaned missed or had I hit the scrub.

Running to the top of the rise just above where the stag had been I picked up the buck, he had gone less than 60 metres. With his back to me displaying a 27" wide rack I aimed again & this time the 300 Weatherby found the point of impact at the centre of the neck. He never knew what hit him.

I ran down to examine my prize. After 20 years of hunting with my Dad I couldn't believe my luck. I had a great trophy Fallow with incredible palms, 27"W x30"L x18"Palms.

What a stalk, what a hunt, congratulations all round. I will never forget this day. The Trophy now takes pride of place next to other great heads in the family trophy room.



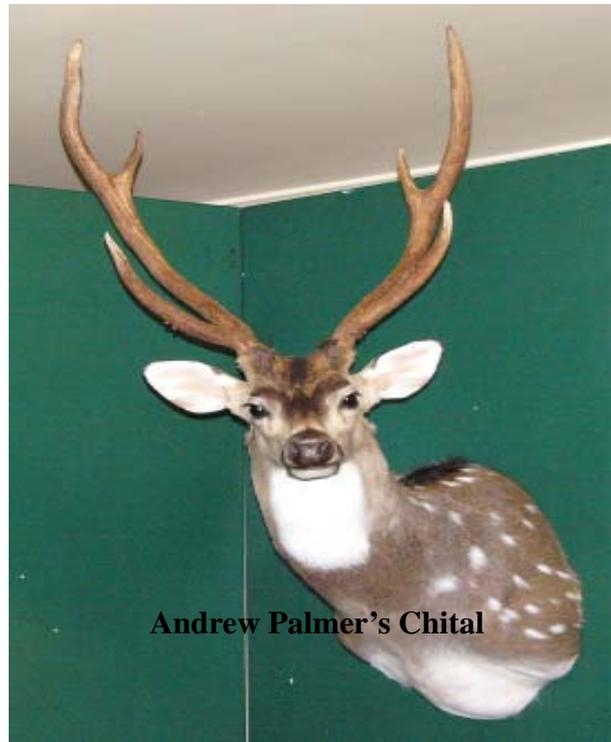
Trophy Exhibition report

In 2004 the NSWDA decided to drop the annual Xmas party /Trophy Competition that has been running for the past 15/20 years and invite members to Exhibit their Trophies in an Exhibition. The Exhibition was well attended and from the quality of the heads exhibited, I am sure this will become a day in the Calender not to be missed by any avid hunter in the future.

There was no restriction on when, where and how the Trophy was taken. In fact there weren't any guidelines at all, & amazingly every species of deer other than the Molochan Sub species of Rusa was on display.

Around 70 members, guests and families attended with a BBQ being donated by the club.

The following photographs give some idea of the quality of the exhibits, we look forward to the end of year Trophy Exhibition again this year with a relaxed atmosphere and another display of top quality Trophies.



