

Ruahine Forest Park (RFP) Recreational Hunters' Survey

Results Summary

Geoff Kerr 12 September 2017

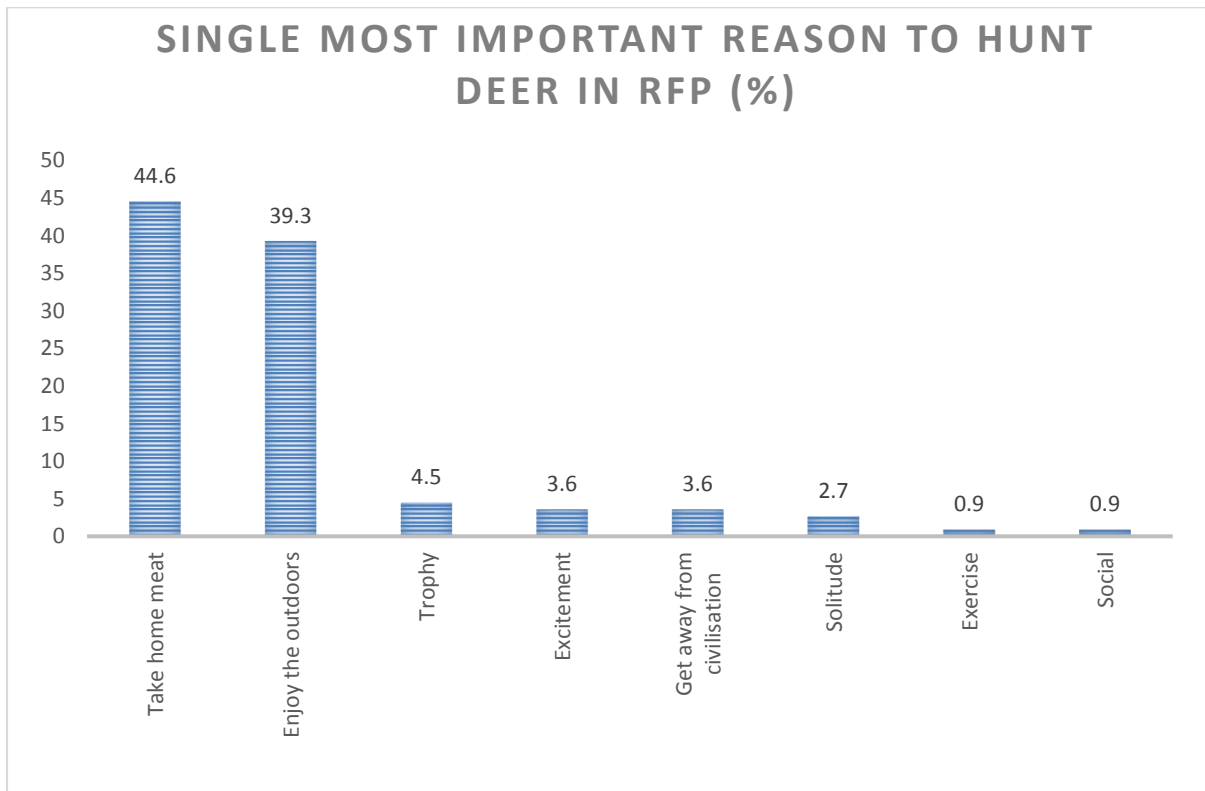
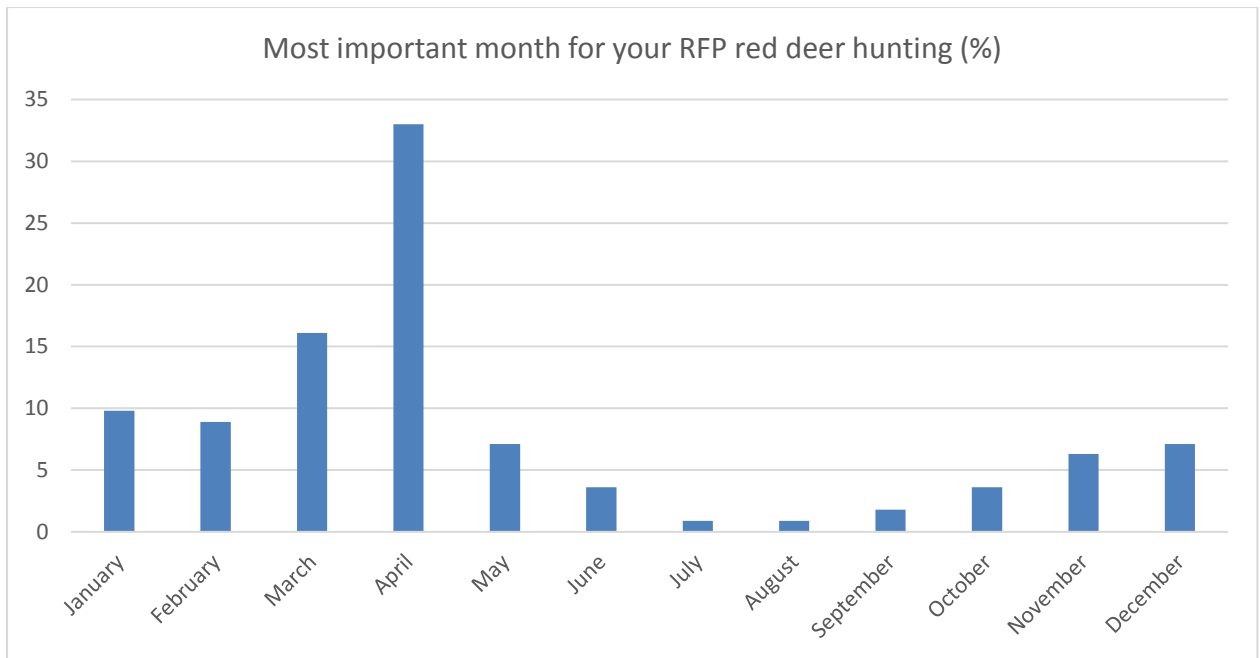


