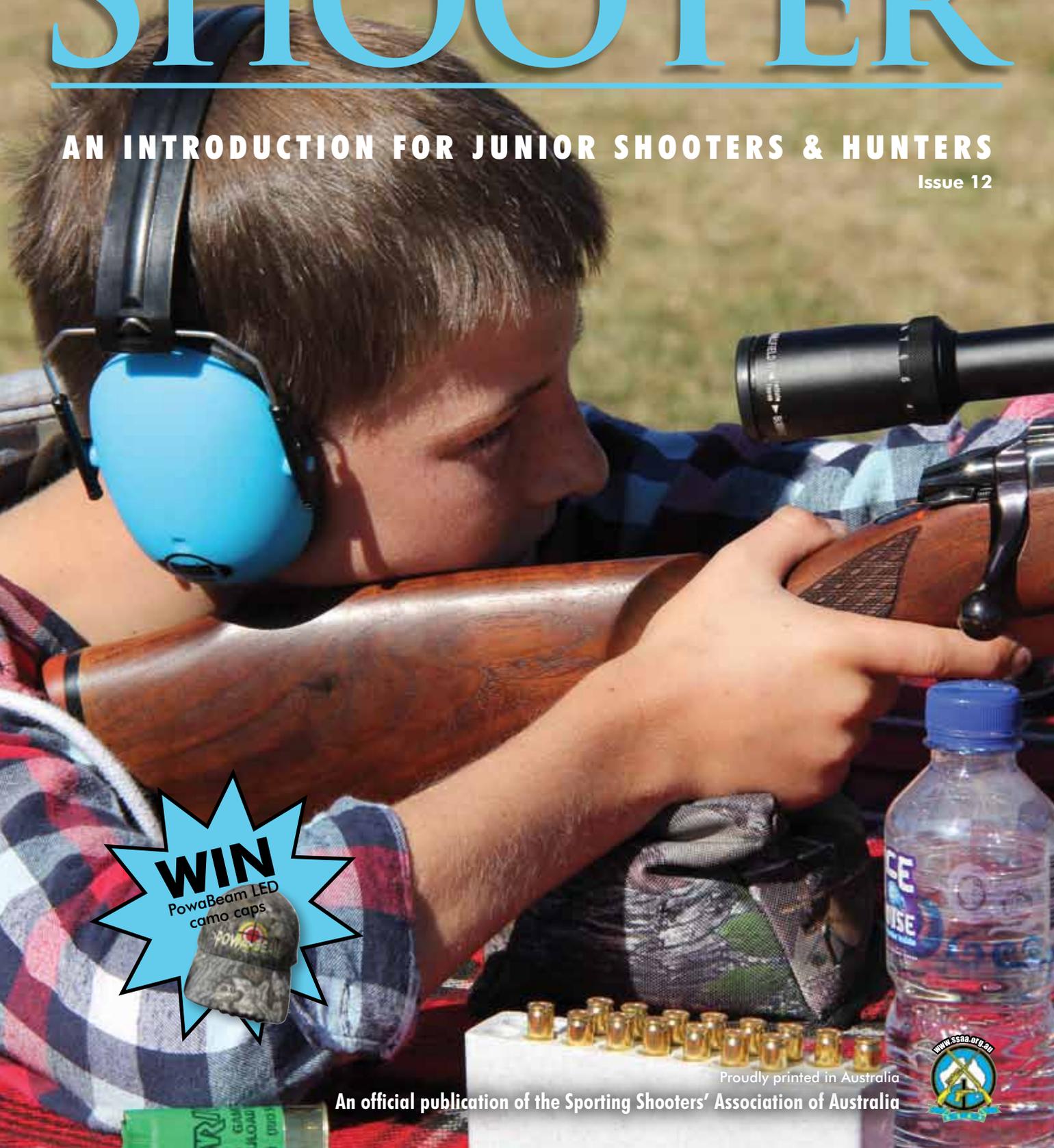


# THE JUNIOR SHOOTER

AN INTRODUCTION FOR JUNIOR SHOOTERS & HUNTERS

Issue 12



**WIN**  
PowBeam LED  
camo caps



Proudly printed in Australia

An official publication of the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia



# Contents

- 2 Editorial
- 3 Records broken at 2013 SSAA National Junior Challenge
- 4 A fun and well-managed event
- 5 Some thoughts on hunting with juniors
- 8 Stuart Foate - Benchrest's wonder kid
- 9 A start-up guide to Benchrest
- 11 Goats on the ridge
- 14 Hunting in national parks
- 15 I beat Dad on my first go at the range
- 15 Juniors-only competition
- 16 Sponsor a junior and save your sport

## Editorial

**W**elcome to Issue 12 of *The Junior Shooter*. In this issue, we speak with 17-year-old Benchrest shooter Stuart Foate. Stuart has been a keen sporting shooter

since he first gained his juniors permit when he turned 12. Interestingly, he also reintroduced his father Anthony to the sport and both have become successful Benchrest shooters. Now, Stuart, who has risen through the ranks of competitive shooting, will be representing Australia in the World Benchrest Championships later this month. The SSAA and *The Junior Shooter* wish Stuart all the best.

