

Selecting the right pistol ammo • Trapping feral pests • Ridgeline's protective Kea jacket

AUSTRALIAN WOMEN'S SHOOTER



*Libby
Kosmala*

**Paralympic
shooter
into Sport
Hall of Fame**

Issue 7

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Editorial



Gemma Dunn

We’ve hit the halfway mark of what’s been a very turbulent year and Laetisha Scanlan provides an insight into how the shooting community has been affected.

Our cover story features remarkable shooter Libby Kosmala, whose 13 medals across a record 12 Paralympic Games has rightly earned her a spot in the SA Sport Hall of Fame.

I wrap up my three-part series on ammunition selection with a look at Pistol ammo and how it links to my previous Shotgun and Rifle articles.

My review on the Kea jacket from Ridgeline highlights just how useful it is and how it comes with an added conservation bonus.

We introduced you to SSAA Conservation and Wildlife Management Queensland member Michelle Pares in Issue 5 and in this edition, Michelle tries her hand at trapping marauding wild dogs and foxes.

Remember to enter this edition’s fantastic competition and that you can get in touch via aws@ssaa.org.au and **Facebook**.

Gemma

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Taking aim with Laetisha Scanlan



Rally round in these demanding times

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic most of us, with exception to essential services, have been forced to stay at home and social distance. So, what does that mean for our shooting community and SSSA members all around the country?

From a sporting standpoint, like most organisations, all events have been cancelled until further notice, even the Olympic Games. And while I do think this was the best decision regarding the Games for the health and safety of the participants and everyone else, my heart goes out to those athletes that may not be able to compete due to the 15-month postponement. For now, we continue to wait and put our sporting aspirations on hold.

From a business standpoint, my friend and former team-mate Melanie Kirley is an avid hunter, clay target shooter and works in her family's hunting and fishing business. I was interested in regards to how COVID-19 has affected her and her family's livelihood.

This is what she had to say: "It is a pretty heart-breaking situation to be a gunshop owner in the current crisis. We have been through bushfires and drought but it's fair to say the restriction of trade that COVID-19 has brought on us is the most difficult trading period we have ever been through.

"It has been disappointing to be portrayed in the media the way licensed firearms

owners have been. The firearms industry is one of the most regulated industries in Australia and we have some of the strictest gun laws in the world."

Melanie believes the shooting community needs to stick together as a cohort through these uncertain times.

"Victorian Premier Dan Andrews believes it is okay to go bush walking or hiking or ride your bike, but you can't go for a walk with your rifle?" she said.

"You can walk your dog but you can't walk your gun dog with a rifle on your own? You can kayak on your own, but you must not fish from your kayak? We believe outdoor enthusiasts are being shafted in what the Premier believes in his eyes are 'right' or 'wrong'.

"There has never been a better time than now for the shooting industry of Australia to form one voice that gets us through tough times like these. Support your local gunshop as they need you more than ever and our sport needs you more than ever!"

If we then look at this pandemic from a social standpoint, little to no face to face interaction with friends and family outside from whom we live with has been extremely difficult for many. It's amazing to think how much I took the basic right of socialising for granted and how the results of isolation can significantly affect our overall mental wellbeing.

I personally have reached a point in time where the enforced break has been somewhat refreshing and allowed for some quietness to our busy everyday life. However, I am now ready to hit the range and be back doing what I love. And I am sure I am not alone in this feeling. It's funny how much you miss something when it is no longer an option of choice.

Unlike other activities such as tennis or football, SSAA members and shooters in general don't have the freedom to go and 'practise' in the backyard (unless you live on a farm and you have these facilities, in which I am very envious of you right now).

So, I can deeply sympathise with the shooting community as the weeks and months pass us by in isolation. Let's hope the easing of restrictions is a success.

My message to everyone is hang in there, be safe. And know that you aren't alone.



Letter to the Editor

Hi all,

I was just reading your issue 6 of the AWS magazine and wanted to write a quick thank you. As a beginner it's so informative and I don't feel overwhelmed with all the info. It makes me excited about shooting again. It's not often you get to hear appreciation (even though there would be MANY who feel the same as I), so I thought I would just voice mine. Thank you!

Hannah

Hi Hannah,

Thanks for reading AWS and for your great feedback. The magazine's aim is to ensure everyone feels comfortable with shooting, which for many means sticking to the basics then developing confidence from there.