Survey opened:	23 February 2017	Survey closed:	2 July 2017
Days open:	129 days	Responses:	112
Permits issued:	2636	Response rate	4.25%

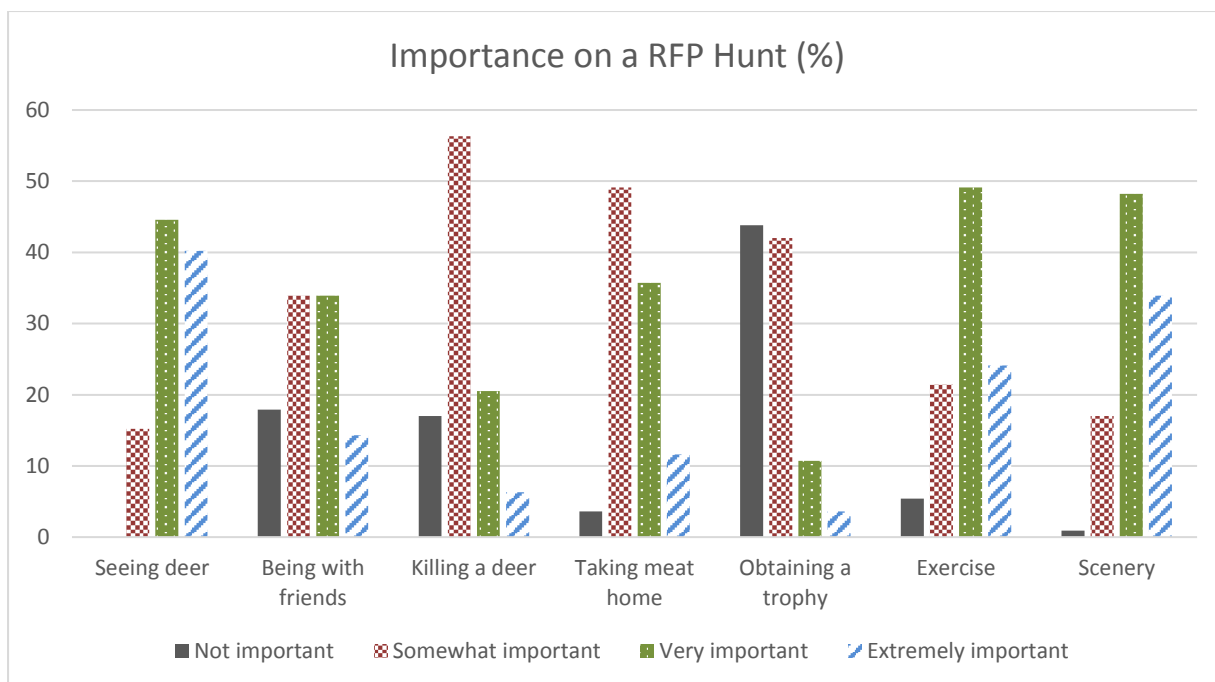
This sample is likely to be biased for two main reasons. First, it is a very small proportion of the hunters who obtained permits during the survey period, which may imply an avidity bias. Second, the survey URL was publicised on a hunting-related forum, which means that people who were not obtaining a hunting permit for the Ruahines could participate. However, that appears not to be the case given the responses about recent RFP hunting trips. Avidity bias (if it exists) is not necessarily problematic, depending on the purposes to which the responses are put. More avid RFP hunters are likely to know more about the Park than low-avidity hunters do. There is also the consideration about which hunters' needs should be favoured – catering to the “regulars” is a strategy that has merit in many cases.

