



Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia (Qld) Inc.  
**Conservation and Wildlife Management Division**



**"Preserving Australia's Heritage"**

SSAA (Qld) Inc. Conservation and Wildlife Management Division  
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## ***CONSERVATION & WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT (Qld)***

### **March 2020 Newsletter**

#### **South East Report**

**A weekend in the heat wave at Moonie.**

The December project trip to Moonie was one of extremes. The teams during the first weekend had their plans foiled by unfamiliar wet stuff falling from the sky, then howling westerlies. Those of us there during the last few days experienced withering heat and mostly calm, but brightly lit nights under a  $\frac{3}{4}$  waxing moon.

This was my 6<sup>th</sup> outing to Moonie for 2019, accompanied this time around by my oldest son who was on his first CWM project. Graham and I have hunted together for much of his life, removing all manner of feral animals, starting with hares and rabbits, then foxes, progressing more recently to goats and fallow deer. All of our nocturnal hunting together had been with my ancient Powa-Beam spotlight and standard scopes. Although I've been using IR scopes and a thermal spotter for ten months, this was to be Graham's first taste of thermal gear.



We fluked a good property to be on, as we had a decent dam along with a huge cultivation that had some wheat left on the ground after harvesting. I was able to give Graham a good demonstration of the advantages of nocturnal hunting with modern gear. Just two days before heading to Moonie, I had taken the plunge and picked up a thermal scope for my .308 Lithgow. (Watch for a review in a newsletter).

Although there was grain on the ground, there weren't huge numbers of pigs visiting. There appeared to be two resident mobs (each about a dozen animals) coming in to feed each night. They had been shot at by the teams out there early in the week & after we tipped a few of them over, they got very vehicle shy and even changed their watering timetable.

scope. Wow, what a painful learning curve! Trying to get a contrasting point of heat/cold to use as an aim point during a heat wave proved difficult using recommended methods gleaned from YouTube, but we did manage to get it "on paper" by aiming at centre mass of a black plastic drum we'd brought along for the purpose (black to absorb heat). Using the resources we had on hand, I ended up jamming a piece of ice from the esky into a crack at the base of a tree stump. This was obliterated with the first shot so I assumed the rifle was hitting spot on (incorrectly as it turned out). My other rifle, wearing an IR scope and Graham's Creedmoor with a 4 to 18 optic were both checked to be spot on, 1" high at 100m.

We planned to sit on a small dam but found it dry so waited until dark then commenced

clip-on for walking out to pigs, so I gave him my spare rifle with the ATN 4K for long shots at any predators we encountered. As we drove around, I pointed out the differences in heat signatures showing on the TFT screen on the dash, that was hooked up to the thermal monocular. I.D determined, not only by body size and shape, but by characteristic movements too. Graham was shooting well, managing to barrel all three foxes we saw during the first couple of hours. On spying a lone pig, we walked about ½ km out into the cultivation to what turned out to be a very large boar, I skilfully missed him, then followed him for another ½ km before taking him down when he stopped for a breather.

An hour later we spied an interesting looking heat signature on the screen so sat and watched while I showed Graham the movements that identified them as pigs. After testing the breeze, we walked out to the small mob, stopped about 60m away and let rip. When the smoke cleared there were no pigs on the ground. Two clean misses, we were stumped.

Four hours later, we spotted that same mob again (five large animals with half a dozen smaller companions). Graham decided to leave the Creedmoor in the ute and carry my spare rifle, as he knew it was shooting straight. I missed with my first shot (again) but dropped a nice sow on the run. Graham dropped his target, a mid-sized boar where it stood, giving us one each out of the mob, but we'd scared them beyond the boundary fence.



On Thursday morning after unpacking we went out to sight-in my new Pulsar thermal

driving around with the thermal spotter. Graham had his Creedmoor wearing my Pard IR

Friday afternoon we sat on the biggest dam on the property and had the same mob of pigs come in for a drink at about 7:30pm. We lined them up, Graham with his Creedmoor, me with the new thermal scope and missed! Yet again I belted one on the run, to save the embarrassment a little. We saw another mob later that night, but they were running flat out about 400m away and didn't stop. Graham scored a big grey tomcat on the way back to camp for bonus points.

