



Annual Report 2020

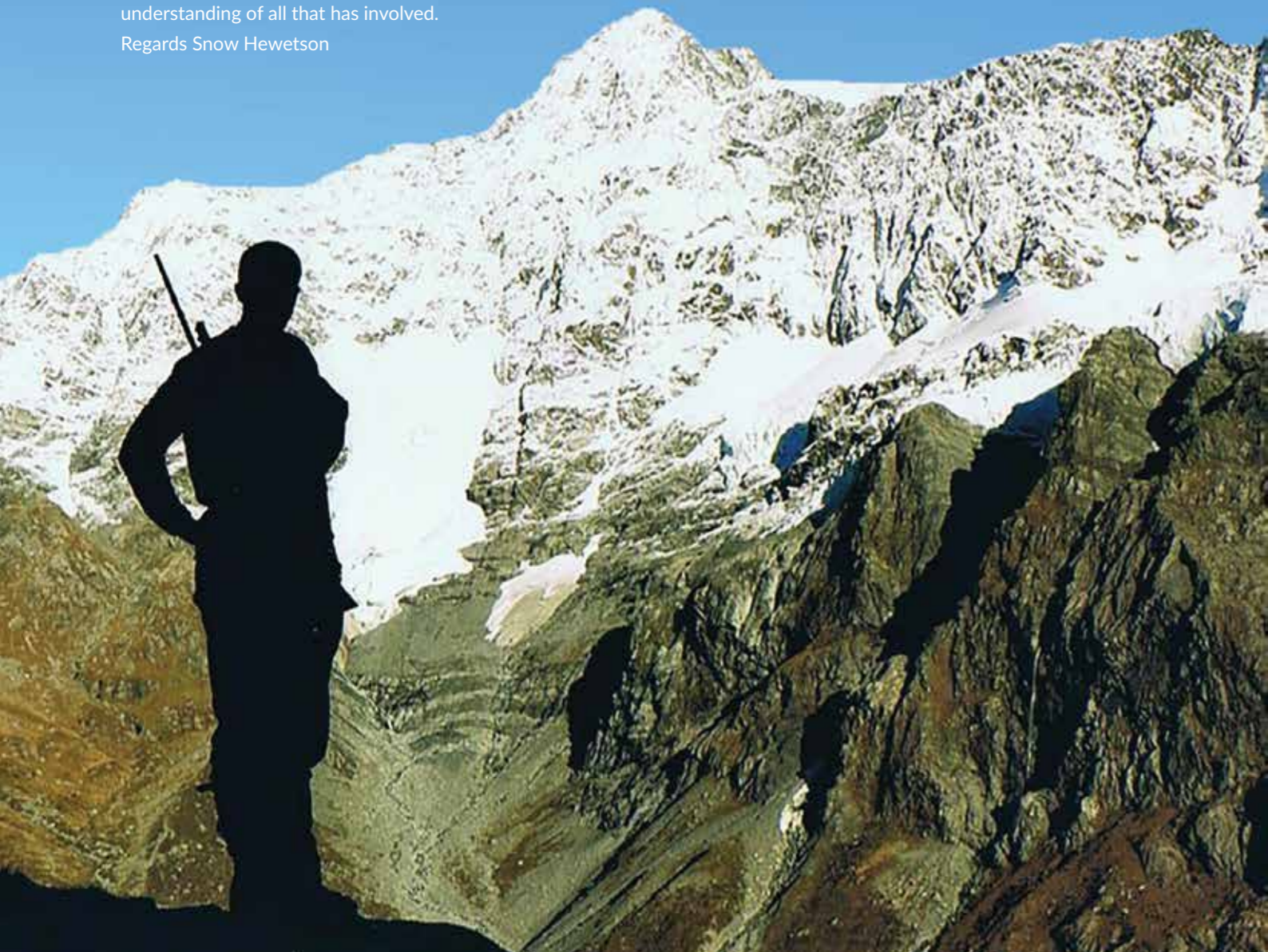


WELCOME TO THE FIRST ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TAHR FOUNDATION.

We have put together a brief report of the activities of the Foundation since our last AGM September 2019. We hope you find our report informative; we want to be open and transparent about the activities of the Tahr Foundation and encourage you to take the time to read through the report. We have had to rise to some big challenges this year, we have done that and met them head on. We haven't always achieved all that we would have wanted to, but we have always done our up most to protect our tahr and the sport of tahr hunting. We hope this report will give all our supporters a better understanding of all that has involved. Regards Snow Hewetson

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Presidents Report

AT THE BEGINNING OF THIS YEAR OUR EXPECTATION WAS THAT WE WOULD BE WORKING WITH DOC TO FORMALISE A LONG-TERM PLAN TO MANAGE TAHR AND START SOME OF THE RESEARCH THAT IS REQUIRED UNDER THE HTCP.

It soon became apparent that a long-term plan was not going to be agreed on in the short time frame the department was trying to push through. In good faith we suggested another one year plan as the only realistic option for 20/20 and that work on a longer term plan should begin with a budget for research, and a focus for the research to be based on the priorities identified at the research day that was held at Lincoln in May 2019.

There was reluctance from Doc to commit to a budget figure and progress on a long-term plan stalled there.

Then enter Covid 19, shortly followed by the whole country going into lock down. The programmed meeting of the TLIG for March was postponed and then canceled.

The Department prioritised their Covid 19 response ahead of everything else at that stage and rightly so but that meant no progress on tahr issues and the Tahr Foundation had no say in how any of that unfolded. When the lockdown was finally lifted Doc seemed in a rush to get us back around the table and to start the process of finalising a plan for tahr control for 20/20.

We were concerned that this renewed haste could force us into a process that would produce a rushed ill-conceived plan. We were very conscious of not wanting to be captured by a process we would have no control over, ultimately despite our best efforts that was what eventuated.

The department pushed ahead with its so-called consultation process where they met with us individually, where they decided who they would meet with and they took the notes and recorded their version of what was said. All of which was very unsatisfactory to our way of thinking, we had no say in the process but were obliged to participate and act in good faith.

At the completion of this consultation process we were presented with a draft plan for 20/20 just two days before we were scheduled to meet again, a draft plan that was a complete departure from what we had a right of expectation to.

The draft plan called for what we consider an excessive number of hours of tahr control across all units and alarmingly an increase in hours allocated to control in the National Parks that included targeting bulls.

At the meeting which took place on the 19th of June we unanimously rejected the need for what amounted to a three-fold increase in the hours allocated to tahr control and the targeting of bulls, pointing out the impact on the commercial sector and the importance of the bulls in the national parks to the recreational hunter.

We held little hope of our concerns being heard and so we sort legal advice on an injunction to halt the start of culling. It quickly became apparent that the Department had every intention of going a head with the full scale of their 20/20 plan and so we were forced to proceed with seeking an injunction.

There was very little time to put together our case and a huge amount of work was required to gather together past documents and prepare statements to demonstrate why we felt we had a right of expectation of what tahr control for 20/20 would entail. We very much felt that the whole process was a sham and that in fact it was a process designed to reach a predetermined outcome and therefore amounted to a failure to consult.

The Foundation challenged the decision to adopt the 2020-2021 plan on three grounds. The first is that the decision is ultra vires the Act, as well as being ultra vires the 1991 policy and the 1993 plan. Our view was that the decision contravenes the Act and the delegated instruments under it because they contemplate a primary role for hunters in managing the tahr population. It follows then that when administering the Act, Doc is required to have regard to the on-going economic basis for commercial and guided hunting of tahr.

The decision failed to have regard to those interests and was therefore ultra vires the Act and instruments made under it.

The second challenge was that the decision had been made in breach of the Foundations legitimate expectation that it and its constituent organisations would be afforded meaningful consultation about decisions on managing tahr.

The third ground for challenge was that the decision had been made with those responsible having asked the wrong questions and then made a decision based on insufficient information.

The case went to the High Court on the 8th of July, Justice Dobson made the decision to elevate the hearing to the full Judicial Review rather than just an injunction. This was not what we had prepared for and had the potential to be either good or bad. It was good in that it would save us substantial funds not having to go back to court later, but bad in that we had not prepared for the full review, if we had gone through the injunction process and been successful we would have been better placed to mount the case for Judicial review. In retrospect we could have done better preparing our legal team with information that could have helped our case. It is not until you are in court and the judge starts asking questions of your legal council that you start to realise how difficult it is for someone who hasn't been involved in this process for a

long time to have a full understanding of all that it entails. I was impressed both with our legal council and the judge in how much they understood about the HTCP and the TLIG, its history and workings, however there were many times when I felt I would like to have been able to speak up and correct statements that were being made. There were many statements made that were at best misleading, I may have been naive, but I honestly expected better from a government department than what I witnessed on that day in the high court.

“We hold the very same concerns around process run by the Department that we held on their management plan. We are concerned about the structure and direction of research, will it be structured in such a way as to produce predetermined outcomes in the same way as the consultation on the management plan was?”

On the 10th of July we received Justice Dobson's judgment we were successful on our challenge of failure to consult, that was significant but effectively what that would mean is we were going to be forced back into a process that the Department would control.

We were subsequently given the opportunity to make verbal and written submissions on the remaining 2020-2021 plan. All but one of the member organisations of the Tahr Foundation made the effort to attend and speak on their submissions, all prepared and produced well thought out and considered submissions. The Game Animal Council produced a very thorough submission outlining options and suggestions for an approach that could be acceptable to both sides of the tahr control debate. Despite the over whelming majority of submissions being in favor of a more staged and a better research based approach to tahr control the Department chose to adopt what amounted to their original 2020-2021 plan.

The effect of this plan is to have effectively set back tahr management by 27 years to the original establishment of the HTCP.



As I write this now, this is where we are currently at, we have an invitation to attend at meeting on the 15th of October to start work on the research needed to guide us forward in how tahr are managed.

We hold the very same concerns around process run by the Department that we held on their management plan. We are concerned about the structure and direction of research, will it be structured in such a way as to produce predetermined outcomes in the same way as the consultation on the management plan was? That would be unacceptable to the Foundation and yet we are obliged to be part of this and in fact we have no choice but to take part in the process if we are to have any hope of a say in the outcome.

We will continue to work with the GAC and seek their guidance in how we deal with where to from here. We will look to identify options and opportunities to undertake research that we will have genuine input into and if that means undertaking our own research then we will give that serious consideration.

There is now an appetite among the Foundation members to undertake our own projects and drive our own destiny. We have some preliminary ideas we are in the early stages of considering, it would be really good to start work on some positive initiatives we can get behind and start to feel we are making a difference for the better.

Last year I finished this report by saying that we have

acted in good faith and done the right thing by the environment and the tahr.

This year we haven't deviated from that at all, we have continued to be the good guys and continued to do the right thing, we can still hold our heads up and say that., If we have come up short then it is not for the want of trying. What we have been subjected to amounts to a devious shifting of the goal posts and a contemptuous disregard for our concerns, our values and our point of view.

The value we place on tahr from a recreational point of view was trashed by the decision to destroy bulls in the National Parks. Our members businesses and livelihoods have been put at serious risk with no regard for the effect on their wellbeing or the future of their families.

If the situation were reversed we would not treat others in this way, we are better than that.

In closing I want to thank everyone for all the time and effort that has gone into the Foundation over what has been a difficult year in so many ways.

It is a privilege to be a part of this group, you all conduct yourselves in the most professional manner, the day you presented your submissions every one of you thoroughly exposed the failures that lay with the Department of Conservation, and you all thoroughly deserved a better outcome than you received.

Snow Hewetson Chair of NZTF.

Minutes

3.30PM AUGUST 31,
2019 AT SUDIMA HOTEL,
CHRISTCHURCH AIRPORT.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

1. Welcome

Snow Hewetson, Chairperson, welcomed all 25 attendees to the Special General Meeting.

2. Attendance

25 Attendees (list attached)

3. Apologies

Simon Guild, Don Patterson, Helen Ivey, Luke Care and Gus Gordon
Moved: Tyron Southward/ Mike Knowles That apologies be accepted. *Carried.*

4. Business

a. Adoption of the 2019 Constitution circulated to all Members.

Discussion followed and Snow pointed out the reasons for the review necessary in the existing Constitution and most these alterations were in response to the rejection by the Charities Commission of the application for the Foundation to be made a Registered Charity. A comment from Jennifer Williamson, Tahr Farmers, in respect to one section where the word “by” was missing. Agreement that the addition be made.

Moved: Snow Hewetson / Kaylyn Pinney.

That the Constitution as published and circulated be accepted with the addition of the word ‘by’ in section 3 (d) (ii). *Carried.*

Moved: Snow Hewetson / Terry Pierson

That a formal vote of thanks be extended to Gwyn Thurlow for his efforts with the re-drafting of the Constitution. *Carried.*

b. NZ Tahr Trust – Appointment of new Trustees.

Snow Hewetson advised that further to Gwyn’s advice that it was believed that the existing Trust be continued in its current form and that common Trustees should be appointed to permit the continuation of a close working relationship with the Tahr Foundation.

Moved: Garry Ottmann / Marcus Pinney.

That on Bob Richmond’s request and in the interest of common trustees that Snow Hewetson be appointed as Trustee of the NZ Tahr Trust. *Carried.*

The Trustees of the Trust are: Snow Hewetson, Marcus Pinney, Sheene Ottmann and Tony Pidgeon.

