

RANGITATA 

HIGH COUNTRY HUNTING - NEW ZEALAND

NEW ZEALAND

WELCOME

Rangitata High Country Hunting welcomes guests who enjoy a true wilderness hunting experience. Our lodge is set in the foothills of New Zealand's Southern Alps high above the valley floor with uninterrupted views of the Rangitata River and the surrounding mountain peaks. This is alpine hunting camp luxury, warm comfortable rooms with delicious cuisine provided each day by our in house high country chef.

Uniquely your adventure starts right from the lodge. Whether you are chasing a bull tahr, red stag, fallow buck or chamois the hunt starts the very minute you put your boots on and walk out the front door.



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OUR STORY

Rangitata High Country Hunting is a part of a large family owned farming and civil contracting business. Gary Rooney started the business in 1976 and over the past 4 decades has grown it to include large scale farming properties that are involved in the production of sheep, beef, and deer, dairy and cropping. The farms span more than 200,000 acres, over 300 square miles of privately owned land in Te Waipounamu, New Zealand's South Island. Wild game animals live throughout the properties and thrive in the surrounding mountain wilderness. We consider the wild game as a valid resource that we are extremely lucky to have and hunting them is part of our land management strategy. Our hunting business includes a team of professional gamekeepers and hunting guides who keep the balance maintained with a very healthy stock of superior animals for all our guests to enjoy. The land is very diverse and ranges from low lying wetlands at sea level up to alpine peaks at over 6000ft high inland, including native forests, river valleys and open snow tussock. Gary Rooney and his family are passionate hunters and their dedication to protecting the land and environment where the wild animals live is an extremely important part of their land care values. Along with wild animal management there is also a significant undertaking of introduced predator control through trapping programs, inland waterway protection and riparian native plantings. Together we are focused on providing the best possible hunting destination in New Zealand. Don't just book a hunt, book an adventure that is part of our lifestyle.

LOCATION

Aotearoa New Zealand is an island country located in the south-west Pacific Ocean. The two main islands are called Te Ika-a-Māui, the North Island and Te Waipounamu, the South Island.

New Zealand has a land area over 103,000 square miles and runs north to south a 1000 miles long. Geographically both the main islands are very different. The North Island is dominated by the volcanic plateau that has many active volcanoes. It stretches north to the sub tropics and is a real contrast to the South Island that is mostly mountainous with the Southern Alps climbing up to our highest peak, Aoraki Mt Cook at 12,220 ft high.

Rangitata High Country Hunting is located in the central South Island and our lodge is a two hour drive south west of Christchurch international Airport.

When travelling to New Zealand most flights will arrive into Auckland Airport then an internal transfer flight is required down to Christchurch which takes about 1 hour 20 minutes. Your guide will meet you in Christchurch and take you to the lodge which is a two hour drive through the countryside. Helicopter transfers from Christchurch to the lodge are available with a flight time of about 40 minutes.

Many of our guests like to add further touring options and visit other areas of New Zealand after they complete their hunt with us. A good idea is to use the New Zealand Tourism web site: www.tourismnewzealand.com This site is very helpful and is full of information that can help plan your trip after your hunt.



ACCOMMODATION

“Rangitata Lodge, alpine hunting camp luxury”



www.rangitatahunting.com



RANGITATA LODGE

Hunting in these mountains requires physical effort, it's exhilarating hard work so feeling great at the end of a day out on the hill, being able to enjoy a hot shower, eat good food and have a restful night is vital.

Our very comfortable lodge is fully equipped for the discerning hunter who wants to make the most of their New Zealand hunting experience.

The Rangitata Lodge really is alpine hunting camp luxury. Up in the mountains, the hunting starts right from the front door, where tahr and red deer can be seen from the lodge windows. We are off the beaten track but equipped with all the comforts of home including our live in chef who provides a delicious menu of local cuisine from the early morning starts to the late evening return.

The lodge has four warm double bedrooms all with ensuite bathrooms and fine furnishings. Unlimited internet access lets you keep in contact and to send out photos of your adventure.

Enjoy an evening drink in our lodge bar beside the roaring log fire overlooking the Rangitata Valley.

The secluded setting is far from any tourist route on the no exit road to Mesopotamia and apart from the weather, the only noise is the roaring of a red stag or the whistle of the tahr.

It is extremely important to us that all our guests, are comfortable and warm and have a truly memorable time staying with us in the Rangitata Valley.