Gemma

Women's-only competition

Only female 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:

FALCO Hunters backpack,
Australian Women's Shooter,
PO Box 2520, Unley, SA 5061

or online at ssaa.org.au/win



WIN a FALCO
Hunters backpack

Kindly donated by
Ozzi Straight Shooter
ozzistraightshooter.com

Valued at \$295

Competition closes June 30, 2020

Paralympic great first shooter into Sport Hall of Fame

Nadia Isa

Twelve Paralympic Games and 13 medals across four decades is no mean feat, but that is exactly what nine-time gold medallist Elizabeth 'Libby' Kosmala did to earn herself a spot in the South Australian Sport Hall of Fame.

The rifle shooter met rigorous criteria assessed by a selection committee which included sporting legends like Bruce McAvaney, Jenny Williams, Pat Mickan and Roger Wills, and was chaired by David Prince OAM.

"Libby certainly met the criteria to a very high standard and was deemed to be worthy of induction," said Sport SA CEO, Leah Cassidy.

"Longevity was certainly one of the things that stood out – 12 Paralympic Games is unparalleled – but also her contribution more broadly to the Paralympic movement and to supporting people living with a disability."

Libby was overwhelmed with her induction into South Australia's highest level of sporting achievement and described the award as a 'great honour'.

"The cards I have received and the people that have come up to me, who don't even know me and say 'congratulations, that's wonderful, you deserve to be there,'" said Libby.

As the only shooter to be inducted into the Hall of Fame in its 10-year history, and the sole person with a disability to receive the award last year, Libby is truly a unique athlete.

"There were only seven of us that were awarded, and I was the only disabled. Again, a great honour, I was thrilled to bits," she said.

Ms Cassidy also acknowledged the achievement of reaching such a high level of success in a niche sport in Australia.

"I think we have a dominant sport culture with the cricket and the footy, netball and soccer so it's nice that she represents a sport that probably isn't as well celebrated. And [it] gives young athletes an idea that not everybody likes to play footy, cricket and netball," she said.

Shooting never on the agenda

Participating in rifle shooting was never something Libby had considered. In fact, playing a sport of any kind was off the table from a young age.

Born in 1942 paralysed from the waist down, Libby has never had movement in her legs.

"There was no sport for disabled people ever, anywhere around," she said speaking of her childhood.

"At school I just watched, I didn't ever throw any javelin or shot put. I did nothing at school, no sport. It wasn't considered that a wheelchair person could ever play sport."

But in her early 20s, a chance encounter changed Libby's life.

"I was in the Royal Adelaide Hospital visiting a friend, and this man beside the friend that I was visiting turned to me and said 'oh you're sitting in a wheelchair, you've got big strong arms and shoulders' and I said 'yes'. He said 'well, why don't you play wheelchair sport?' and I said 'where? what is it?'"

"So I went out and had a go and it was terrifying," she said while laughing.

Libby described the experience of arriving at the Hampstead Rehabilitation Centre in Adelaide's north to try sport for the first time as 'disastrous'.

"There were four other guys in wheelchairs throwing javelin and discus at the hospital grounds in Northfield," she said.

"It was very hard at the beginning, being laughed at all afternoon. I felt embarrassed.

"I threw a javelin out the back of my hand and hit a man on the head."

But with the encouragement of friend and future Wheelchair Sports Association of South Australia president, Kevin Bawden, Libby kept coming back – it took four months for her to feel comfortable playing sport.

"If it hadn't been for Kevin suggesting to come back week after week, I don't think I would've continued," she said.

Eventually, Libby was swimming and participating in archery and field events but still hadn't considered shooting.



Photo: Paralympics Australia

“To stay at that level and be able to compete at the pinnacle event in a sport for more than four decades is simply astonishing”

– Paralympics Australia chief executive Lynne Anderson

As secretary of the Wheelchair Sports Association of South Australia, Libby was invited to go to a rifle range in Dry Creek in 1973 in the hope she would coax other people with a disability to try the sport.

“I didn’t want to go. I wasn’t interested, but I went along,” she said.

“I had never seen a gun, I had never pulled a trigger, I had never ever been involved in shooting.”

But she was persuaded to have a try.

“They gave me a rifle, they loaded the rifle, they showed me where the trigger was on the rifle, they put it into my shoulder and they said ‘now hold it still and you’ve got to shoot that black dot 20 metres away’ and I shot the black dot and it went straight through the middle.”

Libby said everyone at the range laughed and told her it was a fluke, so she challenged them to another go.

“So I had another go and it went straight through the same hole.”

From that moment, the then 31-year-old knew she was a natural shooter, and had two coaching offers straight away, so ‘that was the beginning’.