5. Closure

Meeting closed at 3.54pm.

2ND ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

1. Welcome

Snow again welcomed all to the meeting.

2. Attendance

25 Attendees (list attached)

3. Apologies

Simon Guild, Don Patterson, Helen Ivey, Luke Care and Gus Gordon

Moved: Tyron Southward/ Mike Knowles That apologies be accepted. *Carried.*

4. Chairpersons Report

Snow Hewetson read a very considered report (Attached)

Moved: Snow Hewetson/ Gerald Telford

The adoption of the President’s Report. *Carried.*

5. Minutes of the 2018 AGM – Circulated.

Moved: Marcus Pinney/ David Keen. That the Minutes of the First AGM be accepted as a true and correct record. *Carried.*

6. Treasurers Report.

The Treasurers Report was circulated and additional copies available. There was very little discussion.

Moved: Kaylyn Pinney / Garry Ottmann

That the Treasurers Report be accepted. *Carried.*

7. Election of Officers to form Management Committee

a. Chairperson

Terry Pierson assumed the Chair and called for nominations.

Moved: Kaylyn Pinney / David Keen., That Snow Hewetson be elected. *Carried.*

b. Deputy-Chairperson

Moved: Snow Hewetson/ Garry Ottmann. That Marcus Pinney be elected. *Carried.*

c. Secretary

Moved: Kaylyn Pinney/ Garry Ottmann That Terry Pierson be elected. *Carried.*

d. Treasurer

Moved: Kaylyn Pinney / Terry Pierson. That Sheene Ottmann be elected. *Carried.*

e. Two members of the Advisory Board

Moved: Snow Hewetson/ Garry Ottmann. That Gerald Telford be elected. *Carried.*

Moved: Snow Hewetson/ Mike Knowles, That James Cagney be elected. *Carried.*

Terry Pierson reminded all that the Committee had the power to Co-opt members to the Management Committee.

Snow advised that we had not received advice of all Advisory Board members organisations. Specifically, representatives of Ngai Tahu and Tahr Property Owners. Ongoing problem to resolve.

8. General Business.

a. Future Funding

General discussion in respect to the actual financial needs of the Foundation and question was raised in respect to the adoption of individual members. Believed that the basis of the Foundation at this stage was that the Foundation would be funded by the member organisations rather than individual membership. Agreed that may change in the future should the Foundation actually achieve Herd of Special Interest management.

Belief that the Management Committee needed to produce a 12 month budget of expenditure that constituent members could take back to their representative organisations to seek future funding.

Moved: Joseph Peters/ Gerald Telford. That the Management Committee consider a Tahr



Supporters Club where support could be obtained from supporters. *Carried.*

b. Tahr Management

Currently in the hands of the Tahr Liaison Group who, although constituted a fair number of our member organisations, did not necessarily report the beliefs of the Foundation and that further discussions should take place in respect to Foundation responsibility.

c. Research

Believed to be an integral direction of the Foundation as defined in our Purposes and should be an ongoing consideration. Jennifer Williamson advised of the available funding that might be available for the use of research or educational efforts. Advised she was willing to assist.

Kaylyn Pinney is keen to be involved in any research program we might undertake and to also work with the Department of Conservation on any research they undertake relating to Tahr.

d. Foundation Direction

Question was placed “Where do we want to go”

- Possible consideration is the re-establishment of the Tahr Show in Christchurch again.
- Need to really come to terms with actual Tahr numbers and the need for recreational users to record their Tahr kills.
- Need to view the results of the Departments culls.
- Need to look towards longer terms for Tahr control measures and total usages.
- The current Tahr Control Plan needs to be reviewed as a priority.
- In future planning there is a great need to be all ‘working from the same page’ on all issues in respect to Tahr. Need to consider a management plan along the lines of Fiordland Wapiti Foundation and eventually a Herd of special interest
- Comment from Garry Ottmann that the Foundation should not underestimate the achievements to date.

9. Future Meetings

Need for urgent Management Committee meeting. To be advised.

10. Closure

Meeting closed at 4.38pm.

The New Zealand Tahr Foundation Incorporated Financial Statements

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST JULY 2020

Directory as at 31st July 2020 / Committee

Snow Hewetson / Chair
Terry Pierson / Secretary
Sheene Ottmann / Treasurer
David Keen, Joseph Peter, Kaylyn Pinney, Marcus Pinney,
Gerald Telford

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST JULY 2020

	2020 (\$)	2019 (\$)
REVENUE		
Sales	655	-
LESS COST OF SALES		
Purchases	1,260	-
GROSS DEFICIT FROM TRADING	(605)	-
SUNDRY INCOME		
Donations Received	18,195	180,411
Interest Received	2,969	952
Total Income	20,559	181,363
Less Expenses		
Advertising & Communications	9,958	-
Bank Charges	9	-
Donations	500	-
Insurance	-	2,934
Legal Expenses	119,257	5,176
Meeting Expenses - TLG	-	1,042
Research and Monitoring	8,208	-
Sika Show	1,639	783
Shot Show	-	589
Travel - National	1,413	-
Website	410	472
Total Expenses	141,394	10,996
(DEFICIT)/SURPLUS BEFORE TAX	(120,835)	170,367
Income Tax Expense (Note 4)	(551)	-
NET SURPLUS/(DEFICIT)	(\$121,386)	\$170,367

Incorporation Number: 2655152
Date of Incorporation: 3 November 2016
Address: c/- 2763 State Highway 63, RD 1,
Blenheim 7271
Bankers: Westpac
IRD Number: 123 960 801

STATEMENT OF MOVEMENTS IN EQUITY FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST JULY 2020

	2020 (\$)	2019 (\$)
EQUITY AT START OF YEAR	170,367	-
SURPLUS & REVALUATIONS		
Net Surplus/(Deficit) for the Period	(121,386)	170,367
Total Recognised Revenues & Expenses	(121,386)	170,367
OTHER MOVEMENTS		
EQUITY AT END OF YEAR	\$48,981	\$170,367

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31ST JULY 2020

	2020 (\$)	2019 (\$)
CURRENT ASSETS		
Bank - Cheque Account	6,741	12,165
Bank - Savings account	57,376	57,357
Bank - Term Deposit	102,418	100,531
GST refund due	20,067	-
Taxation refund due	510	314
Total Current Assets	187,112	170,367
TOTAL ASSETS	187,112	170,367
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
Accounts Payable	138,131	-
TOTAL LIABILITIES	138,131	-
NET ASSETS Represented by;	\$48,981	\$170,367
EQUITY AT END OF YEAR	\$48,981	\$170,367

"The Foundation aims to advance a management regime that involves a collaborative partnership between Recreational and Commercial Tahr Hunters, the Game Animal Council, the Department of Conservation, the local Iwi, interested landowners and businesses with an interest of Tahr in New Zealand."

STATEMENT OF CASH MOVEMENTS AS AT 31ST JULY 2020

Opening Balance of Bank Accounts as at 1st August 2019	
Bank - Cheque Account	12,165
Bank - Savings account	57,357
Bank - Term Deposit	100,531
Total Opening Balances of Bank Accounts	170,053
Cash Receipts	
Sales	655
Donations Received	18,195
Interest Received	2,969
Income tax refund	315
Total Cash Receipts:	22,134
Cash Payments	
Purchases	1,260
Advertising and Communications	9,958
Bank Charges	10
Donation- Meet the Need	500
Research and Monitoring	8,208
Sika Show	1,639
Travel - National	966
RWT paid	1,061
GST on expenses	2,050
Total Cash Payments:	25,652
Net Movement in Cash:	(3,518)
Closing Balance of Bank Accounts as at 31 July 2020	
Bank - Cheque Account	6,741
Bank - Savings account	57,376
Bank - Term Deposit	102,418
Total Closing Balance of Bank Accounts	166,535

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST JULY 2020

1. The financial statements presented here are for The New Zealand Tahr Foundation Incorporated, an incorporated society.

The financial statements of The New Zealand Tahr Foundation Incorporated have been prepared in accordance with Special Purpose Framework for use by For-Profit Entities (SPFR for FPEs) published by Chartered Accountants of Australia and New Zealand, and are for members use and income tax compilation only. The accounting principles recognised as appropriate for the measurement and reporting of earnings and financial position on an historical cost basis have been used, with the exception of certain items for which specific accounting policies have been identified.





Specific Accounting Policies

In the preparation of these financial statements, the specific accounting policies are as follows:

(a) Goods & Services Tax

The entity registered for July with effect from 1 July 2020. These financial statements have been prepared on a GST inclusive basis from 1 August 2019 to 30 June 2020, and thereafter on a GST exclusive basis with the exception of accounts receivable and accounts payable which are shown inclusive of GST.

(b) Taxation

Income tax is accounted for using the taxes payable method. The income tax expense charged to the Statement of Financial Performance is the estimated tax payable in the current year, adjusted for any differences between the estimated and actual tax payable in prior years.

(c) Revenue

Sales of goods are recognised when they have been delivered and accepted by the customer. Interest income is recognised using the effective interest method.

(d) Donations

Donations received are included in operating revenue. If particular conditions are attached to a donation that

would require it to be repaid if these conditions are not met, then the donation is recorded as a liability until the conditions are satisfied. Donated goods or services (other than donated assets) are not recognised.

2. AUDIT

These financial statements have not been audited.

3. CONTINGENT LIABILITIES

At balance date there are no known contingent liabilities (2019:\$0). The New Zealand Tahr Foundation Incorporated has not granted any securities in respect of liabilities payable by any other party whatsoever.

4. TAXATION

	2020 (\$)	2019 (\$)
Tax Payable		
Interest income	2,969	952
Less tax exemption	1,000	952
Taxable Income	1,969	-
Tax on taxable income	551	-
Less RWT Credits	1,061	314
Tax Refund Due	\$510	\$314



The Tahr Jams

ON THE 19TH OF JULY THIS YEAR THE HUNTING COMMUNITY CAME TOGETHER TO PROTEST AGAINST THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATIONS EXCESSIVE TAHR CONTROL PROGRAM.

An estimated 500 vehicles and somewhere between a 1000 and 1500 individuals gathered at the Tahr statue at Lake Pukaki in -3 degree weather to demonstrate their disapproval of the unnecessary destruction of the tahr herd.

This peaceful protest was organised by Kelvin Williams and the Ashburton Branch of NZDA. The turn out on the day was the biggest hunter protest this country had ever seen, it was more than just hunters who had made the effort to turn out in support of the tahr. The crowd was made up of mums and dads, their sons, and daughters, young and old alike. All well turned out ,well behaved and credit to the hunting community.

The vehicles drove in procession from the lake end car park up to the Mt Cook village, with so many vehicles on the road at the same time the convoy stretched the full length of the Mt Cook highway and made for an impressive sight. The convoy made its way to the village and then gathered for speeches from the Tahr Foundation reps, Willie Duley and Snow Hewetson who both spoke, thanking everyone for a great turn out and support for the tahr and what they represent to us all.

It was very appropriate that we were gathered under Aoraki Mt Cook to mark this protest given the significance

of it being the very liberation point of the tahr herd and the great loss that removing tahr from the park would be to the recreation aspect of the park .Many among the crowd echoed the same sentiment lamenting the loss of a treasured recreational activity from a very treasured landscape.

On the 8th of August a similar protest was held in Auckland , the turn out wasn't of the same magnitude but the mere fact that Auckland is about as far removed from the tahr range as you can get in NZ and Auckland being our largest city the support from the far north was very significant.

An estimated 150 to 200 vehicles took part and somewhere in the range of 300 to 400 hundred individuals turned out. This convoy drove over the harbour bridge and through the city with a lot of support from the public on the street being evident in waves and cheering.

The convoy drove to the Auckland Domain and gathered for a few speeches.

I took the opportunity to thank Callum Sheridan and the Auckland Branch of NZDA for organising the day and supporting the tahr foundation and all the tahr hunters in the South Island. Both these events were well run and all those present were well behaved and respectful.

I spoke to the Police officer who coordinated the drive through the city and thanked them for assisting us with this, he said it was no problem, they were just doing their job and that he could tell this was not your usual protest mob as he put it. He said you guys have obviously been treated badly and have a right to be heard.

Both of these occasions were a real credit to the hunting community and to those who made the effort to make a stand, this is not something that hunters would normally do and in fact as hunters we are more inclined to just go about our own business and do our own thing. This is precisely why it is important to send the signal that we will not just roll over and allow our right to recreate in our national parks to be removed without challenging and objecting strongly to that.

I want to thank all those who made the effort to attend these events and support the Tahr Foundation, for me personally being there with you all was very satisfying and humbling at the same time, thank you again.

Snow Hewetson / NZTF



The New Zealand Tahr Foundation, Duke of Bedford Award

ONCE THE ORIGINAL CULLING OF 10,000 TAHR BY AUGUST 2019 HAD BEEN COMPLETED, WE IN THE TAHR FOUNDATION HAD EVERY INTENTION OF WORKING WITH THE GAC AND THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION TOWARD A HERD THAT WAS TO BE A BULL BIASED HERD.

What that would mean is we would work together to remove breeding females in favor of allowing the maximum number of bulls to survive to become trophy animals. All of this would become part of an overall long-term strategy to manage the tahr herd to control numbers and at the same time produce the maximum number of trophy bulls available to the recreational and guided hunting sectors.