Mean	Median	SEM	Variable
42 years	42	1.25	Hunter age
17 years	11	1.36	RFP hunting experience
28.6%	No		NZDA members
98%	Yes		Male
59.8%	Yes		Urban dweller
149 km	80	14.1	Distance from RFP
2.2 hours	1.5	0.2	One way travel time to RFP
7.8 hunts	4	0.9	Hunts in RFP last 12 months (4 hunters ≥ 40 hunts)
14.5 days	10.5	1.3	Days hunting in RFP last 12 months
76%	Yes		Personally killed a red deer in RFP last 12 months
4.20 deer	2	0.53	Personal annual kill of RFP red deer (Top 10% kill 40% of deer: [20%,60%])
0.88 deer	0	0.15	Personal annual kill of RFP mature red stags
1.45 deer	0	0.26	Personal annual kill of RFP mature red hinds
0.86 deer	0	0.13	Personal annual kill of RFP juvenile red stags
1.02 deer	0	0.16	Personal annual kill of RFP juvenile red hinds
2.8 days	2	0.2	Days per RFP hunt
4.49 deer	3	0.49	Red deer seen on last RFP hunt (2 big outliers –32 & 27, 6≥15)
0.79 deer	1	0.09	Red deer personally killed on last RFP hunt (54=0, 36=1, 14=2, 8=3)

Where medians differ from means there is a skewed distribution. For example, the mean annual kill of RFP red deer is 4.20, whereas the median is 2. This happens because a small number of hunters harvest a large number of deer (in this case 10% of hunters kill 40% of the deer). The difference between mean and median experience suggests there is a small number of extremely experienced hunters in the sample.



These results are consistent with other NZ studies of recreational hunters. Enjoying the outdoors is always a highly significant motivator, and meat harvest is more important than trophies.