Across 12 Paralympic Games (one as a competitive swimmer and the remainder in rifle shooting), Libby won 13 medals – nine of them gold. She was also the Australian flag bearer at the opening ceremony of the Atlanta Paralympic Games in 1996.

Paralympics Australia chief executive, Lynne Anderson, said no Paralympian in Australia or the world has competed in as many Paralympic Games as Libby.

“To stay at that level and be able to compete at the pinnacle event in a sport for more than four decades is simply astonishing and something that should be celebrated,” said Ms Anderson.

“Libby’s record of Paralympic Games she competed in is likely to stand the test of time

for many years to come, and for that reason, she’s become a household name.

“There aren’t many athletes across any sport from any nation who have had quite the impact that Libby has and I know the Paralympic movement and the para-shooting community are grateful for all of her work in the sport.”



Libby is the first shooter to receive the highest sporting award in SA.

An inspiration

Friend and fellow shooter, Andy Summers, has known Libby for at least 20 years and described her as 'absolutely remarkable'.

"Libby has been a great inspiration to the Paralympics over the years in all aspects; not just shooting, she's done an awful lot for wheelchair sports," he said.

Andy is also a member of the Wingfield Rifle Club where Libby coaches. He said there was a huge round of applause when the award was announced.

"This is going to be an inspiration in shooting sports and not just in rifle. I think it's going to have a huge flow on for pistol and target [shooting] because how often does a shooter get into a Hall of Fame? All of us can say, it's a very well-deserved award," he said.

And the sporting community agreed that Libby is a strong role model for budding athletes, particularly young women and para-athletes.

"I think recognising athletes with a disability does send a really strong message that regardless of your ability, you can achieve on the world stage and if you put your mind to it, you can achieve anything," said Ms Cassidy.

As well as a demonstration of passion.

"I think it's also worth mentioning that the Paralympic movement has the ability to inspire all Australians, not just those with a disability, and I truly believe her induction will highlight to everyone just how far someone can take their passion, and show that greatness can be achieved," said Ms Anderson.

Shooting and disability sport

The first Paralympic Games Libby attended was in 1968 as assistant secretary to the Australian team in Tel Aviv, and she said a lot has changed since then.

"The '68 Games that I went to as secretary there were only wheelchair people, no amputees, no blind, no cerebral palsy, no people with intellectual disabilities," she said.

"I think there were about 700 [or] maybe 500 athletes in that third Paralympics and now in Rio there were 4500 disabled athletes. Huge. It's grown and grown and grown."

Libby has also seen the inclusion of the Paralympics held in the same city as the Olympics and the para-athletes utilising the same sporting facilities as the able-bodied competitors.

"It's good for the world because it means that disabled people can continue doing sport in those facilities in that country in that town," she said.

Plans for the future

Now, the 78-year-old has continued doing what she loves. She said shooting keeps her fit and helps her concentrate.

"I shot in a competition on the weekend, I came fifth which is not bad but I like to win," she said. "And I just enjoy winning, I'm a competitor."

Libby has also been passing her skills and wisdom onto future generations of shooting champions. She coaches 16/17-year-old girls and 12/13-year-old boys and has already cherry-picked a couple of students she said are good enough to reach the Olympics.

"They actually listen to me, and now that I've reached the Hall of Fame they say 'can we bow to you now?' and I said 'no, no, no, I'm just Libby still.' It's lots of fun and games."

But she said she'd like to see shooting continue to grow as a sport in Australia. "I wish the public had a bit more knowledge of shooting for pleasure," she said.

"They just know of guns and the dreadful things that happen in the media. That's a bit sad in a way because it's one of the safest sports. It's mentally hard work. If you're mentally alert and mentally able to do it, you can do it for years and years and years."

Something Libby plans on doing for a long time to come.



Libby described the award as a 'great honour'. Here she shares the moment with Adelaide television and radio presenter Mark Soderstrom.



A genuine love of shooting is clear to see for anyone around Libby.

What's the right ammo for you?



PART THREE – PISTOL

Gemma Dunn

Here we come to the conclusion of our three-part series about choosing the right ammunition for you. If you have read the **Shotgun** and **Rifle** instalments, you'll come to realise that the 'art' to selecting the correct ammo is more of a process or a pattern that you can repeat across all variations of ammunition and applications.

I'll admit, pistol shooting is a discipline that I have the least experience in, which is why for this article I have enlisted the help of some fantastic shooters, friends and industry experts to guide me along the way.