What we were now going to be faced with was a reduced tahr herd and therefore we needed to consider how to maximise the trophy potential of a reduced population. The first step to achieve that is to stop shooting young bulls and change our expectation of shooting bulls on every trip or even shooting several bulls on a trip, those days are now well and truly over after the excessive culling that Doc embarked on this year. What is needed now more than ever is a focus on maximising the number of bulls that reach their full potential.

Part of our thinking around what would need to happen to make this work was to raise awareness among all hunters of what we were wanting to achieve and how we would all need to work together to make this come about.

We want to redefine what is an acceptable level of harvest of bulls, we want hunters to start to think in terms of quality tahr trophies not quantity.

We want this to be a change of mind set that hunters make them selves and at the same time we want to encourage this to happen. We hope to generate an incentive for hunters to take responsibility for the future of trophy hunting for tahr.

We were all in agreement that age needed to be the first factor to be considered in determining what would define a trophy bull, secondly horn mass should be consider when assessing horns. The rational for this is mass comes with age and measuring horns for length alone can penalise an old bull with thick heavy horns that have broken tips or ridges. If length alone is the main factor used to

“To encourage this new and more enlightened thinking we have set out to create a new trophy which we will award on an annual basis at the Sika Show. It is our intention that this award will become the ultimate achievement for tahr trophy hunters to aim for.”

determine what constitutes a trophy then that can be an inducement to shoot younger bulls before they reach their true potential. We will only see what that potential is if we allow all bulls or as many as possible to reach full maturity and therefore their maximum horn development.

How then do we propose to set the new criteria and what system do we use to measure tahr horns based on mass and therefore age? We considered many different factors and looked at many different measuring systems, this took a while to work through with a lot of different ideas and thinking given consideration.

In the end it was unanimously agreed it needed to be a simple and easy to use system, ideally one of the recognised systems already in existence and one we already had kiwi measures qualified to access. After looking at all the options the SCI method 11 for measuring wild sheep, aoudad and tur was chosen as the best fit for purpose for what we want to achieve. The SCI method divides the horns length into quarters and measures the girth at each quarter, this is how mass is determined and measured. We then set the age limit for inclusion in a new trophy competition at 8 years, this is in line with our intention to raise the bar and bring about a renewed focus on age when judging a trophy. It is our hope that a new focus on age will become the measure hunters use in their decision to pull the trigger or not, rather than length of horn alone.

See the attached SCI method 11 for further explanation of how this system is used.

The Tahr Foundation now seeks to promote and encourage a more selective approach to trophy hunting of bull tahr, we have chosen this method to set a new standard which we hope will be widely accepted and used.

To encourage this new and more enlightened thinking

we have set out to create a new trophy which we will award on an annual basis at the Sika Show. It is our intention that this award will become the ultimate achievement for tahr trophy hunters to aim for.

The new trophy will be known as, The New Zealand Tahr Foundation, Duke of Bedford Award.

The Tahr Foundation have commissioned Murray Matuschka to sculpt a bronze tahr in the same pose as the statue at Lake Pukaki. Murray was the obvious choice for this having been the artist who created the original statue and his long standing association with the promotion of tahr.

Funding for this project comes from the original tahr trust which was used to raise funds for the statue at Lake Pukaki. The Foundation has deliberately chosen not to use any of the give a little funds in this project.

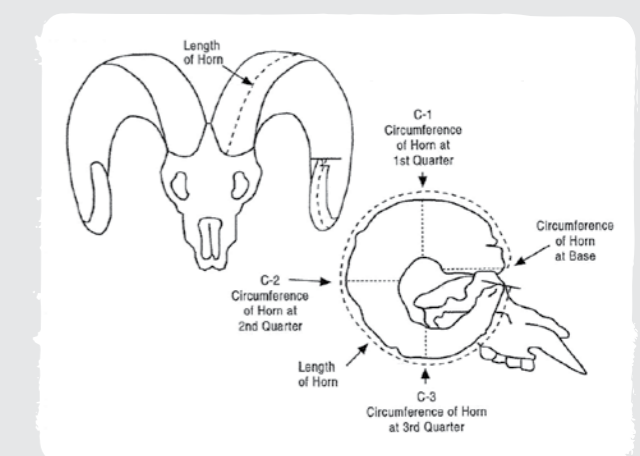
A couple of progress photos of the work Murray has done to date on the mould are included in this article.

We hope that this trophy and the criteria needed to enter this competition will spark debate among tahr hunters, debate that will eventually lead to an even higher value being placed on tahr and the opportunity to hunt them.

They are not just goats, they are a world class alpine trophy animal so lets start to treat them as such, then maybe just maybe in a few years we will see the first bull to go over 16 inches and when we do we will know we are on the right track.

We now look forward to hopefully being able to present the completed trophy for the first time at the Sika Show in 2021.

Snow Hewetson / Chair of NZTF





Give A Little

ON THE 20TH OF OCTOBER THE GIVE A LITTLE FUND WAS SITTING AT \$216,512.

This is the result of an astonishing level of support we have received from kiwi hunters and others from Australia and around the world, such is the mana of the tahr.

There has been a total of 2159 donors over the 4 months it has been running and even in the last few days people are still donating, this is seriously amazing support and we are blown away by this.

I cannot thank all of you enough for this, we are truly humbled by your generosity.

On top of all this there have also been some large donation direct into our trust account, I have tried to thank as many of the donors as I could, but I know I haven't gotten to everyone so please accept this as my genuine appreciation to all who have contributed no matter what that contribution was.

For me personally one of the stand out donations was from Tower Junction Hunting and Fishing where the staff voluntarily donated their own social club funds, I made a point of phoning the store and speaking to the guys by speaker phone to thank them, that kind of support is phenomenal.

The Hunters Element raffle of a guided tahr hunt, which included a full kit of their gear and a shoulder mount of

the bull raised a staggering \$50,000. I have thanked the guys from Hunters Element personally but want to more publicly acknowledge them here and also Dan Rossiter who guided the hunt and Pete Livesey who donated the trophy taxidermy.

Davey Hughes and the crew at Swazi put up there famous Tahr anoraks in a raffle and as fast as they put them up they were fully subscribed. Davey kept putting them up until they raised \$10,000.

Another fantastic effort where everyone was a winner in the end with all proceeds going directly into the tahr trust.

These are just a few of the many generous contributions that you all made toward our cause, thank you again and if I have missed thanking any of you and I know I have please accept my appreciation here.

This time around we made sure the Give A Little fund wasn't so restrictive in what we could use the funds for, the funds will go into our tahr trust when they are drawn down at Christmas and we will be able to use them much more freely to do research and promotion of tahr.

The funds we raised the first time we did Give a Little were designated for a legal challenge and in the end that is what they have been used for. There was enough to cover the costs associated with the court case we took this year.

The funds raised this time around can now be set aside in case we ever need to do anything like that again but also we can use them for research and promotion of tahr with the ultimate goal of achieving Herd of Special Interest status, this is and has always been our primary objective.

Finally I must mention Kaylyn Pinney and thank her for setting up the Give a Little fund in the first place, I think it was a very brave thing to take on the first time and she has my respect and appreciation for that, when I asked her to do it again she never hesitated. I have felt a huge sense of responsibility with all of this hard earned money coming to us and I know Kaylyn has had to bare that too. This is not something to be taken lightly so I think we all owe Kaylyn a big thanks for taking that on.

Those funds give us options we never had before, we now have an opportunity to get some runs on the board, an opportunity to start to do the things we want to do.

Snow Hewetson

Tahr Wars: Part 1

The politicization of tahr management in New Zealand (NZ) did not start and will not end with Eugenie Sage, the current Minister of Conservation. In fact, the very origin and entire history of the species in NZ is a story with deep political roots. It's a story that raises many questions, especially from the rest of the world – like at what point is a species that has freely and wildly inhabited somewhere for more than a century finally allowed to call that place home?

Never before in the history of that story has an election had the potential to so heavily sway control of the issue or to impact the future of the species. The Kiwis will take to the polls on October 17th – if Eugenie Sage and the Green Party maintain the Minister's seat, she will surely continue her crusade against tahr for at least the next few years. However, other political forces in NZ are adamant about incorporating input from the hunting community and developing a modernized Tahr Management Plan. The latest battle in the long and tumultuous history of New Zealand's Tahr Wars will be fought at the ballot box.

There are three types of tahr in the world. The species is closely related to sheep and goats and Himalayan, Nilgiri, and Arabian Tahr all natively inhabit different regions of High-Asia. Himalayan Tahr are what inhabits NZ, where mature bulls can tip the scales at more than 300 lbs. Adult females are typically closer to 80 – 100 lbs. The average lifespan of tahr in the wild is up to 11 years for a bull and closer to 16 years for a nanny. Tahr are prized by hunters for their horns and they make for good eating as well. The NZ record measured in with horns over 15 inches long, and any bull tahr with spikes longer than 14 inches is considered an exceptional trophy. Their thick, woolly fur leaves them well adapted to the harsh snowy winters in the Southern Alps, and the long, windswept, shaggy mane of a mature bull tahr's winter coat is just as coveted by hunters as the meat or horns.

Native to – but now classified as “near threatened” in – the frigidly rugged Himalayan Mountains of India and Nepal, Himalayan Tahr were first introduced to NZ

in 1904, when the British Duke of Bedford sent NZ's Prime Minister, Richard Seddon, three bulls and three nannies from his private herd in the United Kingdom.

NZ was officially recognized as a British colony in 1841, and in the late 1800s and early 1900s introducing game species from other parts of the world to NZ was a common practice. Naturally devoid of any native large mammals, many early European settlers felt as if the Southern Alps seemed desolate and lonely without large mammals running around or any wild game to pursue.

Colonists introduced various game species to NZ for the thrill of the hunt and for additional sources of meat. Today populations of hogs, goats, sheep, and several species of deer including Red and Fallow Deer from Europe and Sika, Rusa and Sambar Deer from Asia are still thriving there.

In 1905, white-tailed deer from the United States were liberated into NZ, and although the herd remains huntable in small numbers, their foothold is not as strong as other introduced deer species. Of all the species of deer in NZ, none is more revered than the mighty elk. Commonly referred to by the Kiwis as wapiti – the Native American term for the species – elk from the Jackson Hole Elk Refuge in Wyoming were gifted to NZ by President Teddy Roosevelt in 1905 as well. They remain at the top of many NZ hunters bucket list. However, hybridization and competition with red deer have created challenges for managing the species into the future.

NZ is now also home to a healthy population of Alpine Chamois – a goat-antelope native to the European Alps and a gift from Emperor Franz Josef of Austria, who shipped them to NZ in 1907. Much like tahr, chamois have become as closely associated with NZ as they are with their historic homes elsewhere in the world.

In 1910, ten moose calves from Canada were sent to NZ by the Governor of Saskatchewan. It would mark the only time that moose have ever been released into the wild outside of their native range in North America. The request for the moose was made by Prime Minister Sir Joseph Ward, who had grand visions of transforming the seemingly barren Land of the Long White Cloud into the world's most fantastic game reserve by assimilating wild animals from around the globe into NZ's unique and varied eco-regions.

The last confirmed photograph of a moose in NZ was in 1952, and the last successful hunt was around the same time. Only three bulls were ever taken by hunters, the last in 1929. Legend has it that a few moose may still be hiding out deep in Fiordland – the most remote and inaccessible spot in the entire country; however, that topic is hotly debated, and many folks believe that the presence of moose in NZ is now nothing more than folklore.

As for tahr, the original plan was to begin stocking NZ with a group of eight, but two escaped before they could be shipped overseas - and during the two-month sea voyage from England, one of the bulls broke free from containment and jumped overboard amidst the ensuing chaos, leaving just two bulls and three nannies to be released into the wild.

That little tahr herd was released into the Aoraki – Mt. Cook area, in the shadows of NZ's most iconic mountain peak, long before it was designated a National Park. Tahr have been running wild through the Southern Alps ever since.

Aside from the small captive herd in England where NZ's tahr originated, this was the first time the species had been introduced outside of their historic range. Five years later, in 1909, the very same Duke again sent another slightly larger batch of tahr to be discharged into the same area. The growing herd was topped off with another ten animals from the Wellington Zoo in 1919 – the final intentional release of tahr onto NZ's landscape. The habitat was a natural fit, and with no natural predators anywhere to be found, their numbers soon began to soar.

Tahr were under legal protection until 1937, but unmanaged herds were growing rapidly, and tahr were starting to have harmful effects on the landscape in certain areas. To rein in their numbers, the protected status of the species was lifted...

... and so began the New Zealand Tahr Wars!

The foremost generation of NZ tahr hunters and the first government-commissioned culling operations failed to put much of a dent in the herd initially. By the 1960s, there was a full-blown population explosion underway. Tahr were altering native ecosystems in some areas too remote to be grazed by any other introduced species on the South Island. In some regions with highly concentrated



animals, reports of well-worn tahr paths cutting across the mountain coupled with a high volume of grazing from various animals was reportedly believed to have caused erosion issues, which in turn led to flooding issues in some instances - however historical evidence citing tahr as the cause of these issues is anecdotal at best.