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HIMALAYAN TAHR



New Zealand has evolved through millennia as a land of birds and reptiles, free of any mammals, with the exception of the tiny Pekapeka, the native bat. All the mammals that we see in New Zealand today have been introduced, mostly in the early days of European settlement. One of these early arrivals, the Himalayan Tahr is so well adapted to the rugged terrain of the South Island High Country, it's as if it's a native of these high mountains of the South Pacific. One of the most striking features of the tahr is their colour, and the adult male's mane matching the long snow grasses where they live. The tahr have become one of our country's favourite game animals and they have challenged generations of hunters to head out in their pursuit. The Rangitata high country has long been a favourite habitat for the tahr, the rugged land of towering peaks and alpine scree is perfect for their lifestyle of free solo mountaineering.

The tahr that live on our land are managed through hunting. We target bulls that are in excess of 8 yrs old with the average age being 9 yrs with 12 ½" horn length. We also take many female tahr annually to maintain a healthy balance. All our hunting is done on foot by spot and stalk, the land lends itself to this method and has excellent road access to most of the areas up to 5500 ft where the tahr live.

Our properties produce strong bulls with trophy horn length and a thick classic bull tahr mane that makes a spectacular mount. Our hunting is not rushed, there is no pressure and our guides will make sure that the animals taken are of high quality and have reached old age. As part of our management we try to take two bulls per hunter and several nannies if we can. Tahr can be hunted anytime, however from mid-March their winter coats are well developed and from then until the end of August they make a beautiful trophy mount.

A photograph of a man in a camouflage jacket and cap kneeling on a grassy slope next to a dead chamois. The chamois has dark fur, a white face, and curved horns. The man is holding a rifle. The background shows a steep, rocky mountain under a clear blue sky.

CHAMOIS

It is Thomas Edward Donne to whom we owe thanks for the introduction of Chamois into New Zealand. T.E.Donne was the New Zealand senior official in charge of the tourist traffic branch of the Railways, he was a keen angler and hunter. It was he who did the deal with the Austrian Rear-Admiral Ludwig Ritter von Hohnel commander of the ship Panther in 1905. Six does and two bucks were taken from the Imperial Crown Lands at Neuberg Austria, after an adventurous journey via London all the animals arrived in splendid condition and were liberated at Aoraki Mount Cook in 1907.

After 115 years of residency in New Zealand the chamois have become a part of the South Island high country wilderness and are one of our most prized game animals.

Both the chamois buck and doe look very similar and during the winter months they both have the characteristic eye mask, dark thick capes and hooked horns. The males can have slightly more defined hooks on their horns and are slightly more thick set bodies but it is often difficult to tell between the two. We have best success hunting the chamois during their rut which is from the end of April through to late July.

A photograph of a red stag with large, velvet-covered antlers standing in a field. The stag is facing the camera. The background is a blurred landscape with trees and a body of water.

RED STAG

Red deer in New Zealand have a very interesting heritage. Arriving from as early as 1851 from deer parks in England and from wild stock in Scotland, it took several attempts of liberation. The arduous 4 month journey by sailing ship took its toll on the animals, but they finally got a foothold and by 1899 the population was sufficient enough to issue 100 shooting licences per year. From then on the deer population grew through to the halcyon days of stalking in the 1920's and 30's, then on to the days of government culling, followed by live capture from helicopters to the deer farming industry of today.

Rangitata High Country Hunting has many herds of Red Deer spread right across our different properties. We manage the deer the same way as the tahr, taking out the mature stags and keeping the number of females in check. Each year any surplus or older red stags from the farming operation are turned out onto the hill to live with the wild deer, this helps the wild deer by introducing new blood, and being from the farm these stags carry very good genetics that get spread to the wild stock which produce excellent trophy animals. Our aim is for our hunters to take mature stags over 8yrs old, the average antler size is 450 SCI, however stags up to and in excess of 500 SCI can be found on our properties. The red stag roar is from early March through to mid-April, though stags can be hunted through to the end of July or early August. They start to shed their antlers by the start of September.

The Red Stag has a massive presence and of all the game introduced into New Zealand they are by far sort the most. Hunting the red stags of Rangitata is at the top of the list of most of our international guests.

FALLOW

The first fallow deer arrived into New Zealand in 1864 from Richmond Park in Surry, England. Several more liberations arrived from 1867 including animals from mainland Australia and Tasmania. These animals where released in various parts of the country and adapted quickly to their new home. Now today you don't have to travel too far to find fallow deer.