Through writing this article, I found that the small amount of knowledge about pistols from working in a gunshop at 18 years old has not been lost on me. I have a newfound appreciation for the vast bank of information and expertise staff at gunshops need to have in order to do their job properly.

Step 1: What are you going to be shooting?

The initial step for all types of shooting when selecting the right ammunition is to work out the application you are using your firearm for. For pistol shooters in Australia the predominant discipline is competition target shooting.

However, there are many different forms of pistol matches you can become involved in within the SSAA. First, you need to ascertain what type of match you will be shooting with your pistol, which would usually have been done before purchasing it as many (but not all) pistols are specialised. From here, you will already know your parameters for ammunition selection due to calibre and competition rulings.

Many pistol competitions will only allow you to use certain types/loads in order

to keep a level playing field among participants. IPSC for example is one that requires a certain 'power factor' in their practical shooting competitions – which is used as a ranking system, designed to reward those using ammunition with a higher power factor.

You also need to take into consideration what the range rules are for certain types of ammunition. Are you allowed to shoot full metal jacket (FMJ) ammunition at your local SSAA range? Do they allow lead projectiles only for ricochet control? Are you shooting metallic silhouettes or just paper?

In some cases, FMJ is the cheaper option as you can usually find them in bulk packs but many ranges won't allow you to use them due to ricochet. So, it's important to be able to assess what you can and can't use before you go testing your ammunition.

Step 2: What type of pistol do you own?

This is an important one for ammunition selection because power factor, barrel types and ammunition compatibility can all come into play. Below are some variables that are necessary to consider when selecting your pistol ammo.

Self-loading pistols

Aside from competition ruling about power factors, it is vital to note that if you have ammunition that is not powerful enough, this can affect the cycling performance of the pistol greatly. The pistol will still fire the ammunition fine, but the function of your pistol may incur a stoppage/mis-feed.

Certain brands of firearms have specialty features such as polygonal rifling (Glocks in particular) which is designed to reduce fouling. Polygonal rifling means that the bore of the firearm, simply put, appears 'shallower' than the angles in the cut of traditional rifling.

Traditional (lands-and-grooves) rifling

If you've had the opportunity to look down the barrel of a pistol, you will notice the appearance of a lands-and-grooves rifling straight away due to its characteristic square cuts made at 90-degree angles. It engraves the projectile more aggressively in order to provide a high level of stability.

Polygonal rifling

Polygonal rifling can be found in many law enforcement or service pistols (so if you're looking at participating in **Practical Shooting** with the SSAA under the production division, this could be your firearm). This form of rifling has shallower channels which is intended to significantly reduce fouling. This is beneficial to these firearm types because they are originally designed to be reliable under high rates of fire. Polygonal rifling also tends to exhibit less wear over time, allowing them to outlast traditional lands-and-grooves rifling barrels.

It is imperative to know about the varying types of rifling because it can impact on your ammunition choice greatly. Some say that you shouldn't fire lead projectiles through a pistol with polygonal rifling. However, the people I have spoken with on this topic suggest that is something they haven't ever had a problem with. They suggested to just keep an eye on the amount of fouling in the barrel and if it seems to be becoming a bit 'dirty', give it a more intense maintenance schedule if you are unsure.

If you are using a self-loading pistol and have experienced frequent misfires it is essential to consider the hardness of the primers you have been using. This


is generally something to consider with all firearm types, but particularly with competition handguns. This is especially a key factor with self-loading handguns because they are designed in a way that stoppages can be quickly mitigated.

Revolvers

It is to be said that the recoil of a revolver can be felt more than that from a self-loading pistol. Although it is not designed to assist with recoil, the by-product of the slide on a semi-loading pistol helps absorb some of the negative/backwards force when firing a shot. Because of this, it is common to find that a lot of people will substitute ammunition to help with recoil in a revolver. For example, people who shoot .357 Mag will often use .38 Special ammunition for reduced recoil and it is also sometimes cheaper.

You cannot do this with all pistol cartridges so it is important to research which ones are suitable and make sure you speak with your gunshop staff to help guide you through the process.

Once you have been able to apply all of these variables to help narrow down what kind of ammunition you need, it's time for step 3.



It is important to know about the varying types of rifling because it can impact on your ammunition choice greatly.

Step 3: Testing

Just like in the testing phase of *What's the right ammo for you? Part 2 – Rifle*, which can be found in Issue 6 of *Australian Women's Shooter*, you will want to begin with a clean slate. This means an unsoiled pistol and fresh targets. For this testing process I recommend you use paper targets, whether or not you intend to shoot paper later on with your pistol. Paper targets will allow you to pick up a good grouping and give you an idea on how that type of ammunition is performing compared to others.