In response, the NZ government recruited the sharpest shooters from their ongoing deer culling campaigns. This army of steady riflemen took thousands of tahr off the landscape. Still, it wasn't until their assault went aerial with helicopter-based shooting operations in the 1960s that their efforts finally brought the tahr herd under control. These operations reached their peak in the early 1970s when aerial gunning operations removed hundreds of tahr a day from the mountains – their meat sold in markets. It didn't take long before the once common groups of tahr 50 strong or more seemingly vanished into the cloudy mist. It is estimated that more than 40,000 tahr – or 90% of the population – were shot or poisoned en masse during the 1970s and early 1980s.

By 1983, NZ's tahr population was hovering down around a few thousand. The recreational hunting community started raising concerns that the most well-respected game animal in the country was about to disappear from the island forever. Soon after, the then Minister of Forests, Jonathan Elworthy, outlawed commercial tahr hunting to help bolster the herd. It worked, and the number of tahr roaming the mountains began to increase again.

“If there were no tahr in New Zealand, I would not support their introduction into the wild. Therefore, if it were possible, eradication would be the preferred option for the Department.” This simple quote would set the tone for DOC's future management of the species for decades to come.

In 1987 the New Zealand Department of Conservation (DOC) was formed and officially charged with conserving NZ's natural and historical heritage. The newborn agency was initially led by Russell Marshall, the original Minister of Conservation. The department was staffed with employees from other governmental land management entities, most notably the NZ Forest Service and Department of Lands & Survey, as well as the much smaller Wildlife Service.

In 1993, DOC released the first official Tahr Control Plan. In the forward of that plan, then-current Minister of Conservation Denis Marshall stated, “If there were no tahr in New Zealand, I would not support their introduction into the wild. Therefore, if it were possible, eradication would be the preferred option for the Department.” This simple quote would set the tone for DOC's future management of the species for decades to come.

That initial plan was admittedly quite innovative for its day and age. It was based on the best available data and sought to manage the impacts of tahr on natural ecosystems while also providing recreational and commercial hunting opportunities. The plan also identified that a lack of quantitative data on tahr populations or the impact tahr were having on native vegetation was a major question mark. None the less, thresholds were set for population densities across newly outlined tahr management units with the goal of balancing both a tolerable impact of tahr on vegetation while also providing sufficient opportunities to satisfy the demand for hunting at the time.

The document also openly acknowledged that the data the plan was founded on should be treated with

caution as the numbers were little more than informed estimates with a caveat that processes for quantifying population estimates should be continuously refined moving forward. The plan was also initially intended to be reviewed in as early as five years' time in order to leave to room for adaptation and modifications as new data was collected and unexpected management issues arose. Even Minister Marshall acknowledged that “this plan is, in part, experimental. It acknowledges that information is inadequate in some areas but that all decisions are, of necessity, balanced in favor of protecting nature conservation values; in other words, the plan is precautionary in approach. The plan recognizes the need to continue monitoring and undertake further research.” But unfortunately, 27 years later, the plan has still yet to undergo a meaningful review.

Simply put – NZ's first Tahr Control Plan was a guessing game due to the limited scientific evidence existing at the time. It was investigational, cautious in its approach, and most importantly intended to be reviewed in 5 years' time.

But instead of adhering to that plan, DOC did not undertake a 5-year review of the program, did not undertake adequate vegetation assessments, and did not undertake sufficient tahr population monitoring measures. Instead, the direction of tahr control continued to fluctuate based mostly on shifting priorities a top DOC 's agenda and ebbs and flows of government funding.

This era of the Tahr Wars was more like guerrilla warfare ,as search-and-destroy operations being undertaken by DOC – with aerial gunning missions consistently slaughtering a few thousand tahr from helicopters each year, with no intention of harvesting the meat, manes, or horns and no understanding of how these operations were affecting tahr numbers or vegetative conditions.

This pattern continued for more than 20 years, with haphazard attempts at managing the herd regularly being a lightning rod for conflict between various factions of stakeholders at large. Aside from anecdotal evidence about the population status and the vegetation health – which varied considerably throughout the tahr range – the limited research conducted on the matters either drew little attention or was relatively unimpactful for shaping management strategies.

Furthermore, data collected failed to show any variables had actually been changed, or any ecological conditions transformed for the worse or the better in accordance with the 1993 plan.

Over the course of that same 20-year span, Government Departments and various Ministers of Conservation were allowed to completely ignore certain aspects of the original plan while others picked and chose aspects of that plan based on their own political motives or varying personal understanding of tahr management issues.

Recreational tahr hunting also exploded with popularity over that same time frame, becoming a cultural way of life for native New Zealanders and a bucket list topping, dream-come-true type of hunt for people around the world. The hunting industry grew exponentially in order to support the exploding popularity of tahr hunting, with many safari businesses, guide & outfitter operations, and other jobs being created directly from the demand for bagging a majestic bull tahr from the only readily huntable population of the species in the world. Subsidiary businesses indirectly in support of the hunting industry grew too – as a whole host of taxidermists, sporting retail stores, helicopter charters, firearm & ammunition importers, optic importers, clothing companies, tent manufacturers, hunting boot wholesalers, camping equipment shops, and other entities that rely heavily on business from hunters to make a living are now found throughout NZ. Hundreds of jobs are now dependent on the sound management of NZ's long-established game species.

The management of game species in NZ, including tahr, took a big step in a positive direction in 2013, when NZ parliament passed the Game Animal Council Act – thereby establishing the Game Animal Council (GAC) soon later in 2014. The GAC represents the hunting sector's interests and is charged with improving the management of wildlife resources while contributing to positive conservation outcomes and provides governance advisories that aims to advise management operations to enhance the quality of game animal herds while remaining consistent with broader conservation values, developing positive relationships with stakeholders, promoting hunter safety, reducing conflict among stakeholders, improving the acceptance of hunting as a safe and legitimate activity, and standardizing strategies and regulations for hunting and

the management of game animals. Key responsibilities of the GAC include advising and making recommendations to the Minister of Conservation on hunting issues (provided the Minister is willing to listen), providing information and educational programs to the public, developing and promoting safety initiatives, conducting ecological research focused on game species, and undertaking primary management responsibilities for NZ's herds of special interest.

In 2016 the New Zealand Tahr Foundation (NZTF) was formed to represent all stakeholders with a vested interest in managing tahr as a commercial and recreational resource. The mission of the NZTF is to actively manage tahr in order to enhance opportunities for hunters, cultivate higher levels of protection for the forests and grasslands on which the species rely, and to advance management strategies that involve collaborative partnerships between recreational and commercial tahr hunters, the GAC, DOC, local communities, private landowners, and businesses with ties to tahr hunting.

In 2017 Eugenie Sage – a Green Party member of Parliament and former spokesperson for the Royal Forest & Bird Protection Society, an extremist environmental group with staunch anti-hunting sentiments – was appointed to her current perch as Minister of Conservation. Throughout the duration of her career with Forest & Bird, Sage's contempt for tahr was public knowledge – having officially decreed on national television that she one day hoped to see tahr “eradicated and totally exterminated” from NZ.

In 2018, Minister Sage announced her plans to reduce the population back down a threshold of 10,000 animals as outlined in the 1993 Control Plan. Which would mean aggressively eliminating some 25,000 of the animals from the finest public hunting areas in the country. NZ was on the verge of what the hunting community labeled Tahrmageddon.

Just two years after being officially founded, and just one year after Eugenie Sage's ascension to the Minister's role – the Tahr Foundation was on the front lines of combating one of the potentially bloodiest onslaughts in the long and tumultuous history of the New Zealand Tahr Wars.

But as you'll see in Episode III – they were ready for the fight.

NZDA's Tahr Control Operational Plan Submission 2020/21

NZDA MADE AN ORAL SUBMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION (DOC) IN AUGUST AT CHRISTCHURCH AS PART OF THE HIGH COURT ORDERED RE-CONSULTATION PROCESS TO FINALISE THE 2020/21 TAHR CULL OPERATIONAL PLAN.

NZDA supplemented our oral submission with a detailed written document. Gwyn Thurlow, CEO, and David Keen, Tahr Rep, attended the meetings and drafted our submission. A copy of the full submission and supporting material was emailed to all members and the following were our key messages to DOC.

To recreational hunters, tahr, particularly bull tahr, are highly prized as a trophy big game animal. It is arguable that tahr are now the most important big game trophy in New Zealand to recreational hunters. Tahr are also important as a food source.

NZDA is a significant voice representing recreational hunters in New Zealand. NZDA has 48 branches New Zealand wide, with 10 branches proximate to the tahr herd, being:

- West Coast branch
- North Canterbury branch (Christchurch)
- Malvern branch
- Rakaia branch
- Ashburton branch
- South Canterbury branch (Timaru)
- North Otago branch (Oamaru)
- Palmerston branch
- Upper Clutha branch (Wanaka)
- Southern Lakes branch (Queenstown)

In total NZDA has 8,300 members, plus their families. Many NZDA branches undertake organised tahr management hunts, including from the North Island. Many of our branches maintain and manage huts and tracks in partnership with DOC in or near the tahr feral range. DOC must therefore acknowledge NZDA's contribution and input into conservation and tahr management and accommodate the members' desire to hunt tahr – the reason the members maintain huts in and near the tahr range.

Every year, each NZDA branch holds an Antler, Horn and Tusk (AHT) competition where tahr feature prominently. The NZDA holds a national competition in July where the best tahr trophies from all branches/ members are entered and judged. The winner is awarded the Mount Cook Trophy for best tahr head by size. The tahr award is one of the trophies with the highest number of entries and prestige.

For a bull tahr to reach its trophy potential he needs to reach 7-8 years of age.

In summary, the importance of tahr to NZDA and recreational hunters cannot be overstated.

SUBMISSION

Bull tahr should not be expressly targeted in Official Control, including in National Parks. The 1993 Plan does not specify the sex of tahr that should or should not be culled by Official Control and so DOC has flexibility in that regard – the overriding imperative is tahr density. The bulls are the draw card for recreational hunters. Removing bulls will mean incidental hunting will not occur which is done when hunters are in areas populated by tahr – i.e. nannies/ juveniles, deer and chamois are all harvested by hunters when seeking out bull tahr. Targeted nanny-control by DOC when undertaking Official Control will have a better outcome on tahr herd management and is also a more cost efficient population control method. If tahr numbers are too low, or perceived by recreational hunters to be too low, then those areas will be avoided by hunters. This will have a net negative environmental outcome and should be avoided by DOC.

NZDA provided the 1985 Levine report extract in relation to recreational tahr hunting as relevant context and support for our submission.

A SUMMARY OF KEY INFORMATION THAT CAN BE GLEANED IS AS FOLLOWS:

- 71% of respondents hunted tahr in the previous 2 years.
- Only 2% hunt tahr on private land. Underscoring the importance of public land to New Zealand recreational tahr hunters.
- The key motivations to go tahr hunting are:
 - Wilderness experiences – offered only by our National Parks and Wilderness Areas
 - Trophy hunting – evidencing the importance of bull tahr
 - Harvesting meat – showing the importance of tahr as a food resource
 - Health, fitness and well-being – showing the benefits of hunting tahr to people.
 - Respondent recreational hunters have indicated conservatively harvesting at least 4,092 tahr in the past 2 years, comprising:

- At least 1,236 bulls in the past 2 years.
- At least 2,856 non-bulls in the past 2 years.
- NZDA notes that DOC should factor this reduction in its population and density analysis when determining Official Control intervention levels for the management units, including for 2020/21.
- Hunters have not adopted the DOC Tahr App, with 87% saying they have not recorded their tahr kills.
- Tahr hunting is done year round, with slightly less emphasis on summer hunting.
- Tahr hunting is mostly done during holidays – long-weekends, public holidays and when taking annual leave from work. This helps DOC decide when to do Official Control to avoid conflict with hunters and ruining their holiday trips.
- Tenting and huts are important to hunters – having access is important. It means DOC needs to keep working with NZDA to maintain huts in the tahr range.

The importance of tahr was acknowledged in 1985 but today, in 2020, the statements need more emphasis because tahr hunting is now more popular and more important to recreational hunters than ever before.

NZDA would like to see DOC avoid a situation when DOC's Official Control culls tahr to a level too low that it causes conflict among hunters and between recreational hunters and the commercial tahr hunting sector. Over commercial harvest of tahr was the genesis for the 1993 Plan and Policy.

As at the date of the NZDA submission there were 54,197 signatures on the Tahr Foundation's petition. This evidences the relative contemporary importance of tahr hunting. In 1976, the petition delivered to Parliament "Save the Tahr" had 12,000 signatures and resulted in the commercial hunting moratorium and the 1993 Policy and Plan.

NZDA undertook a survey "NZDA Tahr Hunter Engagement Survey". It was opened on Sunday, 2nd and closed at 5pm on 5th August. It has 1,390 responses and asks key questions DOC should already know the answer to but have failed to collate.

NZDA BRANCH AND RECREATIONAL HUNTING AREAS OF IMPORTANCE

NZDA highlighted its key stakeholder role in maintaining huts, tracks and working on other volunteering projects in partnership with DOC both in the tahr range and nation-wide.

NZDA carries out this volunteer work in areas of importance to hunting access for its local members. NZDA undertakes alpine hunter training using the huts as their base (i.e. for HUNTS courses) in the tahr range. DOC should seek to encourage NZDA training more tahr hunters and recognise the value of having a motivated and skilling recreational hunting community.