We also have a story from Brad Allen, who shares some techniques he's used to introduce his four

children to the activity of hunting. As Brad explains, learning how to safely and accurately shoot is just one (but still important) part of hunting, and there is another whole world to learn about, including recognising sign, spotting game, taking only what you need, understanding your own capabilities, and much more.

Enjoy this issue of *The Junior Shooter*, and don't forget to enter our great competition to win one of two LED camo caps from PowaBeam.

If you'd like to write a letter or share your shooting, hunting or outdoor story with us, get in contact with our Associate Editor on 08 8272 7100, [edit@ssaa.org.au](mailto:edit@ssaa.org.au) or write to SSAA National, PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061.

**Staff** Managing Editor Tim Bannister, Associate Editor Kaye Jenkins, Art Director Mike Barr, Production Coordinator Judy Ward, Graphic Designer Natalie Hill, Media Officer Rachael Andrews, Advertising Representative Karoline Minicozzi, Administration Debbie Wing.

**Contributors** Gavin Ryall, Brad Allen, Stuart Foate, Sam Spanton, Cameron Smith, Samara Hannan.

Mail: PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061

Phone: 08 8272 7100

Fax: 08 8272 2945

Web: [www.ssaa.org.au](http://www.ssaa.org.au)

Email: [as@ssaa.org.au](mailto:as@ssaa.org.au)

*The Junior Shooter* is owned and published by the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia Inc. Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy of this Association.

No text or photographs within this publication may be republished, either electronically or in print, without the express written permission of the SSAA. Copyright 2013.

Printed by Genii, Brookvale, NSW.

The Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia Inc (SSAA Inc) is subject to the provisions of the National Privacy Act. We collect personal information from members of the Sporting Shooters' Association of Australia in the various states and territories. Should you want a copy of the SSAA Inc Privacy Statement or seek further information please write to PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061.



# Records broken at 2013 SSAA National Junior Challenge

by Media Officer Rachael Andrews

Competition was fierce and records were broken at the 2013 National Junior Challenge held in Canberra earlier this year. SSAA junior shooters travelled from Victoria, Tasmania, the Northern Territory, South Australia and New South Wales to join their ACT counterparts at the SSAA Shooting Complex at Majura. The field of more than 45 competitors took part in three days of target shooting from July 5 to 7, battling it out in cold conditions and difficult winds.

Overall honours in the 4-Gun Aggregate went to South Australia's Alex Payne in the Under 18 category and Tasmania's James Freeman in the Under 15 category. Alex and Mitchell Stevens, who placed second in the Under 18 4-Gun Aggregate, also featured among the provisional records shot throughout the competition. Alex's overall 10m Scoped Air Rifle Precision score of 396.23 is a new record, while Mitchell's overall Field Rifle Rimfire aggregate of 380.11 and his Standing Post score of 96.1 also set new benchmarks at the junior level.

For the remaining records shot, the Field Rifle Rimfire was where the junior participants really excelled, with New South Wales Under 18 competitor Benen Livermore achieving 94.2 in Rapid Fire, South Australian Under 15 shooter Jordan Robinson shooting 96.1 in Offhand and Victorian Under 18 competitor Wilson Swan scoring 99.3 in Sitting Post.

On the final night of the competition, competitors joined forces for a meal and a fun quiz night, where it was smarts that counted for skill.





A field of more than 45 shooters took part in three days of competition.

SSAA ACT President David True thanked all competitors for their participation and said the future looked bright for the sport of target shooting with such talent coming through the ranks. He was also pleased to see the maturity of the junior shooters and more than happy that they were safe and had a great time.

“The talent of the junior SSAA members coming through the competition and shooting at their local clubs is very promising and it means our sport will be around for many years to come,” he said.

“The sportsmanship showed over the weekend between the competitors as they helped each other and competed in tough conditions was encouraging. It was a great event for us to host in the ACT and we look forward to doing so again in the future.”

Information about the 2014 National Junior Challenge will be released next year and all SSAA junior members aged under 18 years are eligible to compete. For a full list of results and a gallery of photos from this year’s SSAA National Junior Challenge, visit [www.ssaa.org.au/juniorsports](http://www.ssaa.org.au/juniorsports)

## A fun and well-managed event

Just a quick note to give my thanks and congratulations to the SSAA ACT Branch for the way in which this year’s SSAA National Junior Challenge was handled. From early Friday morning to Sunday afternoon, I have never been to an event that was so much fun, relaxed and so well managed.

Myself and my son were total novices to competitions and what to do, but from the moment we arrived, the club had the staff keeping us informed and making us feel right at home. Conditions were tough, but there was some great shooting, and my son had a really good time, due in no small part to the sportsmanship shown by all competitors and the willingness of others to share their time and knowledge.

To Peter, Scott and Alex especially, your efforts really stood out for us, but the whole club needs to be commended on their efforts, such as the supply of hot food (love the deluxe sandwiches!), good hot coffee always available, and watching as three and four details of children and young adults were seamlessly brought into their shooting positions without a single hitch.

