

NEW ZEALAND Hunting & Wildlife



The Jungle Lane Shoot

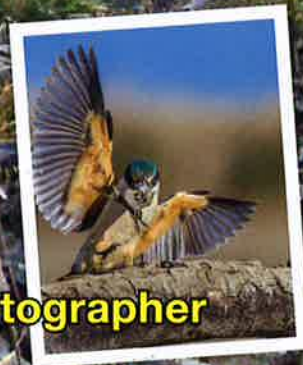


The 2015 Roar

WILD PIG AND CAT...?!



Profile:
Matt Winter, photographer



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.22 Jungle Lane Shoot sets up realistic hunting scenarios

By Nicole McKee, NZ Mountain Safety Council



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In April this year I attended New Zealand Mountain Safety Council (MSC) Firearms Safety Instructor Harry Hoover's .22 Jungle Lane shoot and took some of my family with me. It is an extremely well organised shoot run on a 1.5 km track at Hangawera Station, near Morrinsville. This is the second time it has been held and it's the kind of event that the MSC is proud to support and be a part of.

“...This exercise really gets the kids focused”

Harry came up with the .22 Jungle Lane shoot because he wanted to provide an event for families to enjoy – something recreational that gets people outdoors, teaches new skills, is affordable and, most of all, is fun. He set the course out in such a way that those with more experience could participate alongside novices and all

have an enjoyable day. I would also like to commend him for even making his course wheelchair-friendly. This enabled one extra competitor to attend the shoot and participate fully.

This year I decided to take two of my girls with me: Brereton (11) and Kiriahi (14). My husband, myself and the two girls made up our squad. After sighting in the rifles on the multiple reactive steel plate targets set out from 30 to 150 yards, we set off. A full day's adventure lay ahead

in the jungle lane, which had 30 positions to shoot from. Twenty of these were for scoring in the competition and were positioned anywhere from 30 to 250 yards away. The extra 10 positions were fun events.

Brereton had an absolute ball trying to figure out where the targets were. They were up banks, hidden in trees, some were moving and they came in all sorts of shapes. Once she acquired the targets by eye, she positioned herself with my rifle and zoomed in using the scope. Never have I seen such concentration on a young person's face as when they prepare to identify and acquire a target, then take their shot. One of the good things about having reactive steel targets is that you can always hear an audible “ting” when your .22 bullet hits the plate.

Kiriahi has been hunting with her father and, being that little bit older, she already knew how



Caitlin Ward with the hare she dropped at 100 yards during her first-ever shoot on the range

to position herself in awkward places to take a good shot. One thing that became apparent to me very early on was that while Kiriahi had that knowledge, Brereton didn't yet. It would be wrong to presume that a person should have certain knowledge just because other members of their squad do.

Brereton has been taught to shoot four positions, but not how to lean against a tree or lie at 180°, or how to use a daypack on a fence post for support. Through all of these learnings, all she wanted to know was how to get into a comfortable position to take the shot. She had to be taught how to identify the best position, how to get into that



Brereton McKee lining up a shot on the range

“... a great way for young hunters to learn safe firearms handling skills in a relaxed, friendly environment”

position safely while always keeping the rifle pointing in a safe direction, how to secure herself in that position and lastly how to acquire the target, fire and follow through. But we all know it doesn't stop there. When kids hear the "ting" of their round hitting the target they get excited, so my two were reminded to open their bolts and clear their rifles before moving out of the position.

This exercise really gets the kids focused: Can I see it? Can I shoot it? Did I hit it? Can I do it again? We need them to learn to be aware of their surroundings and who is in them; to correctly identify their target; to take the shot only if it is safe; to know whether they hit the target or need to take another shot; and that yes, of course you can do it again; and once you have finished, you must clear your rifle, show others that it is in a safe condition, and then again be aware of other squads in the immediate area and where they are moving or have moved to.

Kids are never too young to start learning about situational awareness. We can answer their questions easily

enough, but we also need to teach practical thought processes. I believe that if we can teach these skills at an early age so they become part of their subconscious thought processes, then maybe, just *maybe* we can teach the next generation of hunters essential new skills that have not previously been taught to some of us.

Harry organised for the Girl Guides to come and cook meals for the competitors over the two days. One young guide, Caitlin Ward, had never used a firearm before but was shown how to shoot at the sighting-in area and very quickly picked up how to use it properly and was successfully hitting the targets. Then a hare popped up on the range at about 100 yards so she was told to shoot it. She did - and it dropped on impact. The smile on her face said it all!

We should have confidence in the knowledge that with the right information we can all share in teaching our young people the skills required to hunt, as well as the thought processes involved in sound decision-making. It will then come down to them as future firearms users

Harry Hoover (left) presenting Simon Gillice with the prize for winning both Open and Hunter classes



and hunters as to how they use those skills in the field.

The .22 Jungle Lane event will grow in popularity as word of its success spreads. It's a great way for young hunters to learn safe firearms handling skills in a relaxed, friendly environment. Congratulations to Simon Gillice for winning both the Open and Hunter classes; to Kate Germanis for winning the Women's section and Keoghan van Woerden for winning the Junior section. Thanks to Harry Hoover and his team of supporters and helpers. The MSC looks forward to supporting this event next year too. 🐾

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