Saturday arvo, while driving around to the dam in broad daylight, I spotted something out of place, way out in the wheat stubble. Through the 6X range finder I could see it was a fox. Not wanting to be a spectator on all of the predators, I grabbed my smaller rifle and put one through his heart (at 194 metres). It was the mangiest, sad looking fox I've ever shot. Back to the dam but after a couple of hours the pigs didn't show so we went spotting. Around midnight we saw our pet mob of pigs again and stopped well away and walked half a km in for a shot. This time Graham had re-zeroed his 6.5CR so carried it. I gave the call to fire and, as was my habit, missed! Graham had forgotten to close his bolt so didn't get a shot off.

Frustrated, I called a halt to proceedings and came up with a brainwave method to check point of impact with my thermal scope. Turned out it was shooting about 6 inches low at 50m. The hit on the ice cube on day one, must have been a bounce shot off of the ground in front of the stump. That's why my precision heart shots on



pigs were missing! I was shooting under them. After adjusting the coordinates in the scope it put three shots into a tight group at 60m and naturally, we didn't get to fire another shot at a pig for the rest of the night.

Our final tally was not record breaking but was very satisfying with 1 cat, 5 foxes and 5 pigs which included Graham's first pig and feral cat.

As always; we came away satisfied, with a more in-depth knowledge of our gear and tactics for the next trip.

Neill

## General articles, stories, tips

### Two dogs

The CWM Moonie project working Bee had been cancelled due to rain. This was great news for the property owners, but left us with an unexpected free weekend. Damo suggested that we do an impromptu visit to his friend's beef cattle property in the Brisbane River Valley. The prospect of chasing red deer was the perfect consolation prize for the cancelled Moonie trip.



The drive up the valley showed a covering of green on the hills from the recent minor rainfall. On closer inspection this was a superficial covering of grass on ground that was extremely dry. When we arrived, it was clear that the property owner's, were suffering with the pain of watching their business, stock and property slowly wither away with the drought. Still they welcomed us into their home and gave us the kind of hospitality and good cheer that seemed like the antidote to the dry landscape that surrounded us.

That evening the owner took us for a drive to check his cattle watering points. Around the first hill we spotted a group of Red Deer that were content to just watch us. Damo wasted no time and dropped a nice fawn with a perfectly placed heart shot. The rest of the mob made a rapid escape over the rise. By the time we field butchered the animal, it was time to head back and enjoy a country home-cooked roast and a few red wines.

Next day a driving tour of their string of five properties revealed a few mobs of deer in the distance, but no chances to stalk closer. Later that afternoon, we were dropped high on the boundary ridge of the property overlooking the homestead in the valley below. The plan was for the three of us hunters to each walk down a ridge into the valley, whilst keeping visual and/or radio contact with each other.

The walk down our respective ridges was relaxing and uneventful until my radio came to life. Damo announced that he had seen a group of dogs moving down into a creek bed between us. After a while, with

no further sightings, we decided to sit on our respective ridges while Damo blew his 'distressed fawn' caller.

Almost instantly, across on the next ridge, I spotted two wild dogs running full pelt in our direction. I radiod the boys and we each steadied in readiness. I thought to myself that maybe I was a little bit over gunned with the 300 Win Mag loaded with 180 gn projectiles, that I was carrying for a red deer encounter. A few seconds later a dog appeared 30 metres in front of me and was intent on finding the source of the distressed fawn call. My off-the-shoulder shot was not so pretty, but the power of the Win

Mag made up for it. I had just enough time to step forward to lean against a dead tree trunk when the second dog appeared and stopped near the dead dog. It was just long enough for another 180 grainer to knock him down.

I was thrilled with my first wild dogs and the property owner was very happy to have these calf killers gone. Later that night over a few more drinks one of my 'mates' said I was the guy they called 'two dogs'. Everyone else thought this was hilarious and to be honest, I didn't mind at all.

