

Gun Safety this ROAR



The roar is the mating season for deer and can begin anytime from mid-March onwards. The cooler climate usually initiates the start of the roar.

Hunters hit the hills at this time because it is one of the special seasons in the year where a stag will not only notify a hunter of his whereabouts, but stay and defend his harem of hinds instead of instantly running. A Hunter can roar a stag into closer proximity to himself as the animal seeks to protect his harem from what he thinks is another stag. Hunters have been known to roar to other hunters, both believing they are challenging animals.

Hunters should refresh themselves not only of the seven basic rules of firearms safety but the principles behind those rules BEFORE they venture out on their hunt.

Last year there were 13 non-intentional firearms incidents that occurred.

Eight were hunting related, three were duck shooting.

Four hunting related occurred during last year's roar and two of those four, resulted in death.

Every roar we always push the seven rules and ask hunters to remind themselves of them. The reason why is that for EVERY non-intentional firearms incident that occurs you can usually pick a couple of the seven rules that have not been adhered to.

Remember the basics, make a plan and stick to it. Becoming complacent could make you a statistic.

- Tell people where you are going and when you expect to be back.
- Do not rely on a cell phone as your only means of communication. Coverage is not guaranteed.
- Invest in a PLB or hire one. If things go wrong, you want to be found quickly and easily. Your life could depend on it.
- Make sure you wear a colour that contrasts with the environment you will be in. At this time of the year it is important to be seen by other hunters to help them identify you as a human.
- Should you be shot or take a serious fall your clothing colour may assist search and rescue volunteers to find you.
- Take extra food and water in case you are caught out and spend longer than expected in the bush.
- Check the weather reports before you go and make sure you take appropriate clothing for the conditions you expect to be in.
- When you make your plan stick to it. Especially if hunting with others. We have a terrible record of shooting members of our own hunting parties. Usually because the plans have been altered by one member.

- If you lose sight of a member of your hunting party CEASE HUNTING until you have regained sight of them again.
- Once you have fired the shot, it is too late for "what ifs" so identify that target beyond all doubt. Ask yourself if the target is a human before you pull the trigger.
- Movement, colour, sound and shape can all deceive you – if your gut instinct tells you something isn't quite right, then don't attempt the shot.
- Have a first aid kit, emergency blanket, and extra water on you.
- Know the area you are going to hunt, know the boundaries you need to stick to. Take a map and compass or GPS and either know or learn how to use them before you venture out.
- Only you know how far you can push yourself and you should also know when to identify that you've reached your limits. Have contingency plans ready for those situations before they become emergency situations.



WANGANUI & DISTRICTS, HUNTERS & STALKERS CLUB

We meet every 3rd Tuesday of the month at the **Deer Stalkers Hall, Peat Street, Wanganui**
For more info contact **RIC: 342 6964**

THE FIREARMS SAFETY CODE:

Seven Basic Rules of Safe Firearms Handling

1. TREAT EVERY FIREARM AS LOADED

- Check every firearm yourself.
- Pass or accept only an open or unloaded firearm.

2. ALWAYS POINT FIREARMS IN A SAFE DIRECTION

- Loaded or unloaded, always point the muzzle in a safe direction.

3. LOAD A FIREARM ONLY WHEN READY TO FIRE

- Load only the magazine after you reach your shooting area.
- Load the chamber only when ready to shoot.
- Completely unload before leaving the shooting area.

4. IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET BEYOND ALL DOUBT

- Movement, colour, sound and shape can all deceive you.
- Assume colour, shape, sound, and shape to be human until proven otherwise.

5. CHECK YOUR FIRING ZONE

- THINK! What may happen if you miss your target? What might you hit between you and the target or beyond?
- Do not fire when you know others are in your firing zone.

6. STORE FIREARMS AND AMMUNITION SAFELY

- When not in use, lock away the bolt, firearm and ammunition separately.
- Never leave firearms in a vehicle that is unattended.

7. AVOID ALCOHOL AND DRUGS WHEN HANDLING FIREARMS

- Good judgement is the key to safe use of firearms.

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