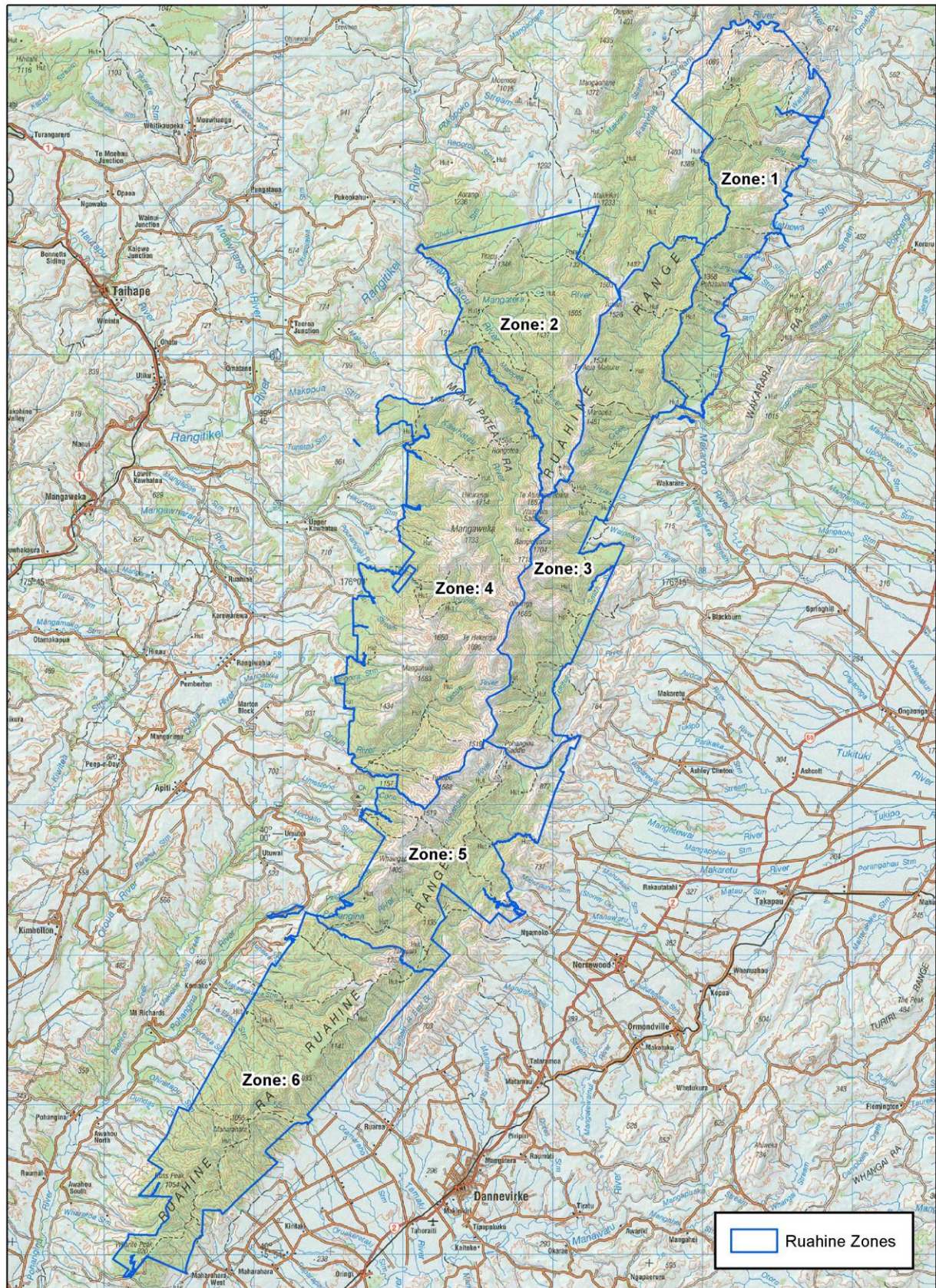


Whereas the previous graph addressed the single most important motivator, this one allows comparisons of relative importance. Seeing deer and scenery are the most important attributes of a hunt. Killing a deer is somewhat important, but nowhere near as important as seeing deer. Trophy has the lowest importance of all these attributes. This evidence suggests that RFP red deer hunters are largely motivated by being in the environment and harvesting meat. Trophies are very important for a small minority of hunters, but are of low importance overall.

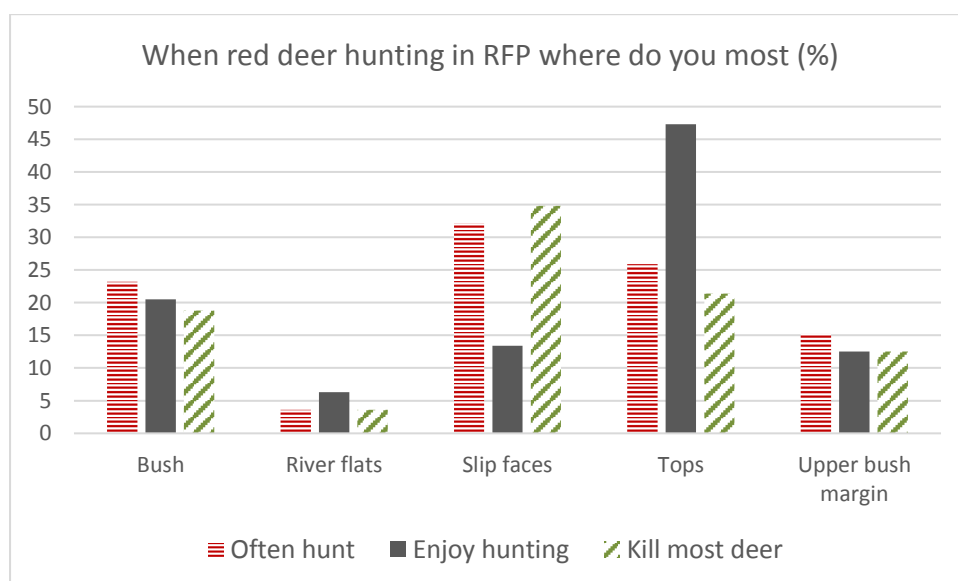
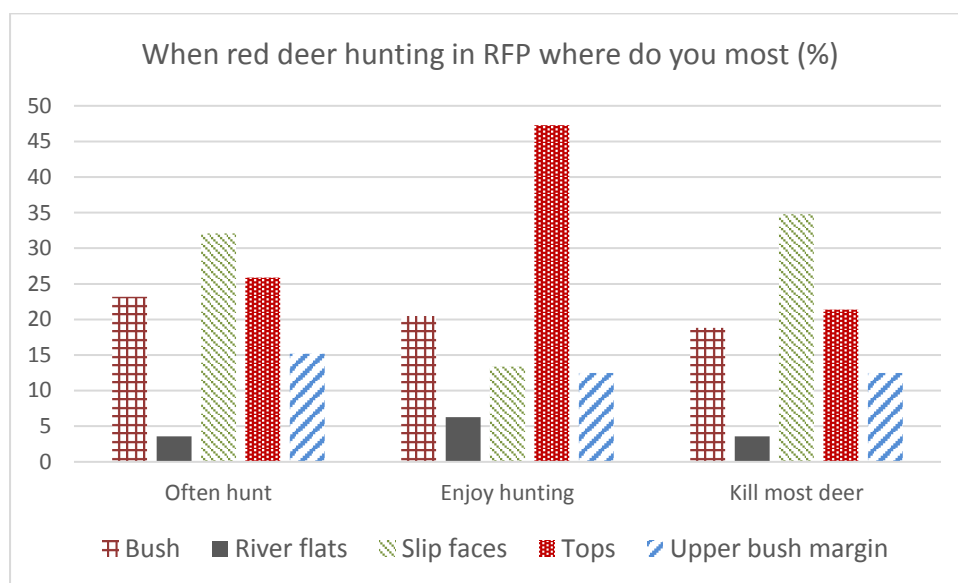
Most important hunting zones:	
Zone 1	3%
Zone 2	8%
Zone 3	16%
Zone 4	37%
Zone 5	7%
Zone 6	29%