Public land areas are where NZDA members and the majority of recreational hunters hunt tahr. This means DOC must reflect the importance of a reasonable hunt-able tahr herd for recreational hunters' fulfillment in DOC's operational plans.

NZDA presented at the verbal meeting regarding huts, noting where DOC should avoid Official Control to ensure those areas have reasonable tahr for hunting and to reduce conflict with general public and hunters.

TIMING OF OFFICIAL CONTROL

NZDA submitted Official Control should only occur: During late-July, after the end of the tahr ballot period, August, September and October.

Not during long weekends and key holiday periods – i.e. align to when hunting cannot occur in the Fox Glacier Valley and Copland Valley, for example. DOC understands the importance of these times to people use public land and should apply this to tahr hunters.

These timings should apply to all WARO, AAHT and Official Control concessions/permits. It will mean DOC will cause less direct conflict with recreational hunters.

USE THE ENTIRE AVAILABLE TAHR BALLOT PERIOD

NZDA submitted for the 2020/21 (and all future Operational Plans) that DOC uses the full available 12-week period permitted for landing permits in wilderness areas (known as the tahr ballot). Page 33 of the 1993 Plan contemplates DOC issuing "landing permits [sic] to operators who wish to land [sic] for up to an annual twelve-week period to run from April till July". Currently the ballot period is only 8-9 weeks, however NZDA strongly suggests DOC extends the tahr ballot periods to allow for additional recreational tahr hunter control:

- Last week of April (1 week)
- May (4 weeks)
- June (5 weeks)
- July (2 weeks)

PRIORITY OF OFFICIAL CONTROL AND PRIORITY AREAS

NZDA submitted for the 2020/21 operational period that the plan should be to focus on the exclusion zones (north and south) and tahr known to be outside the feral range, with a particular focus on the south (because of the National Parks located there).

- All Official Control should be by heli-operators.
- No ground hunters should be used for safety, efficiency and to minimize conflict with recreational hunters (they will come into contact).
- Official Control should be described/framed as numbers of tahr targeted, not hours flown.
- By reference to the management units (MU), NZDA submits Official Control should happen as follows:
 - Outside the range, extensive and sustained.
 - Exclusion zones, sustained, with the use of its Judas

tahr programme

- MU#1, limited Official Control, to large mobs and inaccessible areas.
- MU#2, limited as population is now low, cull certain areas after further liaison.
- MU#3, some Official Control is needed in inaccessible areas to recreational hunters.
- MU#4, official control should exclude hunter landing site areas and around all huts and tracks (3km buffer).
- MU#5, some Official Control is needed.
- MU#6, some Official Control is needed in the inaccessible areas to recreational hunters.
- MU#7, no Official Control. Over culled already.
- (1 – South Rakaia-Upper Rangitata, 2 – South Whitcombe-Whataroa, 3 – Gammack-Two Thumb, 4 – Mount Cook and Westland National Parks, 5 – Ben Ohau, 6 – Landsborough, 7 - Wills-Hunter)

DOC TO REMEDY LACK OF RECREATIONAL HUNTER DATA

NZDA noted that DOC, the Minister of Conservation, and the Conservation Authority all state (repeatedly) there is a lack of recreational hunter data or accurate data, which it has known for some time, yet DOC has not undertaken any proactive steps to gather that missing data.

IN SUMMARY, NZDA SUBMITS:

- DOC should not carry out Official Control within 3kms of huts, tracks, and landing sites/camps, especially in the East Coast management units and on the West Coast hunter landing sites (Christmas Flat, Horace Walker and Lame Duck huts).
- DOC should expressly not undertake Official Control around NZDA managed huts – NZDA members can do hunter lead control in these areas. DOC should carry out density studies and communicate to NZDA branches how many tahr should be culled in the relevant area. This will require communication and ascertaining target densities. DOC should encourage NZDA's active participation in hunting tahr sustainably and continuing to maintain backcountry huts.

The lack of data is used to support the statement that recreational hunters are not controlling any tahr – this is not true. DOC has an obligation to survey hunter and hunting organisations. It should do the survey urgently. In the meantime, DOC should use and apply the data in the NZDA survey in the absence of better information.

DOC TO UNDERTAKE THE REQUIRED MONITORING

NZDA submitted that DOC should do the data gathering and monitoring, especially of the tahr population this calendar year. Tahr densities and population, including age and sex data, need to be ascertained in management units #1, #2, #3, #5 and #6. These are important units to recreational hunters and require sufficient animal numbers to ensure hunters and their families can enjoy their recreation and put food on the table. This information should be used to assess the effects of Official Control and inform the need for any additional culling in the coming periods. It will also allow population levels to be known and so tahr density and population targets set.

TAHR APP

NZDA supports the Tahr App. We would like to see it promoted more and the importance of data communicated to recreational hunters. NZDA submitted that DOC may need to hand over the monitoring and branding of the Tahr

App to GAC. NZDA suggested that DOC seeks to get a public endorsement of the Tahr App by NZDA, SCI, Tahr Foundation and GAC.

The advertising of the App and all flyers have DOC's logo and talks too much about conservation and is not appealing to hunters. The targeting and marketing has been a failure and needs to change.

Making changes would be a positive step for DOC to rebuild the trust of hunters and hunting organisations. It will then allow DOC to receive hunter data.

One submitter each year could win a chosen tahr block and period as a prize for using the App – akin to a 'Governor's tag in USA'. It means the hunter gets something in return for their input and effort.

NZDA has been at several meetings where DOC staff have said the App is not working. The App will work, if DOC takes the right approach, as suggested above.

DOC-NZDA LIAISON

NZDA submitted that DOC introduces a dedicated tahr liaison staff member, based in an office near the tahr herd, who is mandated to carry out effective recreational hunter and hunter organisation liaison, as contemplated by the Plan. That person needs to understand tahr hunting and manage hunting stakeholders and be willing to work with NZDA branches relevant to the tahr herd and hunter-lead control.

NZPHGA DoC Tahr Control Operational Plan Submission 2020/21

THE NZPHGA STRONGLY OPPOSES THE EXTENT OF THE PROPOSED 2020/2021 OPERATIONAL PLAN AND THE RUSHED MANNER IN WHICH IT IS BEING ACTIONED WITHOUT A ROBUST ASSESSMENT OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE TAHR HERD OR MODELING AND POPULATION PROJECTIONS ON WHAT THE HERD WILL LOOK LIKE AFTER THE PROPOSED OPERATIONS ARE COMPLETE.

We value our native biodiversity and have always supported and played an integral part in tahr population control. We understand culling is necessary.

In the last 3 years we have collectively killed well over 18'000 tahr (Note 1). Right now none of us know quite what the tahr herd looks like with regard to population, densities and demographics.

There should be no rush to charge blindly ahead reducing the tahr population further without pausing to establish where the tahr population is at and modeling what the herd is likely to look like after any planned intervention.

To us it looks like the Minister and the Department have simply received a very large budget as part of the Government Covid splurge and have resolved to kill as many tahr as they can without pausing to monitor where the herd is currently at, without modeling what the herd will look like after this intervention and without due consideration to the hunting sector - one of the largest commercial and recreational user groups of the Conservation estate. Nor have they considered the cultural and social implications of this.

While the Department hasn't stated an intent of eradication across the feral range, hunters have genuine fears that the current approach is the thin end of the wedge in this regard. The anti-introduced species ideology of the current Minister is well known to the hunting sector. We have witnessed her strong views on this for over 20

years. We feel that much of the current approach of the Department with regard to this ideology based- non-scientific approach to tahr management is largely due to the Minister's agenda which contradicts and obstructs the Department's usual consultative approach. Why else would the Department be rushing the culling of large numbers of tahr before the election without the science, research or modeling to back it up. The Minister and the Department are riding roughshod over the hunting sector. Our livelihoods and our way of life are under threat. The hunting sector in tatters would represent the loss of an important conservation partner.

The Department of Conservation have an obligation under the 1993 Tahr Control Plan to base intervention on science and research. With sound science, research and monitoring we believe we can collectively manage a sustainable tahr herd that meets the needs of the hunting sector while providing positive conservation outcomes for our native biodiversity.

We hear anecdotal claims of the damage tahr do to certain native alpine plant species, but we are yet to see the science to back these claims. We know tahr eat native vegetation but we don't know at what densities this is at an unacceptable level with regard to many of the specific plant species. Let's get some facts and manage tahr densities around science area by area.

Under any such management program the economic and intrinsic value of the tahr resource must be factored in. 166'000 New Zealanders hunt. Hunters are arguably the largest user group of our National Parks and Conservation Estate. DoC must not forget its mandate to foster recreation on our public land. Hunting is a legitimate recreational and commercial activity and New Zealand enjoys a reputation internationally as a premiere hunting destination.

Tahr are listed as a near threatened species on the IUCN Red list. New Zealand is the last stronghold of tahr in the world. As a comparison, the global population of white rhino is estimated at around 18'000, far more animals than there are tahr in their native range.





If New Zealand had a wild population of white rhino would we be culling them indiscriminately, without sound science to back it up?

In my industry - the commercial guided hunting industry a sustainable tahr herd is vital to our livelihoods and the rural communities where we operate.

The commercial guided hunting industry in New Zealand brings in over \$100 Million of direct overseas revenue annually. Tahr represent something over 20% of this value. The true value of the tahr resource to our industry however, is more than just its raw monetary value. Tahr are an important draw card species for the guided hunting industry. While international hunters can hunt red stags, our highest value species, in a number of counties around the world, they can only realistically hunt tahr in New Zealand. Many international hunters book their red stag hunt in New Zealand because they can also hunt tahr here. Without a viable tahr herd our industry stands to lose not only the revenue associated with tahr hunting, but also a significant portion of the revenue derived from the other high value game animals our visiting tahr hunting clients hunt while here on their tahr hunt including our lucrative private land game estate red stags.

Our industry directly employs 470 people in full time or seasonal employment and a further 64 people in the associated taxidermy and trophy exporting services.

At the 19th of June TPILG Meeting James Holborow stated that substantial impact to the commercial hunting industry will not occur as a result of the proposed operational plan. This is simply not true. Our industry will be severely impacted by the projected reduction in the tahr herd if the full extent of the proposed operational plan is carried out.

Our industry is currently facing extraordinary circumstances due to the closed border as a consequence of the global Covid-19 situation. Our international hunters, who make up over 95% of our client base, and more in terms of value, book 12 months, 2 years or more in advance. The vast majority of our 2020 booked hunters have deferred or rescheduled their hunts until after the border opens. We are currently still taking strong booking inquiries from overseas. When the borders reopen we are going to have a strong influx of overseas hunters. These guys and girls are going to kill a lot of tahr.

We've been told by the Department that a significant reduction in the tahr population on Conservation land won't be detrimental to the commercial guided hunting sector because most of our animals are hunted on private land or pastoral leases. While it is true that many of our members who guide foot hunts do chose to operate on private land or pastoral lease land due to a degree of exclusivity and a higher degree of management, overall, the majority of our tahr hunts are conducted on Conservation Land. Many of our operators, particularly the larger businesses tend to do most of their tahr hunts as AATH. AATH is conducted almost entirely on Conservation Land, much of it in the National Parks.

To compound our fears we see the Minister and the Department looking at tahr populations on pastoral lease and private land. It's difficult for us to be relaxed about aggressive control operations on Conservation Land when we see the Minister and the Department eying tahr on other land tenures. The result of a marked reduction in trophy bull and breeding populations on pastoral lease and private land will see increased hunter competition for a severely diminished trophy bull resource on Conservation Land.

Numbers of tahr taken by commercial operators on Conservation land is trending up annually. Currently around 360 per year according to DoC concession return data.

The total value of each mature bull tahr represents \$14000 to the commercial hunting industry. This is the sum of the trophy fee, guiding fees, lodging, taxidermy and trophy export.

DoC has fostered the establishment of businesses around the tahr resource and has profited from concession fees and AATH offsets. Many successful businesses have been established and enterprising New Zealanders and their families have based their lives around the tahr resource.

A couple of examples from our NZPHGA membership that come to mind:

A young guide who has recently located his wife and two pre-school children to Twizel. They have bought a couple of acres of land and built a house. They have chosen this location because almost their entire business is based around guiding wilderness tahr hunts on Conservation Land. Without a viable public land tahr herd, their business will not be viable and job prospects for them in the Twizel area will be tough.

Another example is a Hokitika based guide who has

recently left a lucrative overseas security contracting career and borrowed to purchase a Westland based wilderness hunting outfit focused primarily on public land tahr. He and his family also face an uncertain future without a viable Conservation Land tahr herd.

I could reel off scores of other examples of guides and outfitters who's businesses are dependent on a viable tahr herd. Some multi-million dollar businesses who's futures are dependent on the arrival of their booked overseas hunters when the borders reopen. Without a viable tahr herd these booked hunters may chose not to come and deposits will have to be refunded. Businesses will fail.

Then there are the taxidermists and exporters who's businesses are dependent on our overseas tahr hunters, and the helicopter operators who provide the air transport.

The industry needs to be able to adjust to any changes to the tahr herd dynamic incrementally. Any control intervention that will have a serious effect on the herd must therefore be implemented incrementally so that the industry can adapt.