If this is typical of what can happen, our sport is definitely heading in the right direction and we will definitely be going to more competitions!

Gavin Ryall, NSW





The boys with all the necessary gear and under supervision, but out there doing it for themselves.

# Some thoughts on hunting with juniors

by Brad Allen

**A**fter hunting many different types of game for more than 40 years now, it can be easy to take most of what I've learned for granted, as most of the skills I've acquired are now second nature and can be almost automatic out in the field. This probably holds true for most experienced hunters.

Teaching kids how to shoot is only one small but very important part of the hunting process. Teaching kids how to be *hunters* is another thing. It's not rocket science though, and experience has taught me that the best way to accomplish this is with the old 'EDI' method: explain, demonstrate and imitate. By just watching you do it, they can learn only so much. To become proficient in any skill, they will eventually need to do it for themselves, and with hunting, I believe that the sooner in life they start, the better.

I started all my boys hunting and fishing as soon as they could follow me around the bush and go the toilet on their own! Let me share with you some of what I've learned over the years from teaching my own kids to hunt.

## Recognising sign

As we hunt through the bush, it's common to see different animal tracks, droppings, rubs, scrapes and other sign. These are the types of things that experienced hunters only glance at and usually just keep on hunting without giving it too much thought, as after all, we've seen it a thousand times before.

When I hunt with the boys, I continually point out different sign, tracks and droppings and quiz them as to which animal they think it belongs to. I show them the difference between a deer, goat and pig track and the difference between their droppings. After a while, they start to notice the marks, tracks and droppings themselves and will be able to tell you what it belongs to. They will genuinely be interested in that little mark in the dirt and that little pile of poo!

To see a 12-year-old noticing tracks and scrapes and checking wind direction before we make a stalk, without being prompted, is a proud moment indeed. They do watch what you do, they do listen to what you tell them and they do eventually learn because they *want* to learn because they're interested. >

## Understanding their limitations

Initially, I keep their hunts reasonably short, trying not to walk too far and incorporating a fair amount of sitting and glassing over likely country. Sitting in a blind is an excellent way for kids to hunt and it has the added advantage of concealment from game, as kids will always fidget to some extent and being hidden by the bush or a camo net pays dividends. It's always important to provide a comfortable place for both of you to sit and a steady rest for them to shoot from. Sitting on the ground or on an uncomfortable log is all right for a short time, so we often use small kid's size folding camp chairs that are very comfortable and light to carry.

The BOG-POD and other adjustable shooting rests are invaluable and really come into their own, as they can be easily adjusted to the exact height required for the shot. For safety reasons, when blind hunting, we always remove the rifle sling, if possible, as they usually end up getting snagged on the rest and it generally gets in the way.

## Spotting game

You'd be surprised at just how good kids can get at spotting game. Quite often, my boys will spot animals before I do, as they are looking from a different perspective, being shorter than me. They eventually start to notice that ear flicking, that horizontal back line or the different colored patch of hide through the bush. My youngest is eight years old and tags along with us on most of our hunts as a 'game spotter', often seeing animals before everyone else. This also ensures that he's included in the fun as well as the older boys, who do the shooting.

To give the kids the best chance of success as a 'trainee hunter', they also need to have the equipment that will allow them to do what you do. We normally hunt in mountainous country and I always use binoculars. Consequently, the boys all have and use their own binoculars. There's no doubt that binoculars are an indispensable tool for most hunting situations, so if you use them, at least consider getting them a cheap pair to start with. But believe me, as they mature as hunters and their interest and skills develop, their taste in equipment will also mature and they will eventually hit you up for something more expensive!

## Noise

When I started hunting, I remember my old man constantly chipping me about making too much noise as we walked through the bush. I'd be all right for a while and then, directly proportional to my attention span, I'd get noisier until the next reminder was delivered. He taught me to place my feet down softly on the outer edge of the foot and slowly roll my foot in, constantly checking for sticks or anything else that might snap or crunch under my big feet and eventually, I could walk as quietly as him. I find myself doing exactly the same thing with my boys, but you need to be patient; however, the older they get, the longer their attention span, the quieter they walk and the quieter they become overall while in the bush.

## Clothing and gear

Kids will want to imitate you, so gear, boots and clothing similar to what you're wearing is exactly what they'll want and need. For obvious reasons, I try to keep kids away from wearing joggers or sneakers in hilly country, preferring boots that offer better traction and ankle support. The area in which you hunt will ultimately decide for you as to what gear they will need to safely and comfortably enjoy their hunting experience.

When they're smaller, I don't let them carry a backpack. A small waterpack is okay, but if anything they're carrying gets too heavy, you'll end up carrying it for them. I know, as I've done it and my backpack, shooting sticks and rifle are already enough weight for me to carry. As they grow older and stronger, they'll be able to carry more gear and walk further without getting tired and without complaining.



Luke with his first pig. The adjustable Pole Cat shooting sticks are an indispensable aid when hunting with kids.