You want to make sure you have picked at least three (no more than five or you'll go stir-crazy) different brands of pistol ammo to test, making sure they are all the same weight, projectile type and load. If you don't test pistol ammunition that has the exact same variables, you won't gain a true result of what works best. If you need to test different loads or projectile types, I suggest you repeat this step for each variable you are wanting to test.

From here, you need to follow a similar process to testing rifle ammunition. Shoot five rounds of that ammunition at your first target, at a steady pace. Be careful not to rush through so that you can gain the best from your shots.

Once you have fired your first five shots, set up a new target (if you need one) ready for the next batch of testing. Repeat with another five shots with your next brand of ammunition.

Remember that the most important thing for accurate handgun shooting is technique, so carry out the fundamentals of marksmanship. After that, step 4 and 5 are the same as I outlined for rifle ammunition in **Issue 6**.

Step 4: Compare

Once you have completed the testing of each brand, you need to work out which one has performed the best by looking at your 'groupings' and also consider the reliability of the ammo used.

You may notice that one grouping of five shots has landed on your target closer together than the others. This means you have a tight grouping and that is what you want to be looking for with this test.

If you are unsure about whether the result is because of ammunition performance or shooter performance, you can have someone else you trust to also complete the test for you, then compare across the two sets of results. But remember the best result will come with a good shooting technique, especially trigger control in handguns.

Step 5: Select your ammunition

Once you have found an ammunition that groups well and functions reliably, use it. If you decide to change your application, you will need to repeat this process until you have a handful of loads and brands that you are sure perform the best for the job.

This is the conclusion of my three-part series on selecting the right ammunition for you. You'll come to notice that mostly ammunition selection comes down to three main factors: overall performance, reliability and price. Through these step-by-step articles I hope you have learnt some insight into how most people go about testing ammunition for their firearm and one day are able to put it into practice yourself.

As always, I advise you whenever you are learning something or trying a new skill, that you have someone on hand to guide you along. The best person to have with you is usually a coach, a mentor, a range officer or a knowledgeable friend until you have enough confidence on your own.

Another great way to learn from others like you is to head on over to the **Australian Women's Shooter Facebook** page and post a question or email me at aws@ssaa.org.au.

Happy shooting!



Every firearm, including handguns have a preference for a particular reload or brand of ammunition. Photo Tim Bannister.



Hunting's best laid plans

Michelle Pares

Early morning stakeout waiting for the old grey dog to come up the hill.

In my spare time, I help out at a family farm around the corner from my Queensland home, where my two calves, Winston and Peacey, reside along with 50 other head of cattle. The 460-acre property is surrounded by flowing creeks, other large estates and offset projects where **Spectrum Environmental Qld** are having a remarkable outcome with planting and maintaining 6000 trees. There are another 6000 still to come for the koala zoning area. Unfortunately, the feral population is booming.

I can drive down the road in the afternoon and pull the vehicle up beside a mob of pigs, turn the car off, climb through

the barbed wire fence and 'hand catch' piglets. The surrounding farms harvest bananas and avocados. The native wildlife is thriving and we have had a number of koalas released in the area. Wallabies are a familiar sight every day, along with snakes and there is also a part of the creek that is home to an endangered species, the tusked frog.

I became interested in feral pest control and helping out at the farm to keep myself occupied while my husband works away. Having an identity, a hobby and a passion means a lot to me. Knowing I have found my place doing what I love gives me a great sense of self-pride and respect.

When circling a few laps around the farm in the Polaris, the family and myself had noticed wild dogs roaming. Not something you want to see when calving season is about to begin. I had also been receiving calls from a neighbour saying he had been spotting these dogs come up his driveway every afternoon like clockwork.

Not having any experience with wild dogs before, I had no idea what I was letting myself in for. I thought I could help out here – how hard is it to shoot a wild dog? And right on cue once again I would take that call from the neighbour saying: "Quick, grab your gear, the dogs are here now." Then I would proceed to



Trap set near an avocado food lure, with the stick in place to block an approach from that side.

spend the next hour running around their property to only ever gain glimpses from a distance. I was quite surprised to see the condition of these wild dogs. Healthy, full of muscles, shiny coats... after all these animals were enjoying a great source of nutrition. Sitting under the avocado tree grazing on a wallaby and chewing on perfectly ripe avocados and mangoes.

