

TWIN COAST ARCHERS



May/June 2014

A special welcome to our New Members!

Thankyou to all who let me know of their successes. For those that do not know, Email me at stgd94@gmail.com with your archery related news/pics that you want to share.

Hunters: If you intend sending pics through of bowshot game, please ensure you select the most 'clean' pictures. I.e, ones with the least blood/dirt etc... on the animal. Thankyou

Tournament News

Welcome to Winter! That means the IBO series is underway. Round 1 at Twin Coast went very well indeed for club members with a large number of placings. Those who featured in the top 3 in their division are as follows: First-place getters – Nathan Orchard, Rebekah, Geordie and Natalia. Both Benjamin Orchard and Sarah missed out on first-equal in their divisions by 1 point. Others that had to settle for second place include Stephen Orchard and Sam Overton. Jed scored 3rd in his division. If you look at the results online you will note Stephen and Nathan did not get awarded placings – that is because they did most of the course setting so volunteered to forfeit their placings from this round.

Another Tournament that has been and gone is the Annual NZ Bowhunters Tournament. This was an enjoyable shoot despite being a little less challenging than what we are used to. Nathan got a very commendable 5th out of a division of 45+ men. Patrick improved his score from last year and if he can keep that up in the years to come, he may end up placing someday! I (Sarah) had quite a successful outing with winning my division for the 4th Consecutive year as well as taking home the 'Most Small Game points' shield and 1st, 2nd and 3rd in 'Best Prepared skin' category.

Bowhunting News

Firsts for hunters this time came with the same species...and shot only a week apart – a Rat each for Sarah and Eli. Total tallies from 1st May – 30th June include: 5 pigs, 22 Goats, 3 Rabbits, 3 Koi Carp, 16 Turkeys, a Magpie, 3 Peacocks, 2 Rats and 21 Possums.

Club News

Thanks to all who put an effort in to make the last shoot at the Orchard's Brown Rd property a memorable one. It was a great turnout and many comments were made about how great the course was. Well done all those who were involved.

Please remember there is no indoors during the School Holidays....so **DONT** show up at Centennial Park until the 22nd July.

NEWSLETTER

If you have a short archery story you would like to share – please send it on through and it may well feature here...

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Seeing as a number of you keen young bowhunters are starting to get out there and chase animals, I thought it may be beneficial to write this. As a few of you have – and are about to – come hunting goats with me, I decided this would be a good time to put this out.

A Few Points On Bowhunting

By Sarah Thoroughgood

First thing – Hunting isn't always as easy as some of you may think! Who thinks I walk out the front door, take a short walk in the forest and don't take long to spot a mob of goats... I stalk in reasonably easy and get a good shot angle...shortly after I am walking home with the goat on my back.????! Yes, sometimes it just goes like that. How many of you would relate my hunting to this though -

“On a fine winters day in the middle of the afternoon, I walked through the forest to a place I thought there may be goats. After a long walk checking out most the hotspots to no avail, I finally spotted them – across the gully in the open pasture. With little more than half an hour of light left, it was going to be difficult to get over there and get onto one before dark. I was going to try anyway! Racing down the slippery hill under the cover of pine trees and taking a few slides on the way – I finally reached the bottom. There was still another 300m of steep hill to climb before I could circle around and get on top of them. Eventually I did all that in record pace and yes, sure enough, light was fading fast. Finally, I edged closer to the mob of happily grazing goats. I just had to cover 15y of open ground before I could get behind the shrubbery below and to my left. That would get me within a reasonable shot range. It was getting debatable if I would be able to make the shot in that light the way it was going. Just as I quietly snuck across the edge of the open gap, keeping low – a black nanny who I struggled to make out in the near-dark spotted me and let out that frustrating snort. She didn't quite know exactly what I was but right then the very faint breeze downdrafted and the goats bolted without hesitation. I had to walk home empty handed and having given it my best. Some days it just doesn't happen.”

Points to remember when hunting:

The wind direction – critical. It is very unlikely you will get an animal (excluding some smaller animals such as possums) if the wind is against you. Plan your stalk around the wind. If the wind is temperamental and swirling but more or less sticking to a 'main' direction – you could risk stalking in fairly quickly (if possible) from that direction and hope the wind stays reasonable for the time you need. This can sometimes work, but is nowhere near as successful as having a steady, consistent breeze in your face.

Animals usually look down hill more than up hill – try to plan your stalk so that you are coming from above them. I have taken many a goat and several pigs with uphill shots, but I've had even more stalks busted because of them randomly glancing downhill and spotting me.

Note also that you need to know the habits and characteristics of the species you are hunting to know what you can get away with. For instance, pigs have poor eye sight compared to other species so you can get away with stalking uphill to them a little more than you could on something such as deer. Pigs do however have very good ears and noses.

This is pretty obvious but anyway...

NEWSLETTER

Noise/Movement - Walk quietly (particularly when stalking) – some animals senses are a lot better than ours. They can pick up your presence easily with a noisy approach. Sudden movements are also likely to give you away. Obviously, you wouldn't expect to shoot something if you are walking around in the bush chatting away to your hunting buddy. Any words that must be spoken should be said in a quiet whisper (or even better use minimal sign language where possible) – this is not necessarily only when stalking, as animals can be anywhere at any time. You may walk around a corner to find one running away because you weren't being quiet enough.