Such a dramatic impact on the tahr herd within a short period as would be expected from the proposed operational plan is unreasonable and unnecessary to be carried out in such a dramatically short time frame particularly when considering the 18'000 + animals already killed in the last 3 years. There is no rush to further reduce the population before establishing where it is at currently.

This on top of the impacts on the industry of Covid-19 and closed borders the level of proposed culling will place considerable financial stress on many businesses. While the Government is handing out financial support to other sectors, the commercial hunting sector has received no support and it seems that the Minister and the Department are intent on driving nails into the coffin of the hunting industry.

A follow through of the second 125 hours of the proposed operational plan without adjustment and due consideration of the hunting sectors recommendations or concerns will be damaging to DoC's relationship with landowners and hunters. For many years hunters have worked with DoC on conservation programs including predator control programs, trapping and in a partnership on wild animal control. Hunters and hunting groups are likely to turn their backs on any goodwill they've held toward DoC and the conservation partnerships we've seen fostered over the years. Already we are seeing examples of private land owners who have had long standing relationships with DoC and have in good faith allowed unhindered vehicle access by DoC staff across their land - now writing to the Director General stating that those arrangements are on hold and DoC staff will not be permitted to travel across their property until a proper consultation process is completed.

We've seen comments from the Department and Forest and Bird stating that the hunters haven't controlled the tahr. While in fact, hunters ability to do so and to be recognised as doing so lies with DoC. Recreational hunter tahr kills have not been recognised by the department. These numbers are considerable. Hunter helicopter transport access to National Parks and Wilderness Areas continues to be extremely limited. The answer to increased control of tahr numbers is increased landing access to these remote areas. Hunters need a lot of gear - heavy optics, rifles, cape salt, etc. They also have a lot

of additional weight to carry out - meat, skins and capes, horns. They are not going to routinely walk considerable distances in rugged terrain carrying all of this plus camp and personal equipment into their campsite. Increased helicopter landing access in national parks and wilderness areas is the answer to enable hunters, both commercial and recreational to kill more tahr. We understand that this needs to be managed around other Park and Wilderness Area users requirements of peace and quiet. Hunters don't need unfettered helicopter access to these areas, but a managed, limited system that works for all users is achievable. Perhaps on a seasonal basis for example - limited landing access over and above the Ballot system access during Autumn and Winter, leaving the trampers in quiet peace during the Summer.

We recommend that the remainder of the current operational plan control effort should be focused on tahr populations outside of the feral range and in the exclusion zones. Limiting spread outside of the feral range should be the highest priority. 'A stitch in time saves nine'. The judas program outside of the feral range should be utilised to its full potential.

Due to the 18'000 + tahr killed over the last 3 years plus those additional numbers killed in the National Parks in the initial 125 flying hours of the current operational plan we recommend that no further control work is carried out inside the feral range until a comprehensive monitoring program is undertaken to establish where the herd is at currently.

The NZPHGA supports the research initiative currently underway by John Parkes on contract to the Department of Conservation and recommends that future operational plans are based on research of the herd and area specific impact on vegetation as required under the 1993 Himalayan Tahr Control Plan - with the economic and inherent value of the tahr resource factored into the equation.

Any of the current budget not used in planned flying hours should be directed into research.

NOTE 1: Recorded number of tahr killed between 1st July 2017 - 30th June 2020: 18'263. Recorded number of tahr killed between 1st July 2018 - 30th June 2020: 13'140. These figures do not include tahr killed to date in the 20/21 control operations or recreational hunter kills or landholder management culls (Pastoral Lease and private land). These numbers are unknown but would be expected to number in the thousands.

Operational Tahr Plan NZTF Submission 2020/21

THE NZ TAHR FOUNDATION WAS FORMED AS AN UMBRELLA GROUP IN 2016 BY ALL GROUPS INTERESTED IN ACHIEVING A HERD OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO WORK WITH THE DEPARTMENT TO MANAGE TAHR AND CONTROL THEIR IMPACTS UNDER THE GAME ANIMAL COUNCIL ACT.

We have a very large number of constituents and 100,000s of followers and people we represent through our various member organisations.

Firstly, we need to register that we are struggling to understand how we are supposed to submit on the whole 20/21 Plan, when half of the projected hours have most likely been done, and we don't know what the result of the first 125 hours - how many tahr have been killed in what MUs. We are struggling to see how what we are contributing here can be seen as the full consultation required by the High Court without this important data.

Also, any previous engagement between the Department and the NZTF in May/June and responses back from us this year cannot be taken as consultation with us. The scale of this year's plan was never conveyed to us and we presumed it was going to be similar to last year as when asked, DOC did not answer the question of how many hours they were going to be doing or the magnitude of the draft 20/21 plan. The issue of bulls in National Parks has been mentioned every year, but never acted on, and we presumed the same was going to be the case this year - especially considering the effects of Covid 19 on the guided and recreational hunting industry.



IMPORTANT CLARIFICATIONS/RAMIFICATIONS

We are not responsible for either control or monitoring under the HTCP. That responsibility clearly lies with the Department. The Department has allowed a lot of misleading statements made in this regard to go unchallenged in the media. Hunter representatives have always acted in good faith working with the Department on tahr control. We have continually said the Department is only doing its job all the way through this process, and not to shoot the messenger so to speak. We feel the Department has certainly not reciprocated, or remained as impartial as it should have with its communications.

Covid 19 has not allowed the harvest of bulls that would have been expected this year, and to have the Department targeting bulls saying it's because the hunters haven't taken them is an absolute slap in the face. The vast majority of hunting is done on public land, and the department's insinuation and statements that the majority is done on private land is totally untrue. If the reporting shows otherwise then that is an issue with the Department's reporting systems. The AATH data they do have shows a rapidly increasing percentage of AATH trophies coming out of National Parks, and that is not fairly represented by reporting an average number of trophies over the 5 years. We have no data for the number of tahr taken by recreational hunters in NPs, but arguably hunters are the largest users of the NPs including the back country huts and facilities away from the tourist walking tracks. The largest helicopter concessionaire for the West Coast tells us that hunters are their biggest clients by far after the tourist flights, especially in Westland NP. (pers. comm. J. Scott)

In the last few weeks there has been several cases of recreational hunters having what for some of them is their hunting trip of a lifetime ruined by the Department's control operations occurring all around them with no prior warning. Some of them have spent considerable money and time traveling down from the North Island, only to have their experience destroyed, and put through in their words "a really scary experience" with shooting all around them and the shot tahr setting off wet slide avalanches in their vicinity. This is entirely preventable. All the Department needs to do to avoid the time and place conflict is give at least a week's warning

when an area is going to receive control - not the specific dates - so hunters' and other PCL users can plan their trips accordingly. We absolutely do not condone anyone making threats of violence on either side of the debate, and have continually asked everyone to maintain the high moral ground and leave the stupid stuff out of it. But if there has been huge increase in threats, it does show how significant this issue is to a lot of New Zealanders.

The only threats we have personally seen are those to boycott the operators doing the highly contentious control work shooting bulls, and we would have thought that is a totally understandable reaction, especially from those whose livelihoods are going to be destroyed. It was disappointing to see the Operations Manager say publicly "We are appalled that anyone is threatening to boycott legitimate businesses undertaking important control work...".

Hunter groups undertake many conservation projects all throughout the country and in a lot of areas are the only ones running large predator control programs - in the Ruahines, Kawekas and Kaimanawas in the central N.I. and the Wapiti area of Fiordland for example - and we have been working hard to establish and maintain good working relationships between the Department and all hunters. We have supported the development of the tahr app to help inform the control program. All the good work that has been done is in serious jeopardy due to the way hunters have been treated over this 20/21 operational plan, resulting in having to go to court to get proper consultation by the Department. The whole country is watching this process intently to see if the Department is now going to treat the hunters fairly and use sound science as demanded in the '93 Plan in the development of the 20/21 operational plan. The app is almost certain to fail now thanks to the huge mistrust that has come about from the way the department has handled the tahr control issue.

MU INTERVENTION DENSITIES

The Department does not have the information it needs to control tahr at the MU level as required by the HTCP. Its MU level population estimates are woefully imprecise, and it has not accounted in any way for the effects of last year's huge nanny biased culls. The Department runs the very real risk of over culling some of the MUs this year.

"For the whole of NZs sake we need the herd to provide the maximum number of trophy bulls possible at these densities to not jeopardise the highly lucrative guided hunting industry that is hugely dependent on the tahr resource, and also the huge recreational hunting resource that has large flow on benefits."

And going forward considering the already large reduction in breeding age nannies, the populations could well be suppressed well below intervention densities in some MUs for most of the next decade if the Department goes ahead with a cull of this scale.

With the earlier consultation not indicating the large increase in magnitude of this year's plan, we presumed the Department was going to do more population monitoring and modeling before undertaking culling of this scale. The Department said they were going to look at Geoff Kerr's modeling which gave us some hope they would take into account the population demographic and base future control work on a better understanding of the population and the longer term effects. The GAC has since done more significant modeling which we sincerely hope the Department is going to take into account in its revised 20/21 Operational Plan.

NATIONAL PARKS

After last year's large nanny culls in the NPs, there has been no environmental need demonstrated by anyone to target bulls. The targeting of bulls is also the least efficient way of lowering the population in NPs, as clearly demonstrated by the GAC. With low nanny numbers, the bulls will leave to find mates outside the NPs, and those that stay will be progressively shot by hunters - if they are left there to attract hunters into the NPs. They also have very high natural mortality (Tustin pers. comm.) There will also be very low recruitment, and the bulls will not be replaced by natural increase to any extent.

We would have agreed to continue nanny culls in population and ecological hotspots especially in

WNP, but we are extremely disappointed to see the Department has instructed or allowed such heavy culling in the most hunted valley in the NPs - the Murchison valley including around Liebig and Steffan huts. Both Alpine and Glacier Country helicopters have done runs in exactly the same places about a week apart, which shows either the Department is really trying to stick it to recreational hunters, or a complete lack of management by the Department of its contractors. We hope it is the latter, but this is still not a good look, when there is much more inaccessible areas of the Park they should have instructed their contractors to target.

Targeting eradication in NPs is not the best use of the Department's budgets, and is not necessary to protect vulnerable alpine ecosystems. Culling to a low population that still provides for a viable hunting resource is the best solution because it will still encourage hunters to go in there doing a significant amount of control at no cost to the tax payer. Controlling to zero density means no hunters will bother to go in the NPs, removing the largest users of the NPs away from the tourist walks, and ensuring the Department will have to do all control in the future.

The hunting sector have asked for bull tahr to be given an exemption from the eradication clause for the next year anyway as the NZCA is able to do under Section 4 2 b, but we've been turned down without what we feel is proper consideration. There are precedents for exempting valued introduced species from total eradication, and we feel tahr are certainly one of these. The Department will never achieve total eradication anyway, and far better to cull to a low level that protects the alpine environment but leaves a viable hunting resource. This is just common sense.

OUTSIDE THE FERAL RANGE

We totally support a huge increase in control work outside the feral range to stop the spread of tahr both north and south. This work is especially important to stop them getting into Fiordland NP.

SUGGESTIONS GOING FORWARD

Targeted culling of higher density areas and higher conservation value areas in the MUs is what is required to meet the directive and objectives of the '93 HTCP.

Population demographic modeling is essential before we undertake much further culling as we approach the intervention densities in each MU, to ensure the best hunting resource is provided for that density of tahr. After last year's intensive nanny biased culling, we need to be very careful we don't cull nannies too heavily in some areas to the extent the densities are suppressed well below intervention levels and it jeopardies the longer term viability of the herd and seriously effects the viability of the hunting resource. Any culling in most of the MUs this year must be precautionary until this monitoring and population modeling is done. And this needs to be done at MU density level as stipulated in the Plan, not whole of population. It is essential we work together to provide the best hunting resource possible within the intervention densities set in the Plan. Just throwing hours at control will certainly not do this.

We have provided information on what areas and MUs require more extensive nanny culling in the interim until this population modeling has been completed. Our members have more up to date information on these areas than the department in a lot of cases. (The information we have provided is included in the GAC's proposal.)

Again, if we get this wrong, we will cause hunters to boycott those areas jeopardising the cheapest form of herd control.

If after we agree on the 20/21 Control plan, the agreed control work is not able to be completed before kid drop this year, we would accept the remaining work could be done in the remote areas that are harder for the hunters to access in June 2021, giving the hunters the popular spring and summer and early rut period to make the most of the tahr resource.

If the tahr densities are lowered in NPs to the extent the hunting resource is gone (which will happen long before getting down to zero density), then this is going to cause a large shift in hunting effort into the remaining areas inside the feral range. Not only the commercial sector, but all the recreational hunting that's goes on in the Parks will now be concentrated into a significantly smaller area, creating the sort of conflict we've managed to largely remove in recent years.

To minimize conflict we need to very carefully manage the tahr resource as we approach the HTCP MU limits.

For the whole of NZs sake we need the herd to provide the maximum number of trophy bulls possible at these densities to not jeopardise the highly lucrative guided hunting industry that is hugely dependent on the tahr resource, and also the huge recreational hunting resource that has large flow on benefits for retail, accommodation, travel, hospitality and the local communities as hunters come from all over NZ to hunt tahr. It is also hugely important for our physical and mental wellbeing.