So after a couple of these phone calls, I thought enough is enough. I proceeded to find a mate, Alastair from **Conservation Wildlife Management (CWM)**, who would teach me how to trap. I had heard before that it's quite a tedious job and you must pay attention to the finer details.

After coming home from a project with CWM, my mind was in the right frame to learn so I spent the afternoon with Alastair. Three hours later I understood the basics of humane trapping: scent – both human and dog and not to have them mixed – location of the trap, tools, lures and most of all not to have your hand in the trap. Then it was down to the final sprinkle of grass over the top of the fine sieved dirt.

After actually seeing how to set a trap, I had a solid understanding of the whole process. It takes about 30 minutes to correctly prepare a trap, with time divided by finding the ideal location then doing the job. Knowing the dogs' routine, tracks and time frames, as well as having the property owners take note of the minor details saves a lot of effort.

We set three traps around our chosen location that I checked daily and re-scented every few days but nothing seemed to work. I found it boring and thought a rifle and paddock full of feral pigs was more desirable. After a few weeks of having the traps in the ground with no success, it was time to do more research, tracking and setting trail cams up to work out the tracks the dogs were taking.

Having an identity, a hobby and a passion means a lot to me. Knowing I have found my place doing what I love gives me a great sense of self-pride and respect.

Going out for my casual morning walk to check the traps I didn't think I would ever be so excited to see fresh dog poo. I knew I was moving close. With hardly any rain the tracks were turning to fine dust and I could

start to spot clear prints of dogs and foxes. Bingo! Time to set more traps, finding the hot spot under the avocado tree. With chewed out avocados and sightings from the neighbours I knew I was on the money. The same week, a neighbour shot one of the dogs early in the morning on the run with a perfect, clean kill.

I set three traps early in the morning, with a food lure under the avocado tree. Just like the that, the next day at 6am, I had a message from my neighbour: "I just heard a dog go off in the trap." I picked up my rifle and headed six minutes around the corner. The thought of an animal suffering in a trap is something I wasn't fond of, so the quicker I arrived the better for both of us.

When I reached there I saw a dog trot off into the distance up the hill. My heart sank, I thought I had failed. Little did I know that there was still a dog in the trap and the other dog stayed close by. One rule is to always have your rifle ready when walking to check the trap (I learnt that the hard way).

Standing at distance, a clean chest shot with a .233 was all it needed. Moving close to the dog while being trapped was only going to make it stress and suffer more. With a perfect outcome, in a soft jaw foot trap, the dog was only trapped for less than 20 minutes and euthanised with a chest shot.

I used the faeces from this dog on one of my other scented traps and was told clearly not to move the trap and instantly reset it, following the same protocol. Another rule is don't let your trap area look staged. After some time, it was once again set and as inconspicuous as I was able to make it.

Early the next morning, my neighbour again informed me: "I can hear another dog in the trap." This time I was prepared. I had my rifle ready and walked quietly into the paddock where the traps were, just in case this dog decided to bring a mate too. In the exact same trap, the smell of blood, urine and faeces from the dog the day before had worked its magic and enticed another dog. I stood from a distance and took a centre chest shot as the dog's position was not ideal for a head shot. An instant kill shot once again was all that was needed, with no struggle or pain. While being a member of CWM I have learnt the fundamentals of vital organs in pest species. In moments like this I am grateful I have this training and knowledge, knowing that I'm choosing the best outcome for this wild dog.

The tally was now five dogs in less than a week – an older female the neighbour shot on the run, two females the council had trapped and my male and female. I checked the cameras 48 hours later to see an old grey dog. A photo from the trail cam showed the dog coming up the hill, with its poor condition and low muscle tone in its back end. There was another photo of a more youthful dog the next day.

Time to put a little bit more effort and tedious work back into the traps. Things went quiet over the next week, with dogs obviously doing their thing. There were prints on the tracks going up the hill to the avocado trees, prints next to the traps and food lure eaten. Apart from my trapper's frustration, every morning I saw old wily foxes on the cameras. So along with the old dog, I had these foxes visiting the traps around 2am every morning, eating food lure and making a nice little mess every time. This meant no food in the traps at first light when the dogs were seen coming in.

I was told by a good mentor that once the foxes contract the sarcoptic mange it doesn't take long for it to run their



The fox in the trap.

immune system into the ground, resulting in the death of the fox. By this stage I had more photos of these foxes than I did of my own husband. But one fox looked as if it was gaining condition by eating all the food, not dying. So I wondered how hard is it to trap a fox?