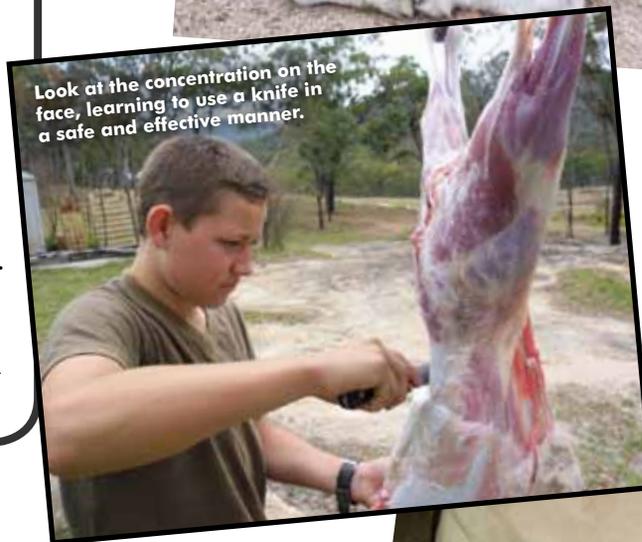
## Using game you take

We always try to use every animal we take and it's important to impress on the kids that animals are not just targets. Consequently, learning how to field-dress their game meat is another important part of their apprenticeship, and even bullet-damaged meat can still be good dog tucker and worth retrieving.

Initially, the boys balked at being involved in the field-dressing process, as was to be expected, but eventually, they all want to assist me and later on, to use the knife and do it for themselves. Their first time can be a bit nerve-racking and time-consuming, but guiding them through the task is always time well spent, and successive skinning and field-dressing jobs become quicker and less frustrating for both the student and the teacher.

During this exercise, constant supervision and advice as to how and where to hold and cut is essential. And only time spent 'pushing the knife' will eventually make them into competent bush butchers. Recently, while on a week-long hunting trip with the boys, they harvested a young goat for the pot, which was then field-dressed and prepared with their help. The next evening, we cooked it in the camp oven and served it up with roast potatoes, peas and gravy. It was an excellent meal that they all helped with and were all immensely proud of.

A fat young goat taken for the pot by the boys.



Look at the concentration on the face, learning to use a knife in a safe and effective manner.

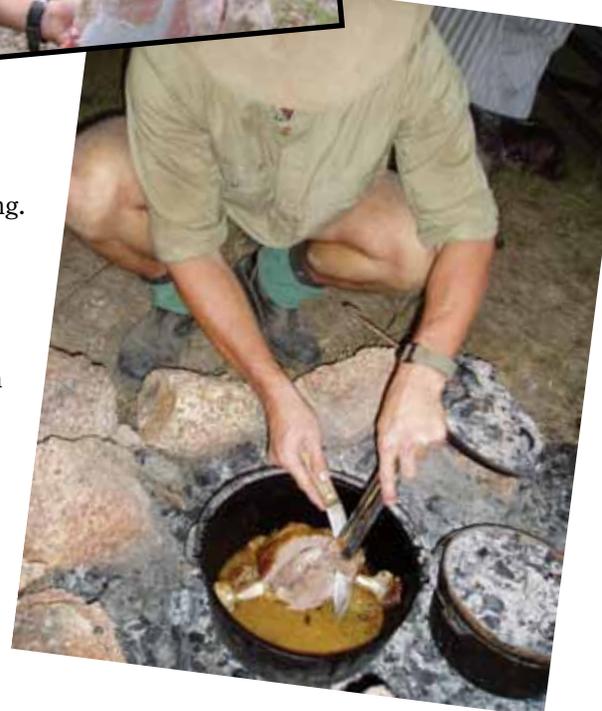
This roast goat cooked in the camp oven looks good and was excellent eating.

## Summary

By now, you might think I'm a bit passionate about teaching kids to hunt and shoot and you'd be dead right! To assist a young person to develop from a raw beginner into a responsible young hunter is an extremely satisfying undertaking. There are very few activities that a young person can do early in life that will mature them like the responsibility they carry as a young hunter and shooter.

The points I have covered here on teaching kids to hunt and shoot are by no means definitive, as my main aim was to start you thinking and hopefully get you into action. As experienced hunters, we all have a responsibility to pass on our knowledge and skills to the next generations and with Australia's ageing population, the worst thing you can possibly do is to sit back and do nothing, as this will almost certainly spell the end of hunting as we now know it.

So do your bit for our hunting heritage and sign up a junior to the SSAA and take that young person hunting. As I've said before, you'll be amazed at what they're capable of and you'll really enjoy it and the kids will love it too. My boys and I can't wait to head back to the bush so we can do it all again.



# Stuart Foote

## - Benchrest's wonder kid

by Media Officer Rachael Andrews

This month, a field of the world's best Benchrest shooters will take to the SSAA Silverdale range in New South Wales to battle to reign supreme. Among this field of prestigious shooters this year will be Australia's number one qualifier, 17-year-old Stuart Foote.

Age is not a factor for SSAA NSW shooter Stuart, who has been building to this point since getting his juniors permit at age 12. He is now a regular on the national Benchrest shooting circuit, having competed for the Australia A Team at the Pacific Regional Shooting Championships in New Zealand in late 2012 and topping the field in the Benchrest

Preparation on the range has comprised training in match conditions and testing barrels with his current powder and projectile.