DOC has fostered this whole tahr hunting resource, both guided and recreational, and needs to manage its control very carefully to balance both the needs of the environment and this hugely valuable resource.

WHAT DOES THE NZTF WANT TO SEE COME OUT OF THIS PROCESS?

The '93 Himalayan tahr control plan set out to find out what density of tahr would not have an unacceptable effect on our indigenous vegetation across the various MUs, while still providing a viable hunting resource to enable their contribution to tahr control. Success for us would be being able to answer that question.

A lot of the TF members are farmers. I would suggest no farmer today is farming exactly the same as he was in 1993, to be successful and manage his assets he needs to constantly take in to account stocking rates and recovery of his pasture across different aspects and conditions. He needs to produce quality animals year after year to stay viable, and at the heart of that is maintaining a healthy landscape to support this. And he needs the social license to continue farming, which requires taking into account environmental considerations.

A lower number of healthy animals within the carrying capacity of his land is key to his future today. It's not rocket science but science is needed. It is achievable but it takes commitment and constant reviewing.

In the absence of this information required of the Department by the 93 plan, and as a show of good faith, we agreed to the huge nanny biased culls of last year. Going forward we expected a phased approach, based on sound science. Unfortunately this is certainly not what we see in the draft 20/21 operational plan, and as a consequence of the department's management of this process, is why we are now in the middle of tarhmeddon 2!

Safari Club International (NZ) Submission

SCI WELCOMES THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENGAGE IN CONSULTATION, BOTH VERBALLY AND IN WRITTEN FORM. HOWEVER, WE ARE DISAPPOINTED THAT THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT AND THE HUNTING SECTOR HAS DETERIORATED TO THE POINT WHERE THE DEPARTMENT FEELS THE NEED TO HAVE EXTENSIVE SECURITY MEASURES IN PLACE AT MEETINGS.

This is a clear indication that the Department is failing to engage adequately and constructively with the hunting sector. Those representing the hunting sector present at the meeting were articulate, intelligent and good law-abiding members of the New Zealand Public. There is no ill personal intent, only a dedication to invoke change for the benefit of both conservation and the quality of life for all New Zealanders. The Department is here to manage our conservation estate for the benefit of the New Zealand Public. As such, we have expectations that reasoned decisions based on sound management practices are presented for comment which make use of progresses in knowledge. The hunting sector provides well thought out technical advice based on experience in operational, scientific and social applications. Unlike other stakeholders we are also a large part of the actual implementation of the plan. Therefore, we have a reasonable expectation to be involved in the forming of annual or other plans so that we can agree and support our role in its implementation. This process has been largely lost and so too has the trust between the Department and the hunting sector which is required for positive conservation outcomes throughout Aotearoa. This loss of trust has been further perpetuated by the Department beginning culling following the court

hearing without talking to the hunting sector first, and not supplying full information to stakeholders prior to or following the commencement of any operations. While the judge gave leave for the 125 hours to occur at DOC's discretion, "can," "must" and "should" are not the same. This course of action suggests to SCI that DOC does not consider the hunting sector's concerns valid or our advice important and this was certainly conveyed during the court hearing. SCI maintains hope, but expects that the resulting 2020/21 plan following this consultation will clarify the Departments position.

SCI know that teamwork and positive relationships are the best way forward and that by working together to nut things out we are capable of finding solutions. It is imperative that we aim for the best possible outcomes for conservation and this we consider; all stakeholders agree whole heartedly on. The argument at present is around the method we use to obtain these outcomes. There is considerable frustration from the New Zealand public around wastage and frivolous spending. Both are of concern in the case for the 2020/21 operational plan presented and this has led to discourse. The sought outcome as we see it is; benefits to conservation and protection of our indigenous flora and fauna. We have seen amazing conservation success over the past few years from working together. One example was on "stuff" this week, in the Kaweka forest park the kiwi call has increased by 600%. Hunters were major contributors to this success, clearing and resetting stoat traps and supporting a small volunteer group running a kiwi hatchery. Another is the blue duck project undertaken by the Sika Foundation, and the Fiordland Wapiti Foundation working with Kea Conservation Trust, the list goes on. There is a huge opportunity to increase the conservation effort by hunters and at no expense to the tax payer. On the other hand, with such high levels of frustration circulating over official control of bull tahr in the two National Parks, there is a huge risk that conservation efforts will be worse than undone. There are very strong views that stand on this issue from both sides, so we seek a middle ground to move forward and find some relief from this potential threat.

New Zealand is home to the only hutable herd of tahr outside of the Himalayas, making our tahr a very marketable resource, one of global importance.

A trophy tahr hunt in their native range can cost between 25 to 30 thousand US dollars each, which means that expanding hunting opportunities in New Zealand could be viable for managing their numbers and generating much needed economic activity. To date the New Zealand government has yet to fully realise the value of our tahr resource, should the Department of Conservation be able to better regulate International hunters the tahr resource would fully fund a large number of conservation initiatives. On the other hand, the tahr population's decimation will cause severe financial harm to New Zealand's hunting industry, including, but not limited to, accommodation providers, helicopter operators, professional hunting guides, and safari and tourism operators. The plan fails to recognize the significant contribution of tahr hunting and viewing to New Zealand's economy. During a COVID-19-induced recession, preserving these hunting opportunities is essential to preventing dire economic consequences, as numerous jobs and businesses that are linked to the hunting of tahr will suffer if the DOC's plan is fully implemented. A considerable amount of the income generated by the hunting of tahr is spent in regions like Westland, areas that are currently really hurting in the wake of COVID-19. Following the Covid-19 pandemic, New Zealand is in a unique position to receive a higher number of international hunters than other countries. International hunters are high value, low impact tourists and will provide significant relief to the economy once they are permitted to return. SCI urges the government to rethink the plan and to reconsider how tahr hunting can contribute to economic recovery and management of the species. Even if our borders do not re-open for some time. Our tahr herd will continue to drive local tourism, with one helicopter operator on the West Coast currently flying around 1000 tahr hunters annually. The West Coast is really hurting at the moment and anything that can be done to improve local tourism should be a priority.

SCI agree with other stakeholders that the Department must avoid controlling tahr in the vicinity of huts and operators should also check known campsites before commencing culling operations. It costs considerable time and money to reach remote locations and it should be of the up most importance for the Department to ensure recreational users have positive wilderness

experiences. No culling within a 2km radius of huts would be a sensible clause to add to the 2020/ 21 plan.

SCI agrees with other stakeholders that the Department must make it easier for WARO operators to be able to operate, adding tahr (excluding identifiable bulls) to the existing WARO permit with spatial and temporal provisions to prevent conflict in April, May, June, is the necessary first step. The Departments failure to make this process easier has not helped with controlling tahr populations to date. SCI also recognises that a subsidy for these operators is a good idea and one that should be fully explored.

SCI would also like the Department to maximise hunting opportunities for hunting sector. In the near future there will not be a great deal of work for helicopter operators in places like Franz Josef Glacier and Fox Glacier. Enabling these operators to drop recreational hunters and guided parties into remote areas of Westland National Park would be a great initiative for regional spending and is the preferable method to reduce bull tahr numbers in the National Park. Conservation projects, such as running and servicing stoat lines to protect whio could be a condition of the permit to land.

SUSTAINABLE ADAPTIVE MANAGEMENT IS THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID BOOM BUST CYCLES CAUSED BY WILD ANIMAL CONTROL.

Page1-2 HTCP: "The Himalayan Thar Management policy (reproduced here as appendix 1) now provides a general direction to achieve sustained control of thar; thar populations are to be reduced to, and kept below, prescribed levels (which will vary from area to area) at which unacceptable damage to conservation values occurs. The policy recognises that thar cause impacts on natural ecosystems and to provide recreational and commercial opportunities."

Page 13 HTCP: "There is significant conservation and management value to be achieved in attempting to carry out thar control in a sustained manner and avoid the historical boom and bust patterns of wild animal control"

Page 13-14 HTCP: There is a need to seek compatibility of future commercial hunting with the other forms of hunting so that all groups are encouraged to maintain a

high level of interest and activity. This may involve the restriction on taking of bull thar by commercial hunters over part or all of the breeding range"

Page 22-23 HTCP: "The present wild animal recovery licensing and permitting systems are managed to minimize conflict between hunter groups and avoid boom-bust hunting. The Department is seeking to avoid boom-bust fluctuations in animal numbers as such events are intrinsically more difficult to manage. To sustain hunting pressure the Department needs to provide opportunities for all the potential control agents -achievement of such an aim requires a careful balance between competing demands, and acknowledgment of commercial reality."

Forest and bird have made it clear that they will not provide assistance to make sure vegetative goals are being realised, and that they do not have the volunteer support network to do so. Collectively, hunters are a team of more than 100,000 kiwis and as has been demonstrated by our multiple conservation-based projects, we are willing to put the volunteer hours in required to help successfully protect all our natural and historical resources. We invite you to work with us to formulate conditions which would allow a more progressive approach to be achieved. As tahr were present within the two National Parks prior to the Parks being gazetted, the hunting sector considers tahr within the Parks to be a historical natural resource. As such, the hunting sector will seek an exemption from the NZCA for tahr in the two National Parks, as currently exists for trout, under the constraint that vegetative goals for the two Parks are being realised. Obviously low densities will still need to be maintained and protection of flora and fauna will be priority number one. Checks and controls will need to be implemented to make sure the conditions of the exemption are being adhered to and penalties for failure. While we would love to have this exemption implemented now and it would put an end to court proceedings for the Department, we also understand it may take time and research to formulate the requirements to make this a reality. The simple reason for this stance by the hunting sector is not to increase densities, but to allow for sustained control of tahr using long term methods, create unity among the

people of New Zealand and protect our environment, culture, heritage and quality of life. These values are core to the mission of the NZCA.

The HTCP currently stipulates a density <1 tahr per km2 in the two National Parks. The issue is how and when this achieved. While DOC has stated that it must adhere to the HTCP 1993, it appears to be selective in the portions which it chooses to implement and when. We all agree that targeting nannies in the parks is to be done. The hunting sector reasoning is based on biological principles, no ladies = no babies, therefore the most significant long-term contribution to a low tahr population. The Forest and Bird argument as we see it (obviously we can't know their thoughts, only observe their stance from an outside view) is simply that there should be no tahr in National Parks, so shoot them all. This of course is a concise and easily promoted view but not one that is able to be achieved in reality. Even in the exclusion zones zero density has not been achieved and pockets of tahr currently exist outside the feral range. SCI believe targeting the exclusion zones and outside the feral range to be an absolute priority for DOC control to ensure tahr don't get a foothold in other important areas, such as Fiordland. The exclusion zones need to remain as close to zero density as possible every year for all time. This is a considerable commitment for the Department in terms of expenditure, one that has not yet been undertaken this year, despite it being of the highest priority in the HTCP 1993. With regard to the two National Parks, zero density is absolutely unattainable. The two Parks are central to the feral range and tahr have had a strong foothold in the Parks since their original release in 1904. With this in mind we come to the contentious issue at hand, "bulls in the Parks". Until such a time as we have the vegetative information to know what density of tahr have negligible impact on a site-specific basis, we will support lowest possible maintainable densities.

What the hunting sector contests is how this is achieved, by who and when.

Page 41 HTCP: "Official control will generally only be employed when other alternatives have not proved to be either successful or viable. The exemptions to this are in the Northern and Southern exclusion zones and

the Wills/Makarora/Hunter and possibly Mount Cook / Westland National Parks management units, where recreational, guided or commercial hunting are unlikely to achieve population targets over the entire area.”

We are therefore pleased that the NZCA have extended the offer of considering a plan from the GAC, which demonstrates a likely achievement of target densities over the entire area by the hunting sector. SCI advises the Department to suspend official control of bulls in the two National Parks and facilitate a more agreeable plan in collaboration with the GAC. Again, we highlight the lack of urgency for culling and the page 41 provision above legally allowing for this more reasonable solution to be found.

Inside the feral range, but outside the two National Parks, there is absolutely no urgency or justifiable need to undertake the hours of control proposed. It is clear that there is a lack of evidence to indicate urgency of control on the basis that;

- No species are confirmed to be threatened or at risk of extinction from the current densities of tahr
- There are no updated scientific measurements to indicate densities exceed thresholds
- The large number of tahr removed over the past two years has resulted in a considerable population reduction
- Official control may not be required for the HTCP targets to be realised through time due to ongoing reductions following female biased harvest that has yet to be realised

The call for research, as is part of the HTCP plan, was promoted by all stakeholders at every meeting over the past two years.

Page 7 HTCP: 2.2 Impacts on the environment

“There is little evidence describing thar impacts on flora and fauna.”

Page 10 HTCP: 2.3 Impacts on conservation values

“Specific values have not been identified in ecological terms for much of the Thar range.”

Page 15 HTCP: “5.2 Monitoring Thar control

“It is desirable that improvements to monitoring of hunter success be sought. Such statistics are an integral part

of the data required to determine regional trends in thar population size and to ensure target densities are not exceeded.”