Drought forces koalas to spend more time on the ground moving between trees. This is when wild dogs can have a greater impact on their already dwindling numbers.

I altered the pan tension lighter to the traps set for the dogs and placed a rock over the food lure area so they had to work a bit harder for the food. Having the awesome 4G trail cameras set up from Peter at **Get Trapped**, then waking up in the morning to trail cams pics on my phone was amazing.

One morning, waking up with 47 pictures, you know it's going to be a good day. And

around 2am right on schedule again, the fox couldn't resist the awesome chicken wing dings. The oil, fat and marinade mixed together looked similar to what you see when you open up your jar of fox lure, but just minus the horrendous smell.

I was back in the car to put the fox out of its misery. Walking up the hill towards the trap, there was an awful pong and the fox's condition confirmed I was ending its suffering with a one-shot kill straight through its chest. Within a matter of moments, the fox had been removed and the trap reset.

I am not proud of taking an animal's life but I am proud of the work I do for preserving Australia's wildlife and environment. Every hunter understands 'that moment' and is always thankful for a successful and humane end to a hunt. After the countless hours put in to checking traps twice every day, resetting, the study and research, in those final moments of pulling the trigger you know all that time has come together and was purposeful.

In the simplest way I do what I do, because I love animals and our native wildlife. With the dogs' surplus killing antics I know the job has to be done, I realise it's not a task for everyone and I also acknowledge I will do it with the most care and the least amount of suffering as possible.

Wild dogs are recognised as widespread and established predators. This location is a part of the koala habitat zone, with numerous amounts of animals being

released in the area. Drought forces koalas to spend more time on the ground moving between trees. This is when wild dogs can have a greater impact on their already dwindling numbers.

There is legislation that you check your traps every 24 hours so any animal isn't suffering for a long period of time. Living so close to this location I have the benefit of being able to check my traps every 12 hours. With a 4G trail camera set on each trap, when an animal comes within range, a picture message is sent to my phone.

The traps that I use are a Jake padded-jaw trap, which consists of rubber lining on the inside of the trap. This causes minimal damage; it holds the dog's paw in place until it can be euthanised. I'm also aware of the finer details, the land layout, what time the dog comes into the trap site to calculate trap location, shade and the direction of the sun rising and setting, knowing I'm reducing other stress factors.

With a group of likeminded people, the property owners, friends of the family, neighbours, environmental groups and our local council we can all work together to achieve a greater outcome for our native wildlife and protect our Australian heritage.

Information gathering, sharing and cross-referencing trail cam pictures keeps us all aware of how many wild dogs and pests are in a small location and we can successfully mark them off once they are euthanised.

Our local council pest control officers have had some great success stories with reducing these numbers through various strategies. I am also grateful for them pointing me in the right direction and offering their wisdom when I am lost for ideas. I feel that combining all methods to control pest species is the best outcome. One particular process might work for a younger uneducated dog, but the older wiser dog will need a different approach.

Our pest control officers go out of their way to assist landholders and have extensive background in farming and professional trapping. Since government legislated that the council could assist in this field of pest control, a positive outcome and future is a definite possibility.

With a 4G trail camera set on each trap, when an animal comes within range, a picture message is sent to my phone.



Michelle's second trapped dog was a large male.



A NZ Kea bird.
Photo Mark
Fraser.

Ridgeline's Kea jacket the real deal!

Gemma Dunn

At the 2019 **SSAA Shot Expo** in Melbourne I was able to catch up with Kelly Coogan from **Outdoor Sporting Agencies (OSA) Australia** about new Ridgeline products set for release. One of which, was the Women's Kea jacket and thanks to Kelly I was later able to get my hands on one to review.

Kelly explained how excited Ridgeline were about this product for a number of reasons. The main factor was the improved technology used within the fabric and design. The second was the conservation approach they have taken with these jackets.

Ridgeline put a lot of effort into the fabrics they choose for their garments and the level of technology that goes into putting it all together. They pride themselves on it: "[We take you further on your next adventure] with extensive research and development, field testing in various terrain and conditions enabling us to create ground-breaking products that are purpose built, focusing on functional performance using latest fabric technology, and most importantly a focus on sustainability."

It's what makes them so popular in gunshops and camping stores across Australia and beyond. Second to that, it is quite affordable stuff. There's something there for outdoor enthusiasts of any budget.

I received the jacket the very same week Sydney began to receive one of the biggest downfalls of rain seen in years, with 391mm falling over four days. On my way to the office on that day, driving along the motorway I realised I had tyre pressure issues with my car.