"At this point, it's about fine-tuning and making sure I get it right," Stuart said.

Coinciding with his appearance at the World Championships will be Stuart's 18th birthday, marking the next step in his shooting career as he loses his junior classification. But in reality, Stuart has been shooting as an 'adult' for many years; he said that the 'junior' title went away as soon as he proved himself to be serious competition at the senior level.

"Turning 18 will give me a new freedom with my shooting as I'll be able to go to the range and practise without relying on Dad to come and bring the firearms," Stuart said.

While Stuart has been working his way up the ranks in his shooting career, he has been able to shoot with his father Anthony, a fellow nationally ranked Benchrest shooter. The pair often competes in a team together and have travelled around the country.

"It's been fantastic to be shooting with Dad all this time. In essence, there's no greater shooting partner because we both want each other to do exceptionally well," Stuart said.

"It's someone you can bounce ideas off and it's really cool to have a training partner right there with the support you need while shooting. I believe this relationship is one of the things that

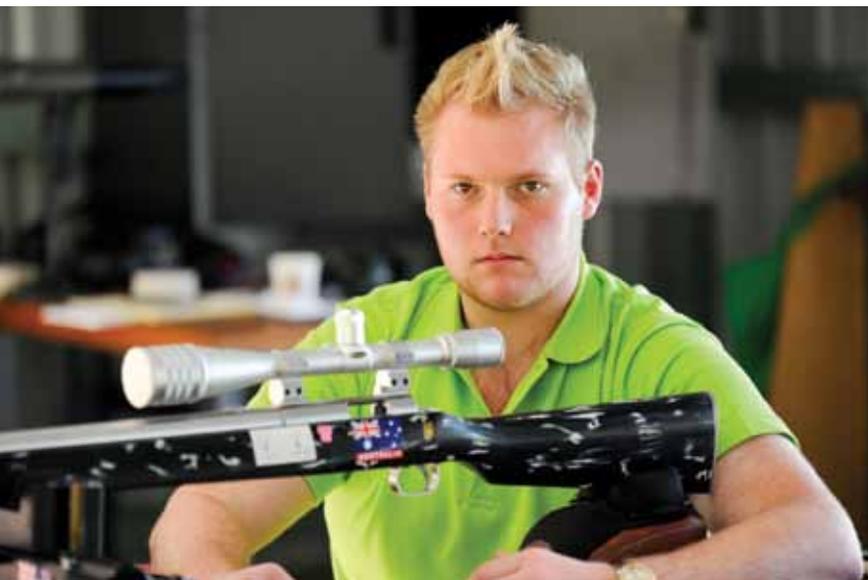
has helped us get into the Australia A Team together."

While the father and son relationship is supportive, Stuart said there was also some light-hearted competition between him and his father, which makes shooting more fun and gives him more motivation to perform.

"We give each other heaps if one does better than the other, but you also just try harder because you want to have bragging rights at home," he said.

However, Stuart says that when it comes down to it, the friendly jibes and the support has taken the pair all over Australia and overseas, and has built a stronger bond between father and son than would have otherwise been possible.

"It's what makes us want to go to events, it makes you want to shoot and it's a great adventure every time we go away together," he said.



Light Varmint competition. However, it was his stellar performance in the National Benchrest Championships in March this year that has cemented his place in the World Benchrest Championships Team.

"There was a little bit of pressure going into this, but I knew what I had to do," said Stuart. "I was focused in the sense that I knew the points I had to keep and I knew I could do it."

With his position in the bag, Stuart has spent the past few months fine-tuning his performance, all while working through his Year 12 study commitments.

"The preparation has been a bit of juggling everything," he said. "To do it, I've set up my calendar and I've been putting school commitments and any shoots practices in on dates and sticking to those. That way, when I say I'm going to practise, it's something I will do."

# A start-up guide to Benchrest

by Stuart Foate

To me, shooting Benchrest is as much of an art as it is a discipline, and I truly believe that the equipment and the preparation to be competition ready are key factors in good performance. I have written the following basic start-up guide for those SSAA junior shooters who might be interested in taking part in this popular discipline.

## What is Benchrest?

Benchrest shooting is a rifle sport where the shooter attempts to shoot five or 10 shots into the smallest possible group at distances of 50, 100, 200 and 300 yards. The rifles are fired from rests, which include a front rest to support the fore-end of the rifle and a rear sandbag to support the butt of the rifle.



## The rifle

To get yourself started in this exhilarating sport, you first need a rifle and not just any rifle, but one that is capable of fine accuracy and generally one that is chambered in the 6mm PPC-calibre.

A 'bench gun' is normally custom built and can therefore vary in price. But there is no need to spend a stack of money at the start, as there are often secondhand rifles for sale, and there is little wrong with modified Remington Model 700s as a basis for a Benchrest rifle.