Other than basic population monitoring pre 2019 culling, the Department has only in the past two months begun to work towards identifying research goals and nothing of substance has been presented to date. Making management decisions so blindly is a recipe for disaster, and the concerns of stakeholders in this regard are well founded. SCI hopes the Department applies more careful decision making for management of our endangered species. Dr Ken Hughey, present at the recent meeting, indicated that it could take three - four years to obtain the research we need to make sound decisions. We should be at least half way there by now, with a far greater understanding and growing knowledge base. With this delayed start, SCI understands that the full extent of research required will take time. However, we expect even partial knowledge will provide a better indication of direction for decision making than none at all. Therefore, SCI advises as much research as possible be undertaken prior to next year’s operational plan and SCI commits fully to assisting in the acquisition of the required knowledge. There is negligible risk in taking this approach, given tahr have been existing in the feral range at higher density than they are currently for many years, not resulting in irrevocable conservation outcomes. In addition, 125 hours committed inside the feral range (although we do not know where precisely) will have already been undertaken prior to the decision being made. This is more than in previous years. In addition, the limits in the HTCP are conservative, so we have time to slow down and assess how close we are to obtaining the prescribed targets. We must have a way to know when to stop.

Page 22 HTCP: Maximum thar densities

“These limits are intended to be conservative.”

If the priority for control is the exclusion zones and the Department needs to spend all the allocated monies on control, then SCI supports the targeting of exclusion zones and outside the range ferociously. MU 7 is not above intervention density, so requires no control. GAC is proposing a method to deal with bulls in parks, so official control could target nannies in the parks, we

“SCI looks forward to working positively with DOC and the GAC for progressive and continued improvement of our game animals for the benefit of the environment, recreation and industry.”

all agree on this. A major scientific effort for sound decision making will also create jobs, support post covid-19 recovery, gain public buy in / trust and rebuild relationships between DOC and the hunting sectors. DOC cannot hope to implement the HTCP though all time without the hunting sector. SCI verbal presentation sort to form an organisational structure, which gave each stakeholder and implementor their own purpose and targets to be achieved. That promotes team work and cooperation to achieve environmental goals that are sustainable through governments, but have checks, balances and accountability. This is a no brainer and SCI invites the Department to work through the process of this operational restructure for the success of future operational plans.

The legalities of legislation have been quoted again and again. However, the ambiguity of the judge’s conclusions i.e. can but not must, is a clear display of the purpose of legislation, as only a guide for managers. Legislation is designed this way to allow for technical discretions to be made. Certainly, page 41 HTCP as quoted above shows this.

We note in the meeting that Forest and Bird admitted to being an integral part of the formation of legislation pertaining to conservation estate. SCI therefore contests that a significant imbalance in the formation of legislation has occurred, and that legislation needs to be updated to support all of the New Zealand public, not just one stakeholder. Particularly one that functions as nothing other than a stick to its self-placed legislation and long-term agenda. SCI is pleased to hear Forest and Bird have accepted that tahr are here to stay and that 10,000 is acceptable. However, whether they choose to listen to the advice of science and good management for the protection of our biodiversity and quality of life in the long term is yet to be seen. Despite the Forest and Bird biases within the legislation, there is room for

interpretive differences.

Below is an example of an alternate interpretation within the Conservation Act 1987 and relevant policy. This can be provided for all the legislation in an extensive and comprehensive way. However, in this submission we seek to be concise and so provide only one part to serve as an example.

GENERAL STATUTORY CONTEXT

1. Conservation Act 1987

“Conservation means the preservation and protection of natural and historic resources for the purpose of maintaining their intrinsic values, providing for their appreciation and recreational enjoyment by the public, and safeguarding the options of future generations.”

“Natural resources means-

- (a) plants and animals of all kinds; and
- (b) the air, water, and soil in or on which any plant or animal lives or may live; and
- (c) landscape and land form and
- (d) geological features; and
- (e) systems of interacting living organisms, and their environment; and includes any interest in a natural resource”

The Himalayan Tahr is by definition of the Conservation Act 1987 a natural resource. Policy 13a CGP 2005 calls for such natural resources to be defined.

“Conservation management strategies and plans should include identification of: i. natural resources, historical and cultural heritage, and recreational opportunities, at specific places on land and water...”

The preservation and protection of natural resources is required by the Conservation Act 1987.

Preservation, in relation to a resource, means the maintenance, so far as is practicable, of its intrinsic values

Protection, in relation to a resource, means its maintenance, so far as is practicable, in its current state; but includes—

- (a) its restoration to some former state; and
- (b) its augmentation, enhancement, or expansion

The second part of the definition applies specifically to tahr in that they are recreated and appreciated by the public. The point under dispute is in regard to the extent and logistics of “safeguarding the options of future generations”

While “protection” allows for a return to “some former state,” it also provides the option for “enhancement.” The term “enhancement” by definition is an increase or improvement in quality, value, or extent. This allows for improvement to quality, value and extent of

Himalayan Tahr, for which the hunting sector only seeks within the bounds of their current feral range.

53 Powers of Director-General,

3) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), the Director-General—

(g) may control any introduced species causing damage to any indigenous species or habitat.

The term “control” is not defined by method or extent within the Act. Therefore, both the method and extent of control are up for debate and arguably at the centre of the current opposing views within the bounds of the HTCP.

The term “damage” is not defined in the Act. All species, indigenous or introduced, could potentially “cause damage” on some level to another species or habitat by their presence. To apply this generalised policy “damage” must be defined and the hunting sector require the Department to do so in a way that is quantitatively measurable and relevant across time and space, as part of the reasoning given for decisions made on the final operational plan as per requirement of the court decision. In addition, each indigenous species where “damage” identified results in control of another natural resource should be specified and the Departments expectations for its “protection” as per the Conservation Act 1987 interpretation.

MANAGEMENT PLANNING DOCUMENTS

Policy 4 of the CGP refers to pest management programmes.

The Biosecurity Act 1993 is the only statutory Act which actually defines “pest”; an organism specified as a pest in a pest management plan.

With regard to the Biosecurity Act 1993, there is not a “pest management plan” for tahr. The HTCP 1993 rather is a Wild Animal Control plan for the management of Tahr and does not qualify tahr as a pest under the Act.

Wild animal as per WAC Act 1977

- (a) Means
 - a. any deer (including wapiti or moose):
 - b. any chamois or tahr:
 - c. any goat that is not

i. held behind effective fences or otherwise constrained; and

ii. identified in accordance with an animal identification device approved under the National Animal Identification and Tracing Act 2012 or in accordance with an identification system approved under section 50 of the Biosecurity Act 1993 and approved by the Director-General for the purposes of this Act:

The CGP gives the definition of pest as “Any organism, including an animal, plant, pathogen or disease, capable or potentially capable of causing unwanted harm or posing significant risks to indigenous species, habitats and ecosystems or freshwater fisheries.”

There are a number of issues with respect to this definition being but not limited to;

- (1) All species, including indigenous species, may be considered as pests, and no ranking is currently defined.
- (2) All species are potentially capable of unwanted harm.
- (3) What constitutes unwanted harm is not defined and the word “unwanted” is subjective.
- (4) Significant risks are not defined in this document.

The word significant is not subjective. Its definition is required to allow for application to decision making.

The points of relevance to tahr in the CGP follow;
4.2

(e) Commercial hunting of wild animals and animal pests should be encouraged to maximise the effective control of them, while minimising any adverse effects of hunting on planned outcomes at places.

(f) Recreational hunting of wild animals and animal pests should be encouraged where this does not diminish the effectiveness of operations to control them and is consistent with planned outcomes at places.

The wording “wild animals and animal pests” within the CGP gives distinction between the two. Wild animal is defined clearly in Conservation Act 1987, but the criteria to be considered an animal pest is not clear. If wild animals are automatically identified as pests then no distinction would be made. “Maximising effective control of them” is subjective, in what is effective control of a wild animal species.

SCI looks forward to working positively with DOC and the GAC for progressive and continued improvement of our game animals for the benefit of the environment, recreation and industry.



New Zealand Association of Game Estates DOC Consultation on the HTCP Operational Plan 2020/21

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE NZAGE

- 100% voluntary self-regulating association with the purpose of setting standards for privately owned enclosed properties managed for the purposes of hunting and other land use i.e. tourism, grazing and biodiversity
- Approx 20 members, with a number of potentially eligible properties looking at membership. This figure is not exhaustive as there are a number of potentially
- Eligible properties who choose to remain unaffiliated with any self-regulatory body
- In operation since 1998 and closely aligned with

the NZPHGA

- Represent the bulk of investment, cost and risk borne by the commercial hunting sector. Cost of land, fencing, stock, management, improvements, compliance and client recruitment / marketing. Estimates are around the \$300m mark for total on property investment.
- We have actively worked with the Department of Conservation and other
- Government agencies in good faith to develop our Industry Agreed Standards, with the intent of fostering understanding each other's priorities and a 'good neighbour' policy.

CURRENT SITUATION FACING

NZAGE MEMBERS

- NZAGE members are on their knees financially as a result of Covid-19.
- 2020 has seen just 10% of our operational season / income, but with 65% of operational costs.
- Every operator will be facing a catastrophic loss for 2020 and most likely 2021 too.
- This will mean 24 months with a greatly minimised income but with fixed costs and obligations that cannot be avoided, which limit owners / operators ability to pivot.
- The tourism industry is the hardest hit sector in the NZ economy and the game estate sector is arguably one of the worst hit within that.
- A significant number of member businesses and unaffiliated game estate businesses will fail in 2021 if borders remain closed, assuming no external intervention.

EFFECT OF THE PROPOSED 2020/2021 OPERATIONAL PLAN ON GAME ESTATES

- With the above as context, it makes the way in which the 2020/2021 Tahr
- Operational plan has been approached by the Department all the more brutal - in terms of timing and intent.
- It feels like that while some tax-contributing industries are bleeding out with absolutely no end to the pain in sight, the Department has received a huge slice of taxpayer money, ostensibly for job creation and is forging ahead in an almost
- Bloody-minded fashion with a plan to kill as many tahr as possible in a short
- Time frame with zero consideration to the consequences and minimal benefit to employment or the economy.
- It appears that the losers on the day are due process; specifically the requirements for consultation and ongoing research and monitoring.
- The other big losers, of course, are those who value or depend on tahr as part of their livelihood.
- On the question of principles - can the Department really say they have acted in good faith?
- The phrase 'being kicked while we're down' does not seem inappropriate here.

THE VALUE OF TAHR TO GE'S

- The direct value of a bull tahr to NZ has been estimated at \$14000 per animal, made up of trophy fee, guiding, lodging, transport, taxidermy and expediting.
- This figure reconciles with the value most commercial hunting operations derive from tahr as part of their trophy options.
- Based on the \$104m annual revenue of the guided hunting industry, it can be safely assumed that tahr are directly accountable for over \$20m of this figure.
- The true value of the tahr resource to our industry however, is more than just its raw monetary value. Tahr are an important draw card species for the guided hunting industry.
- International hunters can hunt red stags in a number of countries around the world, but can only hunt tahr in New Zealand. Many international hunters book their red stag hunt in New Zealand because they can also hunt tahr here. Without a viable tahr herd our industry stands to lose not only the revenue associated with tahr hunting, but also a significant portion of the revenue derived from the other high value game animals our visiting tahr hunting clients hunt while here on their tahr hunt, principally, our lucrative private land game estate red stags, plus the non-hunting tourism revenue derived from companions, touring and retail.
- There is a strong argument to be made that were it not for the option to hunt tahr, many hunters would instead opt to hunt Red Stag in a rival location such as Argentina which is cheaper, closer and more accessible to our core US market.
- To not have a viable bull tahr population in National Parks, adjoining public land and by future extension, crown pastoral lease and freehold private land, game estates outside the feral range would experience a massive reduction in our ability to fulfill existing contracts, satisfy client demand and generate future bookings. This would be due to conflict from displaced commercial and recreational hunters putting pressure on a diminished resource that may not be able to sustain future demand.
- This would further hamper our recovery from Covid and may assist in preventing it entirely at a time that NZ can ill-afford to lose a valuable high-yield, low-impact export tourism industry.

- Many game estate operators have remarked that it is difficult to watch your
- Livelihood evaporate while a key resource in any potential recovery risks decimation via a state-sponsored agenda.

GE'S PREFERRED APPROACH TO MANAGEMENT

To be clear - the NZAGE 100% appreciates the need for tahr management. We have always supported the idea of a staged management approach based on sound research, monitoring and consideration of effects on all interested parties.

To date, that research and evidence seems to have eluded us. This brings us to the core problem - which is, on one hand:

- If we reduce the tahr herd below what constitutes a sustainable hunting resource without undertaking the

appropriate research and monitoring, it will take years to recover. This has immediate and long term negative implications for our industry. And, on the other hand:

If we backed off on the urgency of the timing and resolved to maintain the current population levels while we undertake the science prior to re-implementing the plan, we regain trust, goodwill and partnership from the hunting sector for minimal adverse effect.

It would appear that the consequences of pressing ahead regardless are way out of balance with the consequences of undertaking research and monitoring first. One would have to question why this is the case?

The NZAGE believes that the remaining budget for the 2020 / 2021 Operational Plan should be directed towards research and monitoring before undertaking further flying & culling operations.

Simon Guild President, NZAGE





MANAGING TAHR TO PROVIDE
SUSTAINABLE HUNTING WHILST
CONSERVING ALPINE VEGETATION.

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