See map on the next page

Ruahine Forest Park Hunting Usage Zones



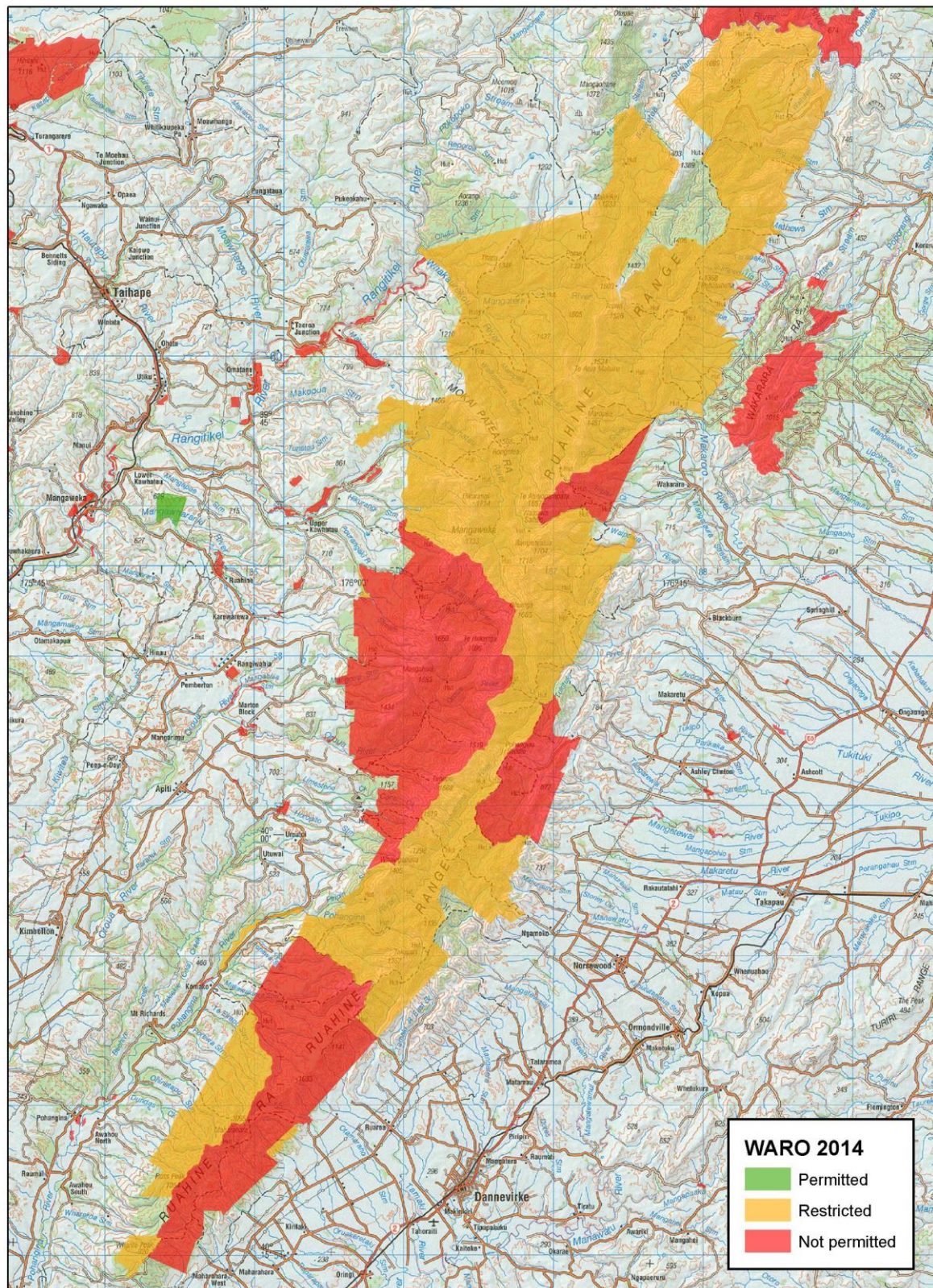
	Most often hunt	Most enjoy hunting	Kill most deer
Tops	27%	50%	24%
Bush	24%	22%	21%
Upper bush margin	16%	13%	14%
Slip faces	33%	14%	40%



