

Resolution

50-01-16

Whereas, the crossbow season was established to provide comparable hunting opportunity for those that chose to hunt with a crossbow; and whereas, crossbow proponents specifically asked for an earlier opening season so the "could hunt when the weather was nice"; and whereas, the primary arguments used for adding a long crossbow season where that crossbows

- Were no more effective than archery equipment.
- Crossbows would draw in new hunters and increase deer hunter numbers.

The length if the crossbow season was set by statute only for the first two seasons so that the data could be collected to determine crossbow effectiveness and extent of use. Data shows that crossbows are considerably more effective that archery equipment, and in fact the crossbow success on bucks harvested is 41.5% higher than it is for archery or firearms in 2014 and almost as high in 2015.

Crossbow hunters have proven to be very effective in harvesting bucks; especially in the stressed Northern Forest Region. Where, in just the second season crossbow hunters actually harvested more bucks than archers did in 2015, despite the fact that there were less than half as many licensed crossbow hunters as licensed archers. The data shows that most crossbow hunters switched from the archery and gun ranks, while many others just quit. Deer hunter numbers rose steadily from 2010 to 2013. In 2014, with the introduction of the crossbow license, deer hunter numbers dropped sharply by almost 40,000 and have not recovered to the pre 2014 levels. Despite fewer overall numbers, hunters are flocking to the crossbow season. In just the second season there were over 75,000 crossbow hunters hunting before the gun season with a weapon far superior to archery equipment.

And whereas, the chances of harvesting a buck with archery equipment during the archery season and the chances of harvesting a buck during the gun season have remained almost identical year after year, it would only be fair now that the facts are available to adjust the crossbow season to bring its success in line with that of the rest of Wisconsin deer hunters.

Be it resolved that the Conservation Congress at its annual meeting in Portage County on April 11, 2016 recommend that the DNR adjust the crossbow season to open on the Saturday nearest September 15th and close on the Sunday closest to October 15th for all crossbow license holders under the age of 55 and handicap permit holders, in order to provide equitable allocation of the resource to all Wisconsin deer hunters.

Respectfully Submitted,
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