Our properties hold very good numbers of fallow deer. Fallow are very adventurous and can turn up almost anywhere on our ground, right from the mountain tops down to the river valleys and throughout the farms. They can even appear in the lodge garden, a fence is no barrier to a fallow deer! Often, the opportunity to take a nice buck is when it is least expected so it's a good idea to give your guide the heads up that you would be interested should the opportunity literally, pop up.

The bucks rut during April to early May and during this time they become very aggressive and vocal. The scene of two fallow bucks engaged in battle during their rut is a savage event to witness.

Most importantly the steaks from a young fallow deer are exceptional, and in our mind this is the best of venison, so this features extensively in our lodge menu.

ARAPAWA RAM

The Arapawa feral sheep are a merino breed that originate from the Middle East. They arrived into New Zealand in the early 1800's by whalers and sealers dropping them on remote offshore islands as a food source for ship wrecked sailors. Arapawa Island (Arapaoa Island) in the Marlborough Sounds was one of the islands that the sheep successfully colonised. They have very fine dark wool however any attempt to farm these feral sheep was quickly thwarted by the fact that they do not respect fences, farmers or anything to do with domestication.

Arapawa sheep can be found in a few areas on our properties and these hardy beasts are just as at home in the alpine high country as they are right down on the river flats. Arapawa rams are robust animals with an extremely thick insulating fleece. They are generally dark in colour from a black brown that can be sun bleached blonde to a motley patchy grey that blends into the landscape looking just like the rocks. We take an average of 14 rams a season with a minimum of a full curl, trophy horns. We also harvest several fat Arapawa lambs for the lodge kitchen as they make a delicious roast.



Evening sunset from the Rangitata lodge.

Photo by Matt Searles Photography

BOW HUNTING



Rangitata High Country Hunting has been hosting bow hunters for over 30 seasons and we are world renowned successful bow hunting outfitter. Our reputation has developed from the vast range of land that we have available and the quality of game animals that live there. In particular, the Himalayan Tahr has been the main drawcard for bow hunters to book with Rangitata.

Our Tahr hunting is all accessible by four wheel drive vehicle and hunting is carried out on foot. The boundless ground cover offers bow hunters a high shot opportunity. As with our rifle hunters, the bow hunters are able to take two trophy bull tahr as part of our package. This works in with our property tahr management plan and offers the bow hunter the opportunity to not only take two bulls but also a second chance should the arrow not connect first time round. This eliminates the pressure not to take a shot in case there might be something better around the corner. This offer is exclusive only to guests of Rangitata High Country Hunting.

We encourage bow hunters to come early in the season. From early March through May is a good time as the days are longer and access is good before the snow arrives. Also it is during the rut so there are more animals around and the males are generally distracted giving the hunter more opportunity.

We have a target range set up at the lodge for practice to check that all your archery equipment is in working order and any sight adjustments can be made pre hunt.

Expandable tips are not permitted - fixed broadheads only.

NON-HUNTERS

Rangitata High Country Hunting understands just how important it is for non-hunting companions to also have an enjoyable time while staying with us. Non-hunters are very welcome and encouraged to join in with the hunt, however, we do recognise that climbing around the mountains all day is not everybody's idea of a good time. There are many alternative options available and you can be assured that all our guests, either hunting or non-hunting, will have an amazing, New Zealand experience.

Non hunters are welcome to just relax at the lodge, however there are other activities available besides hunting.

Some local attractions close to the lodge are sightseeing and helicopter scenic flights. We are located within some of the most beautiful scenery in New Zealand and a short drive up the road to Mesopotamia, you will arrive into middle earth country, the setting for Peter Jackson's, "Lord of the Rings" films. Visiting middle earth is always on the top of the list for many of our guests.

Not far from the lodge is Peel Forest which has native forest walks and birdlife. There are short walks and some that can extend for many hours. The most popular short walk is The Big Tree walk. There are large native trees like Matai, Kahikatea, the largest tree is a massive lowland Tōtara, and it is almost three metres across and about 1000 years old.

The local village, Geraldine, is 30 minutes' drive from the lodge which has many attractions including shopping, a spa, cafés, and the Humdinger gin distillery plus much more.

There are many things to see and do.



CLOTHING AND FOOTWEAR

In order to maximise your experience with Rangitata High Country Hunting it is well worth the effort of making sure that you have good quality outdoor clothing and most importantly, good quality comfortable footwear that is fit for purpose.