Hunters most enjoy hunting the tops, and the tops see a relatively high amount of hunting effort. On the other hand, slip faces appear to be most productive, attracting the highest hunting effort, but hunters get relatively low enjoyment from hunting slip faces.

The map below shows where Wild Animal Recovery Operations (Helicopter deer recovery, WARO) is permitted in RFP. WARO is permitted in restricted areas from 1st May to 30th November.

Ruahine Forest Park WARO Concessions Areas 2014



Would you hunt RFP differently if	There was no WARO in RFP?	WARO was allowed everywhere in RFP from 1st May to 30th November?
No	25%	22%
Yes	54%	64%
Don't know	21%	13%

How would hunt differently if no WARO in RFP	From 112 participants
Would do more tops hunting	25
Would hunt preferred areas (various or unspecified) more	21
Would hunt RFP more often	15
There would be more deer (that's what they said!)	13

How would hunt differently if WARO was allowed everywhere in RFP from 1st May to 30th November?	From 112 participants
Would not hunt RFP at all	25
Would hunt RFP less	10
Would hunt RFP differently (various responses)	25

Overall, do you think that	No WARO in RFP would make your RFP recreational hunting experiences?	Allowing WARO everywhere in RFP from 1st May to 30th November would make your RFP recreational hunting experiences?
Much worse than now	2%	54%
Somewhat worse than now	4%	24%
A little worse than now	2%	5%
No different to now	7%	8%
A little better than now	12%	2%
Somewhat better than now	22%	0%
Much better than now	44%	1%
Don't know	7%	5%

Advantages of current WARO (n=112)	From 112 participants
None	23
Controls deer where recreational hunters don't	32
Sharing the resource	26
High animal numbers	1
Genetics	3
Income generation	2

Disadvantages of current WARO (n=112)	From 112 participants
Reduces deer numbers	20
Reduces deer (or no deer) on tops and/or slips	12
Scares deer	4
Don't recover killed animals	2
Destroys tranquility or the experience	13
Safety concerns	3
Removes stags	15
Unenforced – WARO disobey rules	9
Covers easy recreational hunting access	8
Targets same areas as recreational hunters	8
Not effective deer management	13
Congests foot hunters	1

Preferred WARO harvest restrictions (i.e. Types of deer WARO operators are not allowed to harvest)	From 112 participants
No harvest restrictions	9
All (No WARO)	5
All Stags	21
Mature stags	18
Velvet stags	3
Shoot only poor quality stags	5
Impose a Hind:Stag ratio	1
Hinds	2
Pregnant hinds	2
Lactating/fawning hinds	4
Impose a sustainable quota	4

How do you think RFP hunting should be managed to provide the best recreational red deer hunting experiences?	From 112 participants
Management by recreational hunters	10
Consult with hunters	17
As a purely recreational resource	2
Favour recreational hunting over WARO	24
Same as now	14
Allow recreational hunting helicopter access	1
Ballot blocks during the roar	2