## The ammunition

Most Benchrest shooters choose to reload their own ammunition. This is either because you can't buy off-the-shelf ammunition for their type of custom-made rifle, or because the shooter wants more control over the loads they're using for the different classes of Benchrest, which includes Heavy, Light, Sporter and various Centrefire classifications. Remember, it's mainly consistency that wins shoots, so why should it be any different for your ammo?

Basic reloading equipment can be purchased from your local gunshop and something like an RCBS Rock Chucker pack of presses and accessories is a good start.

You will need dies to make sure the sizing of your brass cases remains consistent and to remove old primers. A die to seat the projectile is also needed.

Finding the right projectiles and powder for any gun can be thought of as being the most important part of developing a working consistent load - and a bench gun is no different. There are many local craftsmen who make an excellent bullet. Barry Warwick is one, then there is Ken Melgard's Copperheads. I personally use Roosters Custom bullets made in Western Australia by Grahame Keppie. Or you can go the imported route, using bullets made in the United States such as Berger, Barts and Hottenstein. Off-the-shelf bullets around 70 grains by Sierra and Speer are a good choice when starting out, and I have seen these bullets shoot some remarkable groups.

Powder can create its own problems, generally due to availability. For shooters either starting out or new to Benchrest, locally made AR2219 or one of the BM range of powders is an excellent way to start your load development. I personally prefer VihtaVuori N133, but at present, there is a limited availability in Australia.





Benchrest is shot from a rest that supports both ends of the rifle and the shooter aims to shoot the smallest shot groups at various distances.

## Maintenance

Cleaning a bench gun is important to again ensure consistency and long-standing barrel life, so this is another focus area outside of the actual skill of shooting Benchrest. The aim of cleaning a bench gun is to remove all of the copper and powder fouling from the barrel. Copper is a part of cleaning that is usually not done properly. As centrefire projectiles have a copper jacket, when the bullet is fired, it can leave some of the jacket's copper in the barrel.

I spend a considerable amount of time trying to ensure all copper is removed from my barrel. To achieve this, the right solvent must be used. For example, I use Pro Shot Copper solvent that gets mailed in from BRT Shooters Supplies in Queensland. This is just what I

have found to work for me, and other good solvents such as Sweets or Butches Bore Shine can also be used to good effect.

Personally, I use my own cleaning system. First, with my rifle sitting in a gun cradle with the barrel pointing down and a bore guide in the action, I pour a small amount of Pro Shot down the barrel. This is followed by two wet patches, then 20 runs though with a solvent-wet bronze brush. I then do five dry patches with the bore guide in. Once the bore guide has been removed, I will put three more dry patches though the barrel. I finish up by gently wiping the front of the barrel to remove any leftover residue.



Variations in wind can make a big difference in group sizes for Benchrest, so typically, a range is fitted out with wind indicators.

## Where to next?

To enter the sport of Benchrest means you have an eye for excitement and a heart for precision and accuracy. You must remember to go into your first Benchrest experience open-minded and ready to give it 110 per cent.

And importantly, don't be afraid to ask questions. Many questions. In my experience, all of the top shooters are more than happy to assist in your development and understanding of what you need to know to shoot small groups. Another way to decide what is working for other shooters is to peruse the equipment lists from any big shoot. These should at least list powder, projectiles, barrels, action, stock and scope.

There are many other aspects to shooting Benchrest, but I've covered the basics that can get you out to the range. Why not head along to the range next time they're doing Benchrest and watch it in action? No doubt, someone will probably try to teach you a thing or two!

For more information about Benchrest shooting, check out [www.ssaa.org.au/benchrest](http://www.ssaa.org.au/benchrest)

# Goats on the ridge

by Sam Spanton

**A**fter a long four-and-a-half-hour drive, we finally arrived at our campsite. It was the April school holidays and I had been looking forward to this trip for ages!

No sooner had we got out of the car than we had spotted a mob of roos up in the paddock next to us. We didn't have a permit for shooting kangaroos and I think they knew it - they were just staring at us and seemingly smiling! One thing's for sure though, there was definitely lots of them.

First, we decided to get the campsite set up and get prepared for the coming three days of shooting and hunting. My dad, my sister Lilli and I each have our own tent, but it didn't take long for us to get everything ready, as we'd done this a few times before.

I'd brought along my new Zastava .22-calibre rifle, which I received for my birthday and I just love. Dad had brought his Sako .223 and an over-and-under 12-gauge shotgun. We arrived late in the afternoon, so it was pretty well dark once the camp was set up, so we decided to go spotlighting with the .22 and .223. We didn't see a lot that first night, but Dad was able to get a nice fox from about 50m with our new .22, so it was back to camp to get some sleep for the adventures ahead.



Spending an afternoon target shooting and practising with the .223 before the hunt.

We woke at 5.30am to have some breakfast and get sorted. Dad, Lilli and I loaded up the car, with the firearms properly secured, and set out on our first day's hunting. The property owner had told us of the ridge where he thought a mob of goats liked to hang out, so that was where we were headed. The terrain to that ridge was extremely rough and rocky - Dad's 'pretend' four-wheel drive wasn't really meant for this kind of off-road action! We eventually got there though, parked the car and set out walking along the fence line. Dad had the Sako .223 and I had the Zastava .22.

