Equal opportunity for all Wisconsin deer hunters 14-01-16

The crossbow season was established to provide comparable deer hunting opportunity for those that choose to hunt with a crossbow;

Crossbow proponents specifically asked for an early opening "when the weather was nice";

The primary arguments used for adding a long crossbow season were that crossbows:

- are no more effective than archery equipment
- and that crossbows would draw in new hunters and increase deer hunter numbers

The length of the crossbow season was set by statute for the first two seasons only, so that data could be collected to determine crossbow effectiveness and extent of use, and adjustments could then be made;

That data now shows that crossbows are considerably more effective than archery equipment: crossbow success on bucks was 40% higher than it was for either archery equipment or firearms in 2014, and almost as high again in 2015;

The data also shows that crossbow hunters are very effective in harvesting bucks; especially in the stressed Northern Forest region, where, in 2015, crossbow hunters took more bucks than archers did, despite the fact that there are less than half as many crossbow hunters;

And crossbow hunting did not increase deer hunter numbers. The data shows that most crossbow hunters just switched from the archery and gun ranks, while many others just quit. Although 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 2011 – 2013 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 now shown to be significantly superior to archery equipment;

The chances of harvesting a buck with archery equipment and the chances of harvesting a buck with a firearm have remained almost identical year after year in their respective seasons. Now that the facts are available, it would only be fair to adjust the crossbow season to bring its success in line with that of the rest of Wisconsin's deer hunters;

Therefore, be it resolved that the DNR take immediate action to adjust the crossbow season to open on the Saturday nearest Sept. 15th and close on the Sunday nearest Oct. 15th in order to provide an equitable allocation of the resource to all Wisconsin deer hunters. ALL REGULATIONS PRIOR TO THE INCLUSION OF THE CROSSBOW INTO THE ARCHERY SEASON WOULD REMAIN. (HANDICAPPED & USE DOR)

Yes_____ No_____

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