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Title: Wisconsin Deer Hunting Season

Background: We currently have seasons for different weapons, different hunter ages, different sexes (that is deer, so far), different zones all to give some special interest group a better chance of shooting 'their deer' or a hope that more deer will be shot in certain areas. You almost have to be a lawyer or go to a special seminar to be on the right side of the regulations. The arguments for special seasons usually are about special interest groups which is a good way to fractionate the hunting community resulting in our current state of on-going complaining or bickering. It seems that the driver behind the discussion is how I can get 'my deer' forgetting it isn't 'your deer'!

Once you separate archery and firearms seasons, the specific weapons used may be different, but I haven't seen proof that they are enough different to justify additional fractionation or actually kill more deer. Within the 'Twang and Bang' framework there will be time for the casual hunter, the meat hunter, the avid hunter, as well as the big buck hunter without playing favorites to one or the other. Youth and mentored hunts seemed like a good idea but I believe they introduce impressionable people to hunting that is unreal and unsustainable by making deer hunting seem like deer shooting. Deer hunting should not be reduced to be in competition with video games, but a real life alternate to them. The traditional approach of bringing youngsters and newbies to hunting camp focuses on the right things: camaraderie, safety, sportsmanship, teamwork, woodsmanship, respect for the outdoors and fun; not for filling a tag (or complaining about the herd management by the DNR). Simplicity will also draw more new folks to the good things about our tradition. At our annual deer camp party, one of the younger members (40ish) remarked that these 'special' seasons would have taken the awe and anticipation out of his first deer hunt opener. What used to be a 'rite of passage' now can become an event to just 'shoot a deer'!

The Problem: As the Wisconsin deer season structure has become diluted by all the special seasons, the traditional aspects of the hunt are being lost and the regulations have become overly complicated.

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Conservation Congress at its annual meeting held in Waupaca County on April 9, 2012 recommends that the Conservation Congress work with the Department to take action to correct this situation by establishing a fifteen day gun season beginning on the Saturday before Thanksgiving in November for all weapons that go 'bang' (firearms). Further, establish an archery season beginning mid-September to 24 hours before gun season and continued 24 hours after gun season until year end for all weapons that go 'twang'.



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