

AUSTRALASIAN

**SPORTING** Australia's Top Selling Hunting Magazine

# SHOOTER

JANUARY 2011

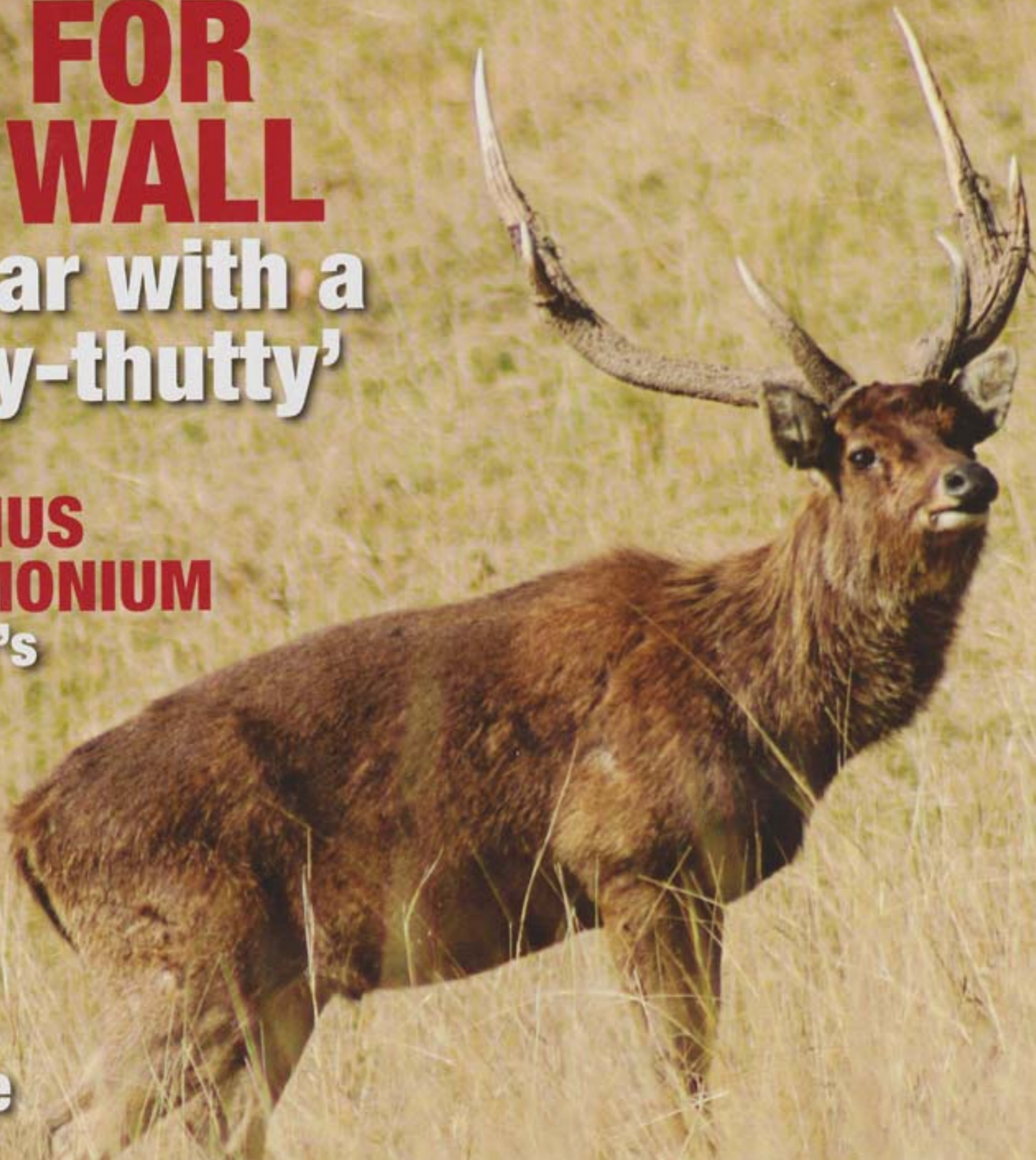


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## MY TENTERFIELD LEARNING CURVE

The Editor discovers the value of the Tenterfield fox whistle.