Important fact - New Zealand is in the Southern Hemisphere and the seasons are opposite to those in the Northern Hemisphere; mid-summer in Europe and the USA is mid-winter in New Zealand. It seems obvious however this is overlooked time and time again. It is an easy mistake to make when the weather is warm, then 24hrs after boarding your aircraft you arrive into winter conditions.

The most important item on your equipment list is your footwear! Most of our hunting is done by the spot and stalk method, so your boots need to be sound, waterproof with plenty of ankle support and comfortable.

The weather in early season March and April can still be warm through the day however a quality waterproof outer shell is important as the weather can change at any time. For the months of May June and July you need to step up the insulation layers as it can be cold frosty weather even snow and temperatures can be down to -10c or 14f, even colder with the wind chill factor.

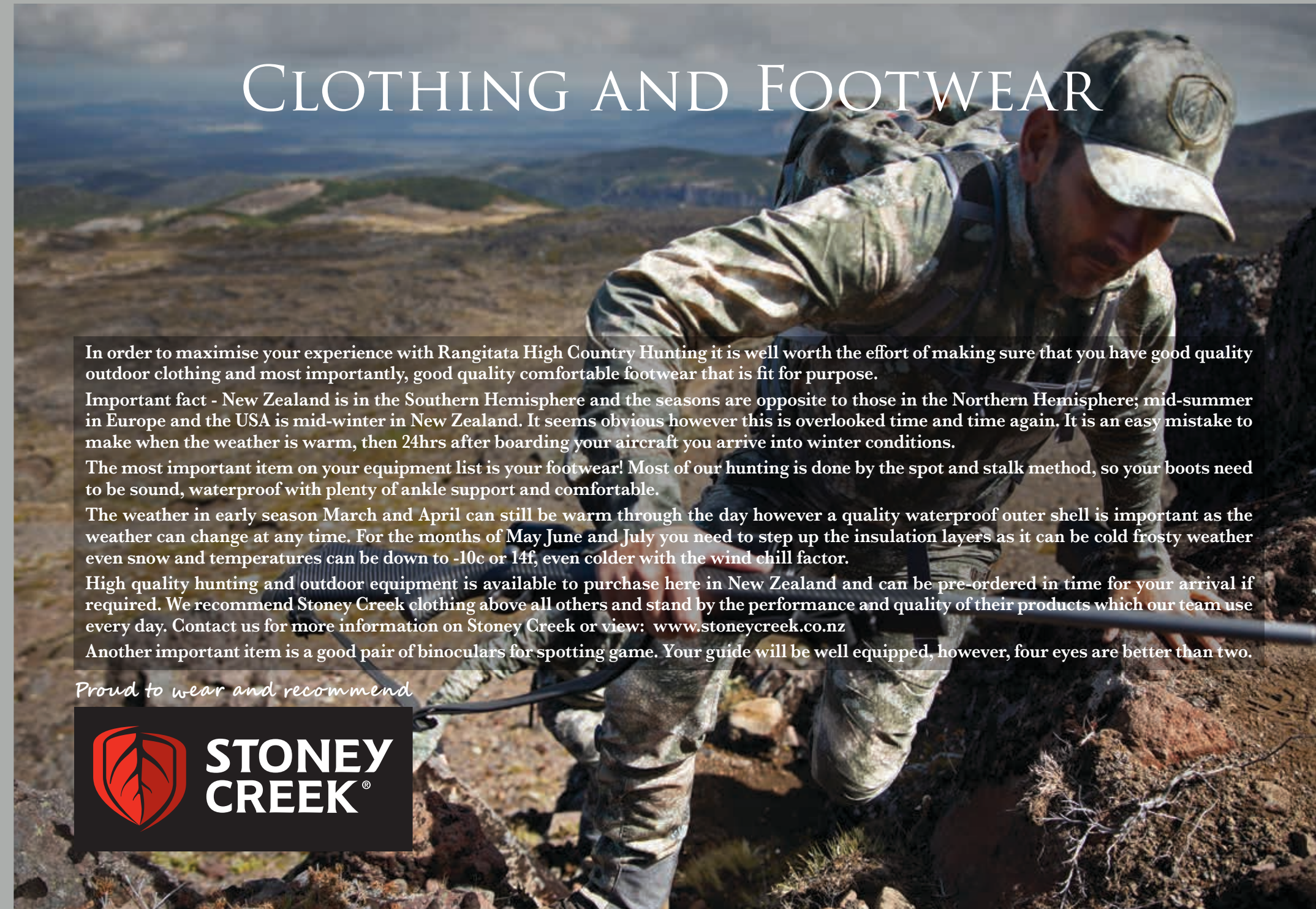
High quality hunting and outdoor equipment is available to purchase here in New Zealand and can be pre-ordered in time for your arrival if required. We recommend Stoney Creek clothing above all others and stand by the performance and quality of their products which our team use every day. Contact us for more information on Stoney Creek or view: www.stoneycreek.co.nz