We only had to walk about 100m before we found our target - a feral goat. There were two nannies quietly grazing along the fence line, so we snuck up on them. Dad took the first shot; it was a great, clean kill and the goat dropped immediately. There must have been a herd of goats nearby, as we soon noticed two more that had run at the sound of the shot before turning back to have a look. We had to put our rifles down and take turns safely getting through the fence before Dad gave me the .223 to take one of the animals myself. >



The log in front of me proved to be very helpful in providing good cover. I put the bipod down on the log and loaded a couple of bullets into the magazine. Looking through the scope, I could clearly see my first goat - a nice little nanny at around 60m. 'Don't mess up now, Spanton!' I thought to myself.

Squeezing the trigger, I took the shot and it was one of my best shots ever! The goat fell to the ground immediately. I had my first goat! We then saw the herd of goats run over the ridge and away, too fast and too far to pursue. We went down to have a look at our handiwork and found mine to be a good-size nanny with horns of around 17 to 20cm. I was very, very happy with it!

By this stage, with the herd of goats long gone, we were all a bit tired from all the trekking through the rough terrain, so we headed back and did a lot of target shooting for most of the day. In the afternoon, Dad and I went for a walk around one of the paddocks with the 12-gauge, but unfortunately, we didn't find anything. That night, we cooked up some snags, relaxed around the campfire and then did some spotlight air rifle target shooting for more practice.

We woke up at 5am and realising this would be our last day of hunting, we decided to really make the most of it. And let me tell you now, we certainly did! We headed up to the same spot as the day before and started walking, this time with the .223 and 12-gauge. My sister decided not to come this morning, as she was too tired and a bit sore from all the trekking the day before, so it was just me and Dad.

We walked to where we'd seen the herd of nannies the day before, but saw nothing. We continued to walk along the ridge, uphill, for another half-hour. We had almost decided to call it quits, but decided to push on for one last go, just in case. Thank goodness we did, as when we got to the top hill of that ridge and through a thick haze of fog, we could see a heap of white dots across the gully.

We stayed very quiet. Dad said he thought the animals looked like a big herd of goats, but I thought they just looked like a bunch of sheep. Dad grabbed the .223 and had a look through the 3-9x scope to be sure, and it was a massive herd of billy-goats - at least 30 of them!

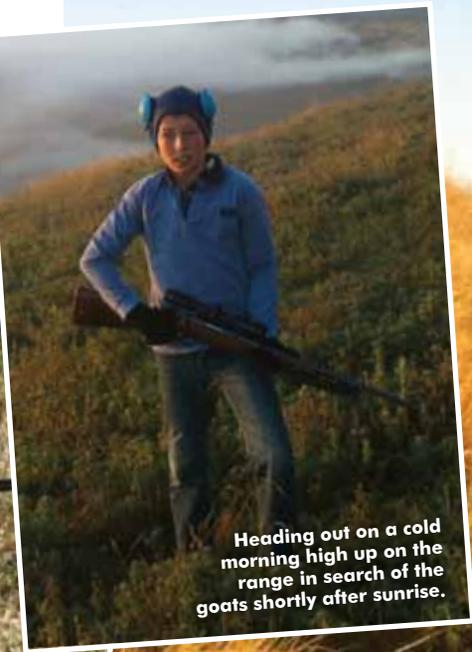
We took up a position behind a rock and took turns scoping them out. Wow, there were some big ones in there, and



Sam is obviously pleased after bagging his first ever goat with the Sako .223.

they were all billies. White ones, black ones, black and white ones, all sorts. And they all had no idea we were there. We were around 200m across the gully and had fog moving about and the wind in our faces. At that moment, I wished we'd had two rifles, so we could both have a shot at the same time. The 12-gauge shotgun was useless at that distance.

After about 10 minutes, we had identified the biggest animals, but were debating whether we could accurately take the shot from that far. I told Dad to take the shot, as he is *slightly* more accurate than me - it hurts to write that! So he took up a position, loaded a few of the 64-grain Winchester XXX bullet, spotted the animal he wanted and took the shot. The shot was dead-on and hit the goat in the shoulder, dropping it immediately. We were both very happy! The billy looked huge in the scope before the shot.



Heading out on a cold morning high up on the range in search of the goats shortly after sunrise.



Dad with the big billy and the Sako .223. The horns measured 72cm point to point.

It was about a 200m shot, so we had to walk that far up and down a big gully, which was tiring when it was a freezing 4C. When we got to the animal, we found it was certainly a great billy with a big beard and horns that looked huge to me. When we later measured them, the horns were 72cm across! We were lucky that we had brought the much heavier 64-grain ammo for the .223 that day, as the lighter bullets at that range may have struggled to deliver the power required to put down that big billy.

The billy looked golden in the light as the sunrise started to take hold, so we took a heap of photos before we removed

the animal's head for mounting back at home. Dad didn't stop moaning about how heavy it was to carry back!