Gary



## Cheap as chips target stand - ideal for sighting-in, out in the field.

I've found this simple target stand works a treat. All it is, is an off-cut of corflute screwed to a tomato stake. It's tall enough to be above the level of most grasses and strong enough not to get blown about even in a stiff breeze. You can get a 900x600mm sheet of corflute from Bunnings for about \$6 and a pack of 3 x 900mm tomato stakes is about \$13. I used galvanised stitching screws to secure the corflute sheet - which I cut down to about A4 size, but any flat-headed screw



would do the job. (Or just use a small washer and some ordinary countersunk screws if you don't have anything else on hand.)

For targets I use standard SSAA targets cut to size and secured with thumb tacks, but

in a pinch you could use some squares of duct tape as an aiming point or even just draw on the corflute with a Nikko pen. (Just remember to cover any pre-existing bullet holes so you don't get confused.)

The system is light, doesn't take up much space in the truck and if your rifle happens to be far enough out so you end up hitting the stake - it's a \$4-\$5 tomato stake. It's not the end of the world.

Things to watch out for ...

Remember to take a hammer or mallet because you usually can't just push a stake into the ground and, hardwood tomato stakes are chock full of splinters, so be a bit careful when handling them.

Cheers,  
Benn

## Pockets of success

There are some good outdoor areas still available despite the drought and fires. Northern NSW and adjacent Qld on the Great Dividing Range come to mind. A couple of good spring fed lakes lie in the upper New England and more than one location holds quality rainbow trout.

I'm back from a trip with an acquired knowledge of locations and contacts. I was hoping for trout, venison and cod. Trout came up ok around Ben Lomond. The cod were in the Severn river running into Pindari dam through the gorges that have not seen enough rain in quite a while. Deep holes in the gorges had a lot of weed. The Cod I saw took shrimp at leisure from the weed but took no interest in my lure.

Some good fallow deer were about in the high country, in two or three spots. My aiming spot at deer has always been on the frontal area and with a significant bullet weight. My deer hunting mates share this belief. No one wants to lose a deer. Around 11:30, I detected movement in heavy timber and shade. I settled excitedly but still, and checked again and again through the scope on my BDL 30:06. Having satisfied myself on the deer, I squeezed off a round. Three deer broke in different directions and were gone in the timber and scrub. I was steady and breeched another round and moved into the target area, checking my back mark to my hilux for the return trip. I moved in circles outward from the scrub around the area for a few minutes; then bingo, a spot of claret on a leaf. A couple more circles radiating out found more of the same going up the gully, giving me a positive direction. Fifty metres further, and attention to tracking got me to my prize, where it had dropped.

My motto is to spot carefully, move little and wait if you suspect its game. It should be a one shot prize. Use enough gun to do the job. Don't risk a loss.

Paul Millist





## Ken Payne story

### Extra benefit to CWM Membership

Over the years of being a CWM member, I have met a lot of kindred spirits and some have become close family friends. As we are all different, each of us will click with certain people more than others. Beside the broad social aspect we all enjoy, a side benefit is that I have taken some of these

friends to my private hunting properties, and I have been invited to theirs, broadening my hunting experiences and memories.

It is always enjoyable and relaxing hunting with close friends, each knows how the other operates amid lots of friendly banter. While sitting on the bank of a creek or waterhole waiting for feral animals, I enjoy watching the native wild life coming in for a drink or watching birds of prey

soaring on the thermals. I have been in places that I would not have been if not for hunting, and have taken many photos which continue to jog my memories.

Our group is involved with other groups allowing us into areas that the general public are not able to access due to its remoteness or scientific purpose. I have had other members who have spotted the CWM sticker on my car and come over and introduced themselves, forming another contact.

## Upcoming Activity Dates

Our calendar of activity dates is now published on our web site. Please go to:

<http://cwm.ssaqld.org.au/2013/index.php/calendar/2020-calendar>

## CWM Contacts

<http://cwm.ssaqld.org.au/2013/index.php/contacts>

## **Our Supporters**

The businesses listed below support us in different ways, whether it is through direct discounts to members, donations to the Christmas Shoot, or items loaned for field use.

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