I immediately pulled over and sat there, thinking about how drenched I was about to be when I got out of the car. I knew my umbrella was at home, I was wearing office attire and was not impressed. Upon scanning my car for something to keep me dry, I saw the unopened postbag with the Kea jacket inside. I snatched it up, ripped the bag open and thought 'well, testing is about to begin.'

Although I could have done with a full dress-length jacket that day, I will say I was absolutely amazed at how dry I was up top after a good five-plus minutes in a heavy downpour on the side of the road. I was completely dry underneath the jacket, and it also allowed me to scurry around, bend down and gave me a full range of motion with my arms. I was impressed with the jacket already and I thought this was as good of a test as any, particularly for waterproof protection. Safe to say, anytime I had to go into the rain over that dreadful weekend, the Ridgeline Kea jacket was the first thing I grabbed.

Further testing of the jacket had me in various shooting positions. I tried lying down, kneeling, standing up, leaning on the back on a rest. As a result, I found the jacket to be extremely comfortable to shoot with in the field or at the range. The comfort can be attributed to the Quiet-Tex 5K fabric.

It is a polyester fabric which is quite malleable, meaning it has a slight bit of stretch in it while also having a durable water resistant (DWR) coating. One of the more interesting components of this fabric is that Ridgeline claims it helps you

remain silent, which is a huge plus when on a hunt. I couldn't find a neighbourhood cat to try this out with but I do think the material is a lot quieter than some of my other outdoor jackets so I would like see how this performs next time I can go hunting. However, the bottom zipper pull/slider does rattle against itself a fair bit when you walk so I think a rubber or plastic coating on the pull would be a good addition.



The other thing that Ridgeline does well is have the fit for women right. A lot of their clothing I own has fitted me quite well in the past. Their sizing seems to be true, as I usually vary between a 10-12 in women's clothing and the size 12 Kea fits me beautifully.

One thing I do struggle with when I am choosing jackets is the fact that my shoulders are quite broad for a female, meaning I tend to have to go a bigger size just so my movement isn't restricted. This is generally exacerbated when the sleeves have adjustable Velcro cuffs. I don't have this issue in the Kea jacket at all. It is so important when clothing companies are selling to women that the body shape and curves are taken into account during design and manufacture.

Having said this, I did find the placement of the openings for the front pouch pockets were a bit off for me. I tend to enjoy pocket openings being positioned a little lower so it requires less bend in the elbow to put your hand in them. It was generally fine for me to do so when standing up but slightly difficult when in a position where my torso was shortened.

It would be good if there was about two more inches in length from the mid-section to lower the pockets and give the jacket a bit more overall length. Again though, this is a personal thing and is something I am generally quite particular about due to being a shotgun shooter and having a history with poor pocket placement on my vests.

With winter now upon us I look forward to testing the Kea jacket in cold weather. It certainly wouldn't be the warmest Ridgeline jacket I own but I think it will be snug enough and a long sleeve undershirt would certainly help in extreme conditions.

Back to when I was first speaking with Kelly, I mentioned that Ridgeline has a secondary conservational motive with their Kea jackets, which I absolutely love. Ridgeline say that: "The Women's Kea jacket has been inspired by the world's only alpine parrot, the Kea. Heavily hunted to near extinction last century, these amazing birds need protecting so they can continue to exist in their home in the South Island of New Zealand."

Ridgeline is donating \$5 from the sale of every Kea jacket to the Kea Conservation Trust so they can continue their work with these birds.

As hunting and conservation go hand in glove, I think that this is a wonderful initiative from Ridgeline. Hunters and groups like the SSAA's Conservation and Wildlife Management have been involved in conservation for a long time and this is yet another way we can contribute to the wellbeing of important wildlife. Aside from purchasing the Kea jacket from Ridgeline, you can see the work that the Kea Conservation Trust are doing for yourself and you can donate further at keaconservation.co.nz

Overall, I believe the new Women's Kea jacket is certainly made with the outdoorswoman in mind. It ticks all the boxes in terms of breathability, fit and durability. Often these days with outdoor jackets, you either find something that is waterproof and warm but feels like you're wearing a plastic bag. Or you put on a jacket that is just as good keeping you warm and the water out, but is extremely heavy and bulky. The Kea jacket has functionality and comfort, with a RRP of \$249.95, it's also kind to your wallet. Visit ridgelineclothing.com.au



The Kea jacket is lightweight, durable and comfortable to wear.



Gemma is amazed at how well moisture is kept out in the wet weather.

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