Back at the ranch, we did some more target shooting before reluctantly packing up camp and heading home. So that was the end of our hunting adventure. I definitely think it was well worth the drive, as I had a great time and had some great shots. I also learned that it pays to persevere, even when you are getting nowhere. If we hadn't, we wouldn't have got that trophy billy. We have recently put the horns up on our wall - and they look great!

# Hunting in national parks

by Cameron Smith

**A** topic that has been in the Australian news lately is hunting pest animals in national parks. Many people believe that this is a bad idea, but when you look at the evidence that supports shooting in national parks, it all makes sense. The main reason for this is so that our beautiful national parks don't disappear through the destruction caused by these animals.

Pest animals have a huge impact on our native flora and fauna. The main reason why these pest animals have a huge impact is predation, competition for food and shelter, habitat destruction and spreading of disease. Some examples of pest animals are foxes, rabbits, hares, pigs, goats, camels, wild dogs, cats and buffalo. Most of these animals have no predators to control their numbers.

Farmers living next to or near national parks are the most affected by this increase of pest animals. The pest animals are coming out of the parks and destroying everything around the parks, costing the farmers more money to replant the crops. The animals are also eating the grass planted for stock feed and uprooting trees planted for shade. Foxes and pigs are a big problem to farmers because they attack lambs and calves. As these pest animals are going in and out of the national parks, they destroy the fence work and allow farm animals to escape.

Pest animals can potentially spread diseases. These diseases include:

Pigs: Foot and mouth disease, brucellosis.

Foxes: Hydatids (worms), canine hepatitis.

Rabbits: Myxomatosis, viral haemorrhagic fever.

These diseases can infect native animals, farm animals and even people. The animals can also spread weeds. The seeds may be in their droppings or attached to their coat or feet and can be left in other areas.

Another reason that the government is considering letting shooters into the national parks is that poisoning has killed not just pests, but native animals, pets and farm animals. Shooting is more target specific because you see what you



are killing, instead of accidentally killing native animals through poison or other means.

Another reason is that bringing in volunteer shooters is cost-effective to the government. The shooter is responsible for the cost of their supplies, such as their transport, guns, ammunition and food. The hunters have to record what they shoot, which gives the government an idea of the numbers of pest animals in the parks.

Shooting is safe and enjoyable for the hunters. The hunters are in there under strict rules and regulations. The hunters must be trained, educated and licensed before they can go into the park, and the number of hunters in the park is limited.

All parks selected are less used than some of the major parks such as the Royal National Park. Hunting in national parks and nature reserves will be restricted to certain areas and times. Under no circumstances are the hunters allowed to use dogs or to shoot native species. There will be no shooting in wilderness areas, World Heritage sites or metropolitan areas.

Figures have shown the alarming number of pest animals is rising and native animal numbers are falling rapidly. We are also seeing the loss of flora and other destruction that these pest animals cause. If we don't act now, our national parks, nature reserves and state conservation areas will be gone!



# I beat Dad on my first go at the range

by Samara Hannan

**W**hen Dad first asked me if I wanted to get my shooters licence, I thought he was joking, so I said “Yeah, sure. Why not?” The next thing I knew, I was watching the SSAA NSW Safe Shooting video, taking notes like crazy and answering all the questions Dad was throwing at me over and over again. I think the video was in my dreams for about a week! But I was so happy to pass the test after being drilled by my dad for so long. Now all I had to do was wait for my licence.

I could hardly wait for Dad to take me out to the range. I had never fired a gun before, but I was excited. I remembered Dad telling me his first time he got to go hunting rabbits - he tells the story over and over again, so how could I forget? I think it was when the dinosaurs were still around! I wanted to see if I could do better than him on my first go, but on the range, because I’m not yet confident enough about hunting just yet.

After a couple of practice shots and some wonderful help

from the more experienced shooters at the SSAA Coffs Harbour range (they were awesome), it seemed like all of a sudden, I was hitting bullseyes all the time. Just to rub it in, after every shot, I would call out to Dad, just so he could hear, “Oh, look...another bullseye!” I really wanted to rub it in, but I could also see the look of pride in his eyes.

Dad asked me at the end of the shoot, “Did you like it?” I think he could tell I did because I had a smile from ear to ear and I wanted to bring home my targets and first two shells that I got a bullseye on. I said to Dad, “That was cool; I can’t wait to go again.” Sports shooting is definitely something I want to keep doing, and maybe Dad will one day get me one of those pink rifles - that would be so cool!

I’d like to thank firstly my dad for inspiring me to try sports shooting and also the SSAA team at the Coffs Harbour range for making such a difference.

To watch the safety video, go to YouTube and search for ‘SSAA NSW Safe Shooting’.

## Juniors-only competition

Only junior SSAA members are eligible to enter. One entry per member. To enter, simply write your name, address and membership number on the back of an envelope and send it to:

October Junior competition  
SSAA Media & Publications  
PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061

or online at [www.australianshooter.com.au](http://www.australianshooter.com.au)

Competition closes November 10, 2013

### WIN 1 of 2 PowaBeam LED camo caps



Valued at \$25 each

Kindly donated by PowaBeam  
[www.powabeam.com.au](http://www.powabeam.com.au)