Another important item is a good pair of binoculars for spotting game. Your guide will be well equipped, however, four eyes are better than two.

Proud to wear and recommend



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RANGITATA LAND CARE INITIATIVE

Sustainability is at the core of our company's beliefs. As one of the largest private landowners in New Zealand we have over 200,000 acres of land in our care and we are committed to preserving the unique wildlife and iconic landscapes within it. Since our initiation, we have undertaken numerous measures to conserve our wild spaces and these areas are not only crucial to the success of our hunting passion but are a fundamental component of New Zealand's renowned cultural and ecological heritage.

As part of our environmental initiative we have invested extensively in protecting the waterways that flow through our properties. All riparian farmland under our care has been protected and planted with native shrubs to enhance water quality. Since the inception of our land protection plan more than 6 years ago we have planted over 35,000 native shrubs, trees and grasses in these areas, all selected for purpose of river bank protection nitrate cleansing and food availability for our native fauna.

We recognise and appreciate that the prosperity of our wild animals is dependent on maintaining a stable, functioning ecosystem. Our own extensive predator control programme covers much of the South Island's most fabled country, and we are working tirelessly to exterminate pests as part of our commitment to protecting Aotearoa's native habitat and historic alpine areas.

Our team of gamekeepers and farm managers operate trapping lines, from the alpine high country down to the river valleys, which target introduced predators such as the feral cat, ferrets, weasels and stoats. These predators have had an enormous impact on our native wild life since their introduction in the 1800's and through our trapping over the years we have seen a great improvement in biodiversity on our land.

We take pride in our sustainable approach to managing our land, water and animals and we hope you will share in our vision to conserve our environment so that it may continue to provide for posterity.



GENERAL INFORMATION

BOOKING POLICY

A 25% deposit is required to confirm your booking - Please plan your hunt carefully as deposits are non-refundable. However they are transferable to the following season. There may be price variation if a booking is transferred beyond the following season.

A further 25% is required 3 months before your hunt date, the outstanding 50% can be made on completion of your hunt.

A completed and signed booking contract will be required along with your deposit.

PAYMENT

Deposits can be made through wire bank transfer, online through our website. For payments while in New Zealand our lodge has card processing facilities, cash is accepted or bank transfer. We accept most major credit cards (3% processing fee). Personal cheques and travellers' cheques are not accepted because New Zealand banks no longer accept any cheques.

TRAVEL

For travel advice from the USA to New Zealand including further touring options for after your hunt we can recommend making contact with the team at Esplanade Travel, www.esplanadetours.com a link can be found on the information tab on our website.

Entry into New Zealand requires an entry visa. The required Electronic Travel Authority (ETA) application is a 10 minute online process. A link to the ETA can be found in the information tab on our website.

ARRIVAL

Please book your flights to arrive into Christchurch, this is the main city in the South Island. It is advised to arrive the day before your booking, spend a night in a hotel and we will collect you from there the following morning.

FIREARMS

Please notify us of your intention to bring a firearm with you as early as possible. A visitor's firearms permit which includes firearms import permit must be applied for at least 4 months before arrival to New Zealand: www.firearmssafetyauthority.govt.nz

You are welcome to bring your own firearm and we can help you with this, however to save the hassle of travelling with a firearm we have high performance Hardy Rifles, and quality optics available for you to use at the lodge: www.hardyrfle.co.nz

PHYSICAL ABILITY

Hunting in an alpine environment is physically challenging. Our properties are well tracked and have excellent 4x4 access into the high country where the animals live. An enjoyable successful hunt is very achievable for most people.

THE HYBRID & PROJECT X

Rangitata Hunting are proud to recommend and use Hardy Rifles



UNITING YOU, WHO DEMAND THE BEST,
WITH THE APEX OF REVOLUTIONARY EQUIPMENT



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