

Hunting at Tokomaru

A GUIDE TO THE SEASONS



For all hunting enquiries phone owner and host Aaron on **+64 21 281 8161**
For booking enquiries phone Wendy on **+64 21 400 566** or email **bookings@tokomarulifestyle.co.nz**



Timing is crucial in hunting.

Not just during the hunt itself, but also in preparation. If you have your heart set on hunting one of our stunning red stags, it's just as important to plan your dates to coincide with the hunting season for red deer, which lasts approximately six months of the calendar year.

For the ultimate thrill-seeker, you'll want to ensure you book well in advance, so your hunt coincides with the *roar*, an 8–10 week period during the Autumn months where red stags have increased aggression levels, as they seek to protect their harem of hinds from other males.

Use our thorough guide to which animals are available to hunt and when, to help plan your perfect New Zealand hunting adventure.

Seasonal Guide



Summer

December – February

Billy goats, weighing up to 65 kilograms and wearing their fawny coloured summer coats can be hunted in this period, as can wild boar. Red stags are in hard antler by the third week of February. This is a great time to come and identify your trophy in advance of the *roar*. Fallow deer can be hunted during this period, but for meat rather than trophy, as the bucks aren't yet in hard antler until the Autumn.

Autumn

March – May

The *roar* or the *rut* is the name given to the period between late March and early May where red stags, motivated by the scent of ovulating red hinds, *roar* their challenges of masculinity and dominance toward each other.

During the *roar*, hunters can imitate the sound of a challenging stag to lure an alpha male into confrontation, although many hunters use the technique sparingly or refrain entirely, as our alpha stags will roar sufficiently regularly during this period to allow for tracking. Resisting the temptation to reproduce the *roar* allows for a stealthier approach as the red stag will be less likely to suspect an approach.

Hunters who choose to imitate a competing stag can entice the stags to approach them rather than vice-versa. Duplicating the sound of a roaring stag can be achieved using a number of methods, all of which can be demonstrated by our on-site guides:

- A simple cupped-hand technique
- Using a drink bottle or a tin can
- Using a hollowed out cow horn
- Using a simple, soft ribbed PVC pipe

The *bugle* (wapiti elk's rut season) also occurs during this period, commencing slightly earlier than the *roar* (usually around the second week of March). The *bugle* is so named in honour of the elk's whistle during this season, in contrast to the more guttural roar of the deer. Wapiti bulls are much less cautious at this time of year, making for a truly exciting hunt.

Fallow deer begin their own *rut* in April, through till the end of May, so should you narrowly miss the window for the red stag *roar*, hunting fallow can be an exciting and viable alternative throughout May when their distinctive croaking grunt makes tracking and enticing the animals a real thrill. Goat and boar are also available to hunt throughout.

Seasonal Guide



Winter

June – August

During this period, red stags are more likely to be found feeding and grazing. Much less vocal than during the *roar*, the deer are more docile during this period. If the idea of pitting your wits against an aggressive, testosterone fuelled red stag doesn't appeal, this is the season to hunt, when the animals are much more passive.

This logic also extends to wapiti elk and fallow deer, who will be much more docile and skittish (particularly the fallow) during the winter months.

Goats begin to *rut* in May and usually last through to July, while the billy's dark, shaggy coats are arguably at their finest, although mating does occur all year around.

Hunting billy goats is definitely one of the biggest challenges a hunter can embrace due to their fine eyesight and lightning speeds. Boar are also available to hunt.

Spring

September – November

Red stags are not available to hunt during this period as they shed their antlers by August. Fallow stags will shed their antlers by September, but both the males and females can still be hunted for venison. Wapiti elk are still available to hunt in September, as these stags typically shed their antlers a little later than the reds, and of course, goats and boar can still be hunted throughout much of this period.

FAQS

What equipment should I bring?

Guests participating in hunts will be required to bring a rifle, ammunition, hunting knives and bows (or we can provide on-site if preferred), as well as wet weather clothes, backpack, binoculars, a flashlight and tramping boots. Tramping boots should be waterproof, rubber soled and have plenty of grip for wet terrain.

What outfitting will I require?

As your hunt will take place on exclusive private property, and you will be the sole hunter on manoeuvres, high visibility clothing is not required to hunt at *Tokomaru*. Waterproof clothing and tramping boots are a must.

What type of hunting rifle is best?

When it comes to the best rifle for hunting game, it really does boil down to personal preference and comfort with your firearm.

.308s or .300 Win Mags with their small diameters and high velocity bullets are favoured amongst many seasoned deer hunters, whereas smaller bullet calibres such as .222s or .223s are often favoured for goats and boar. Blaser R8s are also a staple amongst avid hunters.