Disguise – Everyone thinks 'camo'. Camouflage can help a lot, but isn't a 'must' to ensure you get an animal. I've shot plenty of goats wearing standard colour clothing (even PJ pants one evening...just for the sake of it!). Bare skin will give you away more than solid coloured clothing will, simply because when the light falls on your skin it almost 'glows' from a distance. People may argue understandably that you have a better chance when wearing camo which I believe is correct. Broken patterns make you blend in with the surroundings more than solid colours. However, at the end of the day – you don't want the animal getting aware of your presence so if it is done perfectly, the animal won't even turn to look at you anyway. If it does happen to glance your way, camo will give you the extra advantage. There is another sort of disguise though – making yourself appear as something other than a human (I.e danger to an animal). When stalking through open bits, it is a very good idea to hold your bow in front of your face and keep low so as to confuse animals that look at you. I recall many a hunt saved by doing this. I also remember sneaking in on a couple of goats with Benjamin and Kate one Summer/Autumn. Benjamin logically thought of a perfect disguise. We were sneaking through areas with lots of fern about 35y uphill of the goats. Benjamin promptly plucked a decent sized fern frond off and held it in front of his face and body as we shuffled across the hillside as good as on our knees. Perfect! By the end of this stalk (we were 15-20y away), the goats were well onto us but had no idea quite what we were so hadn't moved off. In case you were wondering, we did not end up shooting any as we saw they were nanny goats that were heavily pregnant. Again, you can get away with this concept on goats, but deer are somewhat more alert and are likely to run before identifying exactly what you are anyway – but there is no harm in trying if you are found in that situation, there is nothing to lose!

Time – When stalking, you don't always have to go super slowly – that can result in opportunities lost. You get an idea of what you can get away with once you have hunted certain species a few times. A particular hunt comes to mind which showed a mix of fast and slow to make the most of the situation. On New Year's day, Peter and I spotted goats from a good kilometre away. After a steady walk/climb for half an hour, we were 80y away. That is when it got difficult as one nanny goat had posted herself on guard duty and was perched on the edge of a spur, surveying everything down the valley from her. Thankfully, we were a little above her, but my approach would take me slightly below her before sidling around the hill. I tried to walk quietly down through a tight patch of native trees/ponga ferns and I didn't really succeed in getting through super quietly but the goats were still mostly grazing when I emerged back into the open. I then had to sidle around one small spur and come up the side of another before I'd be in a good spot to shoot. This involved a lot of slow crawling and trying to stay low, hiding in the long seeding grass/weeds. Eventually, after lots of patient moments waiting for goats to take their eyes off me, I finally eased up the side of the second spur. A nanny goat copped a 4 blade broadhead through the shoulders from 25y and unusually died on the spot after a 180 degree turn where she was standing. We had been hunting for a few hours to get this result. If I had moved slowly from several hundred metres back, they probably would have fed away by the time I reached where they were. At the same time, if I'd rushed into 50y, it's guaranteed one would have spotted me and it would all be over. To be fair, the topography of the land allowed us to get into 80y mostly without being in sight of the watch nanny.

The Animal – Obviously I have made comment about various species behaving differently. For now I will just talk about goats as that is what most of you are likely to chase first (before bigger animals). Within the goat realms, there are a lot of differences. Here are a few things that seem reasonably stereotypical with goats: Younger goats are usually less alert and more prone to an arrow going through them! That is because they haven't matured enough to realise the importance of keeping an eye out for danger at all times. Some billies can be less alert than nannies – particularly during the breeding season. That is when billies are more likely to be fighting for dominance/the right to claim the girls than watching for predators. Mature nannies are generally the ones to watch out for. It is not unlike one to post herself at a lookout such as a high point in the surroundings near the herd and keep watch for anything unusual. They also seem to keep a general watch out for danger while grazing/resting more than billies or juveniles do. We don't shoot kids (up to about 5 or 6 months old when we refer to them as juveniles and they are big enough to be considered fair game) for ethical reasons. Kids are generally very un-alert and often haven't the slightest clue humans mean danger.

Obviously I am speaking about the goats I have experienced and mostly the ones on the surrounding properties here. They are hunted a lot (as you know!) so you can expect them to be a bit more alert. Not all goats are like that...some can appear very dopey, simply because they are not used to having to watch out for danger. You will find differences in how alert the animals are anywhere you hunt – it is subject to what is called Hunting Pressure. Somewhere that hunters 'bomb' up every weekend, animals are likely to run at the slightest hint of danger – they may even come out of cover only at night when they consider themselves reasonably safe. However, animals that are used to wandering out of bush and grazing on a farmer's paddocks where one or two people hunt one weekend each in an entire year and quad bikes, people and dogs are coming past within a few hundred metres on a regular basis - are likely to be reasonably oblivious to someone sneaking up on them.

This is of course only a few points on hunting – there are many other aspects to it, particularly once you add the shot and what happens after that. Maybe that can be for another time... I wish you all success when you next head out hunting!