**NOW TENTERFIELD WAS** made internationally famous by the Australian gay icon, Peter Allen in his song, "Tenterfield Saddler" and a nice little ballad it is too, but Tenterfield is the home of one of the most devastatingly effective predator calls on the planet, the humble bent piece of tin known simply as the "Tenterfield Whistle". Now you can look at all sorts of electronic callers which involve lugging a power source or the expense of replacing batteries and if you're a gadget man who enjoys tinkering, then that's fine but, if you want to go "back to tors" and just hang this little cracker around your neck, then you'll be just as well equipped to call them in, if not better.

I'd been out with Tony Pizzata fox whistling over several sessions in the last few years and seen him use his more and more in preference to his button whistle, particularly when he wanted his call to carry a long way or if he was working in windy conditions. I had also been watching Tom Varney's DVDs and seeing the awesome results he and his son had achieved using one. So, I rang John Cooper, manufacturer of the modern Tenterfield whistle who lives not in Tenterfield, but Coffs Harbour and saw if I could get a whistle for myself to get skilled in its use.

Well, it took a while for John to get back to me but once he did, my conversation with him left me convinced that he is a true gentleman. A Tenterfield Whistling kit duly arrived on my desk and it contained what you see in the accompanying pic plus a second whistle. The CD takes a while to get around to the business of whistling but, like most things in the country, if you hurry, things won't work nearly as well and I must admit that I was quite relaxed, entertained and well-informed by the time I had listened to the whole CD.

I was now itching to get out and try the whistle but I needed to practice somewhere first. I drove down to a local beach carpark and started with the windows up. By half an hour I was a lather of saliva down my front, breathless and not producing much noise, at least not like that on the CD.



The Tenterfield Whistle Kit comes with an instructional audio CD, written instructions and two anodised aluminium whistles with lanyards and a card directing the buyer to see Tom Varney's DVDs.

This urban fox was drawn into 5 metres with my amateur efforts with the Tenterfield Fox Whistle - truly impressive.



1



2



3

IMAGES 1 - 6: Series of pics taken of a fox which approached the author to 5 metres and then just hung around for over five minutes. Obviously it had never been shot at, living on the fringe of a coastal suburb.

But then, after a short rest, I gathered my breath, enlisted the force of my diaphragm and got a creditable first attempt. Then I repeated it and successive efforts got progressively better, with the odd slip-up to bring me back down to earth.

It was mid-afternoon on an overcast day by now and I needed to get something live to come in to the whistle. So, I drove to a large area of bitou bush on a public headland north of the nation's birthplace, picked my spot taking account of wind direction and let out a couple of blistering shrieks. By the time I had lifted my head from the whistle, a fat pair of foxes was ten metres from me, having covered the fifty metres from the bush concealed den in a few seconds. I managed to snap off a couple of bad photos and moved on a short way and the next stand proved unproductive, or so I thought. After five minutes of whistling I got up and moved over to a small hillock and, when I crested it, I met a big dog fox running right at me. He'd obviously come from a long way away, so two stands resulted in three foxes.

I decided to sit just below the crest of the hillock and see if I could draw that spooked fox back but nothing doing. Despite his reluctance, another younger fox approached me from my left flank, trotting in towards me along a long ridge approaching the hillock. When he got to about ten

metres from me, he just slowed and started mooching around for several minutes. In that time I had the opportunity to take all the photos that appear with this article; they were not taken on burst mode either.

Getting a little bored with this, I made a few exaggerated movements and he took off and slowed to a walk about 120 metres away and when I shrieked again, he propped and looked back towards me. If I'd had a gun it would have been murder, not sport, but when you're eradicating ferals, that's immaterial.

In the few minutes I was playing whistle tag with that fox, a second one had come into the hillock along exactly the same route the first one had used just minutes before. With my concentration on the first fox I did not see the other one until I got up to go and the second fox, all of 15 metres away, spooked and took off. Score for the Tenterfield whistle was five foxes called in from three stands - pretty impressive for an urban editor who hasn't even met Tom Varney yet.

Now, whenever my cat won't come to my calls after dark, I drag out the Tenterfield and drag him inside to protect local native animals. It works every time.

**You can get your own Tenterfield Whistle package from John Cooper at 02 6652 2095 or through his website on [www.tenterfieldfoxwhistle.net](http://www.tenterfieldfoxwhistle.net) ■**

