



## **Hunter National Training Scheme (HUNTS) Course 2026 information**

### **INTRODUCTION**

The Otago Branch HUNTS course is conducted annually from August to Mid-October. This course is designed to help novice and partially experienced hunters gain competence and confidence in basic bushcraft and hunting skills, enabling them to successfully complete hunting trips in areas below the bush line. Trainees who successfully complete the course will be awarded a certificate.

### **PREREQUISITES**

To attend a HUNTS course at the Otago Branch, you need to be a full financial NZDA member and have attended several club meetings.

Ideally, you will have a Firearms License (FAL) and your own firearms. However, we understand that you might be early in your hunting journey and may have a pending FAL. In such cases, exceptions can be made on a case-by-case basis, subject to approval by the HUNTS management.

The HUNTS course is primarily designed for new hunters aged 18+ however seasoned hunters looking to brush up on their skills are also welcome. Younger hunters are also welcome, with applications subject to approval by the HUNTS management.

Participants should have a good level of fitness to carry a day pack, carry any game taken, and navigate the terrain in the Blue Mountains at Beaumont.

### **HUNTS RESOURCES & BENEFITS**

At the end of the course, trainees will have gained basic knowledge and skills in firearms, hunting, and bushcraft skills, covering the topics outlined in Annex A (attached). Each trainee will receive a copy of the NZDA HUNTS training manual, a valuable 258-page resource offering an in-depth guide to all aspects of hunting that will be useful throughout their hunting journey.

Additionally, NZDA has established partnerships with various hunting organizations to provide trainees with exclusive benefits, including giveaways and discounts.

### **HUNTS INSTRUCTORS**

All our instructors are dedicated volunteers who generously donate their time, skills, and invaluable knowledge to train new hunters. With many years of experience in firearms, bushcraft, and extensive knowledge of hunting in the Blue Mountains, they provide trainees with a wealth of insights and learning opportunities.

## **DURATION**

The course consists of a number of theoretical and practical modules held over 8 weeks. Including two weekends, one Sat at the range, and one weekend carrying out water safety. This may change as required.

## **COURSE OBJECTIVES & PROGRAMME**

A list of the course objectives is attached as Annex A.

The training programme and timetable including locations is attached as Annex B.

Additional information (directions for travel etc.) for each training location will be given out separately.

## **COURSE COSTS**

The course costs are **\$500**, if you are already an NZDA member. This is to cover reference material (HUNTS Manual and handouts), and administrative overheads to run the course efficiently. This also includes the costs of the hunting weekend in the Blue Mtns.

If a family member is attending with you, and sharing the reference material, the cost for the family member is reduced to **\$435**.

Some additional costs may be incurred for field trips and any additional items you may wish to take.

## **CLOTHING & EQUIPMENT REQUIRED**

You will be required to bring your own hunting clothing and equipment, including rifle and ammunition, when required. When and what to bring will be detailed prior to these times.

Whilst you may not have all the equipment at this time, you can add to your gear after learning throughout the course.

## **REFERENCES/STATIONERY**

You will be provided with the necessary manuals, lesson handouts and workbooks, but you will need to provide your own stationery for the course.

## **HOW TO ATTEND THE COURSE**

You can apply to be on the course by filling out the online application form at the below link.

The course is limited to 12 people and priority is given to those that meet the pre-requisite.

## **ANNEXES:**

- A. Course Objectives
- B. Course Timetable and Training programme



## ANNEX A

# HUNTS COURSE OBJECTIVES

### ETHICS, ECOLOGY & REGULATIONS

- Identify stakeholders and recognise their interests: DOC, landowners, iwi, forest owners, other recreational users.
- Demonstrate knowledge of ethics in relation to other stakeholders, the environment and harvestable wildlife.
- Demonstrate awareness of the principles of conservation and management of wildlife, including game animal regulations & legislation.

### EQUIPMENT & FOOD

- Demonstrate knowledge of and use suitable clothing and equipment for hunting below the snowline.
- Demonstrate awareness of suitable food for hunting trips below the snowline.

### TRAVEL & NAVIGATION

- Navigate in the outdoors in good visibility: route selection from a map, map orientation, following a bearing, establishing position from back bearings.
- Demonstrate understanding of river dynamics and hazards.
- Demonstrate competence in river crossing: solo, groups.
- Demonstrate knowledge of route finding in untracked terrain.

### BIG GAME SPECIES

- Demonstrate knowledge of at least two species: physical characteristics, habitat and range, seasonal variations, local availability.
- Measure representative heads using Douglas Score.
- Identify footprints, droppings and other sign for representative game and other species.

### FIREARMS & MARKSMANSHIP

- Demonstrate knowledge of laws relating to firearms and observe the seven basic rules of firearms safety contained in the Arms Code.
- Demonstrate cleaning and maintenance of a hunting rifle: home/field.
- Zero a scoped rifle with hunting ammunition.
- Demonstrate knowledge of and apply the principles of marksmanship: position and hold, alignment, sighting, trigger control.
- Demonstrate knowledge of bullet placement to achieve clean dispatch.

### HUNTING TECHNIQUES

Demonstrate knowledge of basic hunting techniques for a specified game animal: knowledge of target species range, habitat and hunting area; stalking, use of wind and air currents, positive identification, tracking wounded animals.

### TROPHY & MEAT

- Demonstrate field dressing.
- Describe appropriate meat recovery techniques in specified situations.
- Demonstrate knowledge of meat cuts and cooking methods.
- Describe care of a trophy in the field: Head/skin.
- Identify good practice in photographing a trophy animal.

### WHEN THINGS GO WRONG

Demonstrate survival skills in outdoor environments below the snowline.

Manage simulated emergencies in outdoor environments below the snowline:

Sick or injured person, missing person, overdue party, fatality.



## ANNEX B

# Otago HUNTS Course 2026

## Draft Timetable

Thursday	20th August	Introductory Lecture and Administration
Thursday	27 <sup>th</sup> August	Clothing and Equipment
Thursday	3rd September	Firearms and Shot Placement
Thursday	10 <sup>th</sup> September	Ethics and Hunting
Saturday	12 <sup>th</sup> September	Range-day.
Sunday	13 <sup>th</sup> September	Rifle Cleaning, Maintenance, Knife Sharpening
Thursday	17 <sup>th</sup> September	Game Animals sign and tracking
Saturday	19 <sup>th</sup> September	Alternative Range Day
Thursday	24 <sup>th</sup> September	Game animal and hunting techniques
Saturday	26-27 <sup>th</sup> September	Navigation
Sunday	27 <sup>th</sup> September	Water Safety
Thursday	1st October	First Aid
Saturday	4-5 <sup>th</sup> October	Overnight camping, bushcraft, navigation.
Thursday	8 <sup>th</sup> October	Contingencies and Safety
Friday	09th October	Travel to Beaumont
Saturday	10 <sup>th</sup> October	Hunting Blue Mountains
Sunday	11 <sup>th</sup> October	Hunting Blue Mountains (skinning and processing game animals)

**All lecture nights are held at the NZDA Hall 53 Malvern Street commencing at 7.00 pm**