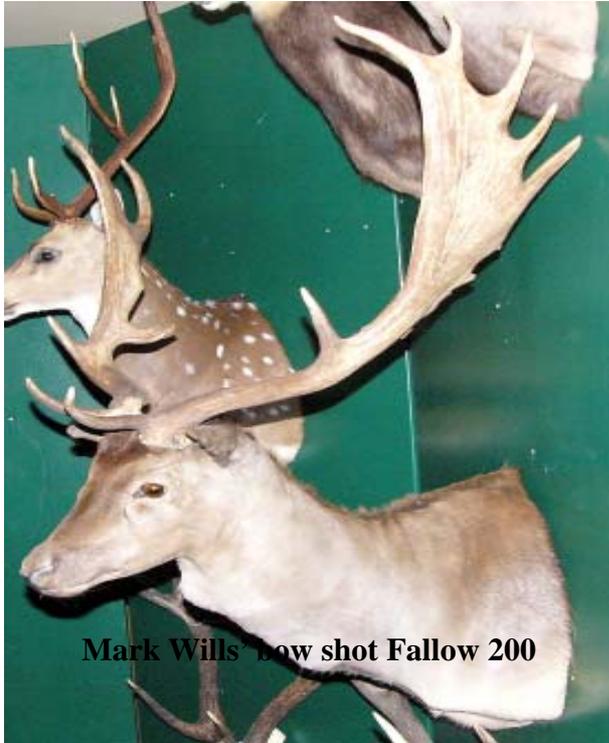
Andrew Palmer's Chital



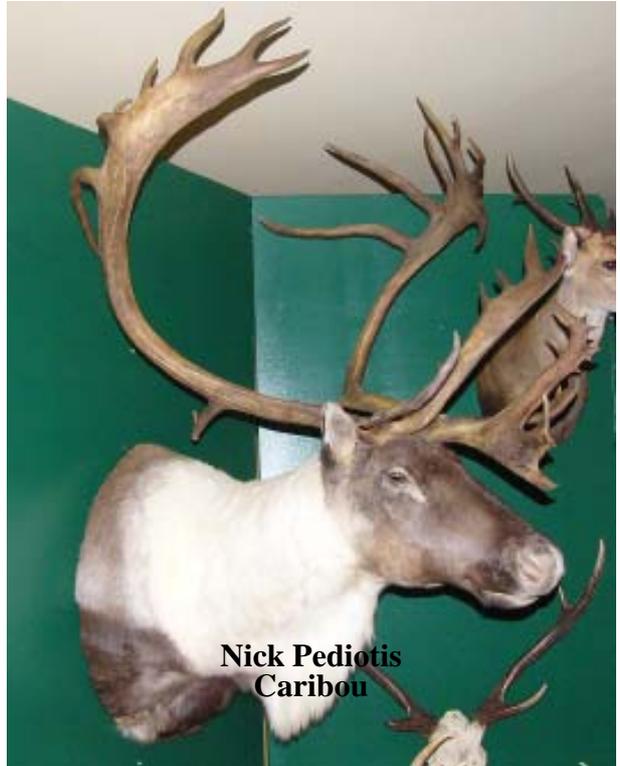


Tad Wantuk's Fallow 254 DP





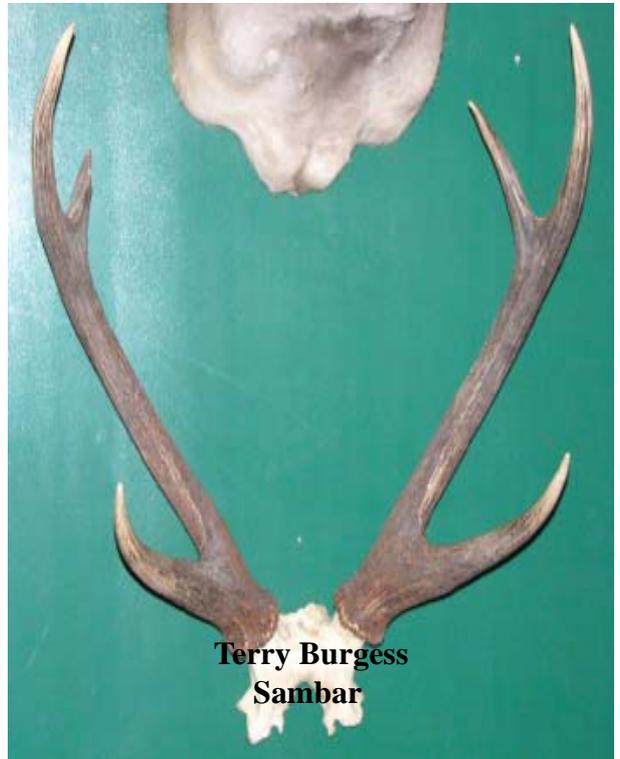
Mark Wills bow shot Fallow 200



**Nick Pediotis
Caribou**



Peter Birchall's Hog Deer



**Terry Burgess
Sambar**





Steve Isaacs Chamois

