

TESTFIRE:

RIDGELINE RECOIL JACKET - WAPITI CAMO

Daryl Crimp

OVERVIEW:

Top line wet weather jacket that comes with matching recoil pants, suitable for layering systems. Available in Olive or Wapiti Camo, sizes XS through 5XL, and unisex. Features three layer RL - Tex PRO 3 soft finish fabric with 10,000 mm H2O rating but with lighter weight and greater breathability than previous jacket models. It is hooded, with full length two-way zip, seven pockets, and said to be designed for New Zealand conditions.



DESIGN AND FUNCTION:

To me, the real test of rain jackets is in being 'designed for Kiwi conditions', as most American/European designs have shortcomings in catering to the extreme ranges of New Zealand weather. The Ridgeline Recoil Jacket (and pants) live up to the claim and tick all the boxes.

First up is the ample length and extra bum tag, which is generally missing on foreign designs, but essential for our conditions. Secondly, the volume is there without any compromise to comfort, or style if you are mirror conscious, which is so important with the modern trend in clothing for lightweight layering systems. This is particularly noticeable (actually it's not because it's so comfortable you forget you are wearing it) around the shoulders and arms, so you have good freedom of movement, and the extra volume actually creates a pocket effect that adds to the warmth.



Ample cargo pockets for all hunting accessories.

The material is not ultra-lightweight, so has some bulk, but the fabric is soft and pliable, which considerably reduces fatigue when wearing it in extreme conditions and/or for long periods. The soft brush exterior is also good for bush stalking, making less noise than some harder shell fabrics.



Easy glide with dome cover.

A personal idiosyncrasy of mine is that I hate wearing anything about my head or face. It's a hang up from the days as a kid stalking wild pigs, where I relied on full peripheral senses to detect the faintest sign of game. Consequently, I struggle to wear hats, veils, and hoods while hunting, and generally only when retreating in really shitty weather. The Ridgeline Recoil Jacket hood has many redeeming features: it is removable, voluminous, has a rigid peak so it doesn't flop over your face, and is adjustable both sides at the front and from the rear, so fussy buggers like me can even find a comfortable compromise.

If you are a pocket geek, this jacket is for you, with seven strategically spaced and appropriately sized pockets: one top chest pocket, two hand warmer pockets with waterproof zips, two back access pockets behind the lower cargo pockets, which were clearly designed with hunters in mind and big enough to carry ammo, radios, PLB, GPS etc. For my money, these were one of the minor design flaws of the jacket: the top hand warmer pockets were slightly too high to fit the natural resting position of a relaxed arm and the back cargo pockets, which could have equally served this purpose, were slightly too low.

I tested the jacket recently while hunting whitetail on Stewart Island and, while we only had moderately bad weather on one day, I was impressed with the overall function of the jacket, the only other niggle apart from the pocket placement was the easy-glide full length zip. It proved a bit fiddly getting the zips and tag engaged sometimes, especially when my arthritic fingers were wet and cold, but once the planets and moon aligned, it operated very smoothly.



Double cuff with velcro band.

One of the best features is the double cuff system; an inner neoprene band overlaid with a second velcro cuff. There is nothing worse than getting water and shit creeping up your arms when its hosing down. These are so comfortable, practical, and easy to adjust. Add to this the high collar that gives extra chin protection, and you have some very nice touches.

OVERALL RATING:

The quality of this jacket is up there, with good stitching and sealed seams. To me, it ticks the design boxes for our conditions, with comfort rating high. The Ridgeline Recoil Jacket is a good all round contender and would find favour with the lowland day hunter, bush hunter, and alpine hunter, through to more serious expedition hunters. Excellent value at its price point.

OUTDOOR PERFORMANCE

WET WEATHER GEAR



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Recoil Jacket

Top of the range jacket from Ridgeline. Designed for the rugged New Zealand conditions. Whether you're stalking prey in the bush or mountains; or you're facing snow, cold winds or heavy rain, look no further than the Recoil.

AVAILABLE IN
WAPITI CAMO \$419.99 RRP
OLIVE \$399.99 RRP







Monsoon Elite Anorak

The Monsoon Elite uses the ultimate in Wet Weather technology.

High breathability & light-weight durable fabric offers protection and warmth in the harshest of conditions.

AVAILABLE IN
WAPITI CAMO \$384.99 RRP
OLIVE \$364.99 RRP