Check out [this page](#) for a more detailed overview of suitable rifles and hunting cartridges.

If you are unsure, consult your firearm and ammunition specialist for advice, or contact us for a friendly chat with our on-site staff.

How do I bring firearms into New Zealand?

To bring your own firearms into New Zealand, you will require a visitor's firearm permit.

This is a fairly simple process with a small cost of \$25 (NZD), although you must already hold a firearm license in your country of residence. Visit the [NZ Police website](#) to find out more and complete the online application, at least a month prior to arriving in New Zealand. You can also download and complete the appropriate form to apply via fax if preferred.

We will provide guns and ammunition for those who do not wish to bring their own firearms.

From what distance away will I be taking shots?

Shots can be taken anywhere from 100 to 600 metres on average, and sometimes from even further afield where desired. Again, this boils down to preference and the specifics of the hunt (eg, what animal you are hunting).

Can I hunt with a bow rather than with a rifle?

Absolutely. Many of our hard-core hunters prefer to hunt by bow instead of rifle. Bows are available on-site if required, although many hunters bring their own.

How long will it take to get my trophy home?

Immediately following a successful hunt, we will have your trophy head taken to our taxidermist half an hour away from *Tokomaru*. The taxidermy process then takes between 4 and 6 months, after which your trophy will be sent on to you (within New Zealand or overseas).

Taxidermy costs range between \$1,200 and \$1,650 for larger deer (trophy fees are extra). Get in touch with us for a bespoke, tailored package for a full cost breakdown of your planned hunt.

Eco Policy & Conservation

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We're serious about protecting our resources.

We hold a genuine passion for environmental conservation and are proud of our record for providing our livestock with the best care and healthy lives.

We also believe that hunting is a vital part of NZ culture, passed down through generations, and that it should and will form a continuing part of our ongoing heritage.

As such, we maintain a fierce commitment to our eco-policy and code of ethics as outlined in this document and made available to all visitors, with a view to ensuring sustainable protection and conservation.

Changing perceptions in the last decade have meant wild deer are now classed by DOC as a pest, causing damage to the natural environment and indigenous biota when herds are left to roam and grow untamed.

Similarly, wild boar can become a destructive presence in native forests or farming pastures when left to become too populous.

By providing a private, fenced home for countless deer, we remove many of these animals from areas where they might be exposed to harmful pest control substances and repellents, such as 1080, in the wild and provide them with food, medical care, shelter and a much increased life expectancy (our red stags are not available to hunt until they reach the age of at least six).

All our animals, whether bred for game (such as our red deer) or for companionship (such as our beautiful highland cattle) are superbly well cared for and receive the very best in love, care and attention from our dedicated staff.

Our Responsibility

We take our social responsibilities seriously at *Tokomaru*, and have a commitment to best practices and adherence with environmental regulatory policy. Internally, we have built business systems and a framework to ensure we meet our specific conservation goals, as outlined below:

- Work to improve environmental awareness and best practice.
- Work to minimise the effects of our operations on our environment.
- Ensure our staff are adequately trained and equipped to adhere to best-practice sustainability and conservation policies.
- Develop a long term environmental policy for our 3,000 acre lands, including 80 acres of Canadian redwood.
- Comply with any and all legal environmental obligations.
- Monitor our conservation efforts internally, to ensure compliance and to improve performance.

Visitor Responsibility

We expect all our visitors to adhere to a strict code of ethics both when participating in hunts and at any other time spent here at *Tokomaru*, as outlined below:

- Guests must conduct their hunt to the highest standard of ethical behaviour, whilst maintaining the utmost respect for the welfare of the animals they are hunting.
- A firearm may **NOT** be carried on our property without prior approval of our hunting guides or staff. Where approved to carry a firearm, the carrier shall abide by the strict rules laid down in our firearm policy, which is available to any visitor or guest via our staff, as well as the current laws that govern the carrying of firearms.
- Visitors must strive to avoid unnecessary damage to the natural environment, destruction of property or any actions that will cause unnecessary fear and distress to our animals, outside of the confines of the hunt.
- Visitors must respect fellow visitors and apply common sense in ensuring their actions not cause any upset to other guests or staff members. All parties shall be treated with civility, respect and courtesy at all times.
- Hunters must adhere to all instructions and requests issued by our hunting guides whilst hunting.
- Quick and clean kills should always be the aim of any hunt. Unnecessary prolonging of an animal's suffering will not be tolerated.
- All guests to behave and act in accordance with good conservation practices at all times.



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