

Crossbow & Archery

PROPOSAL 8 - 5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions. Allow the use of lighted sight pins in restricted weapons hunts as follows:

Alaska Hunting Regulations, page 20:

The new regulation would simply say: "You MAY NOT use a sight that projects a light or beam such as a laser or similar device. Lighted sight pins, or other sights that use a battery to illuminate the sight externally or internally are legal provided no beam is projected."

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like to have the restriction against lighted sight pins or similarly lighted sights removed during archery/weapons restricted hunts. Currently, a bow hunter may hunt in the general season WITH a lighted sight pin legally attached to their bow. However during a "restricted" weapons hunt the light/sight becomes illegal. It makes little sense that you may pursue game in a given area, during a given time period with a lighted sight and then hunting the same animal a day later becomes illegal because that area becomes weapons restricted. A lighted pin does nothing more than allow better visibility for a hunter to see their aiming device and as such potentially make a more accurate shot. Legal shooting hours dictate the close of shooting times and this change would not affect the legal shooting hours. It would allow for better aiming on cloudy days, inclement weather days as well as in deep forest canopy. The vast majority of states already allow the use of lighted pins during their archery hunts. Further, the state of Alaska already allows electronics (bow mounted cameras, lighted nocks) attached to the bow in pursuit of game. This change would clarify the use of a particular piece of equipment for all archery hunters and avoid confusion. My proposal does not include the use of laser aiming devices, only those sights that do not project a beam of light.

PROPOSED BY: Hugh Leslie (EG-C15-013)

PROPOSAL 9 - 92.990(a)(8). Definitions. Update the definition of barbed arrows to take into account improvements in technology as follows:

(8) "barbed" means, in the case of an arrowhead, having any fixed portion of the rear edge of the arrowhead forming an angle less than 90 degrees with the shaft when measured from the nock end of the arrow; **a notch or space of no more than two millimeters between the base of the blade and the shaft shall not be considered a barb;**

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Technology has changed since the Board of Game adopted the current definition of barbed. Many of the newer broadheads are technically barbed if the current definition is applied. However, the broadheads made illegal by applying the current definition are clearly not in the same category of barbed that the board intended to prohibit. The Department of Fish and Game recommends the board update the existing definition to allow hunters to utilize newer models of broadheads without altering the original intent of the definition.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-C15-162)

PROPOSAL 10 - 5 AAC 92.085(15). Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions.
Modify the requirements for crossbow as follows:

Update the language of the regulation to more accurately reflect modern crossbow technology by adjusting the current language to read:

2015–2016 Alaska Hunting Regulations, page 19:
Big game hunting restrictions:

...

“-Hunting big game with a crossbow, *UNLESS*:

-- the cross bow is at least **150** [100] pounds peak draw weight and **13** [14] inches draw length.”

This simple change would encompass the great majority of crossbows currently manufactured and still maintain or exceed the energy levels intended in the original regulation while also keeping the ease of field enforcement provided in the original regulation.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Regarding legal crossbow minimums, current regulations are exclusionary of most crossbows manufactured. A great majority of the crossbows manufactured in recent years fail to meet Alaska's draw length requirement while they are still generating significant energy for hunting Alaska's heavy boned big game animals.

The regulation currently states; "big game MAY NOT be taken by the following methods:
-Hunting big game with a crossbow, unless: (a) the cross bow is at least 100 lbs. peak draw weight and at least 14 inches draw length."

This regulation seems to be dated and fails to take into account variables in the bow and arrow system that determine generated energy of modern crossbows. While the regulation, as written, is readily enforceable, it excludes the majority of crossbows currently manufactured which generate energy levels greatly in excess of the current regulatory minimum yet do not meet the draw length requirement. The vast majority of crossbows currently manufactured have draw weights in excess of 150 pounds yet may only have draw lengths of 12.5 to 13.5 inches, making them illegal for use in Alaska. However the draw poundage is generally much higher than the required minimum which more than makes up for the lesser draw length. Adjusting the regulation will make purchasing a crossbow less onerous on the average shooter.

PROPOSED BY: Robert Swanson (EG-C15-001)

PROPOSAL 11 - 5 AAC 92.080. Unlawful methods of taking game, exceptions; 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game, exceptions; and 92.990(a)(11) and (19). Definitions.
Allow the use of crossbows in restricted-weapons hunts and adopt crossbow standards as follows:

The new regulations would remove the reference banning the use of crossbows in restricted weapons hunts as they would be added to the definition of archery equipment allowed.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? I would like the Board of Game to consider the inclusion of crossbows in the definition of archery and allow for the use of crossbows in archery only hunts. There is little difference in the accuracy or effective range between crossbows and modern compound bows, both are accurate, short range weapons capable of harvesting all small and big game animals in Alaska. The difference is that not every Alaskan is capable of effectively utilizing a compound or traditional bow due to lack of upper body strength or joint problems while they are more likely able to use a crossbow as it does not require the same amount of strength or flexibility. I would restrict the crossbows to "iron sights" with no optical sights allowed and also require the same or similar certification as is now required for bow and arrow archery hunters.

PROPOSED BY: James Fitzpatrick (EG-C15-017)

PROPOSAL 12 - 5 AAC 92.085(15). Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions.

Modify the current definition of a legal crossbow for taking big game as follows:

(15) with a crossbow, unless [THE]

(A) **the** bow peak draw weight is 100 pounds or more;

(B) **Repealed** [THE BOW HAS A MINIMUM DRAW LENGTH OF 14 INCHES FROM FRONT OF BOW TO BACK OF STRING WHEN IN THE COCKED POSITION;]

(C) **the arrow** [BOLT] is tipped with a broadhead and is a minimum of 16 inches in overall length and weighs at least 300 grains; and

(D) **the** crossbow has no attached electronic devices, except for a scope or electronic sight that does not project light externally;

(E) it is a shoulder-mounted crossbow;

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? In 2012 the Board of Game adopted the current definition for crossbow. As with most newly adopted definitions it has become apparent it is in need of some fine-tuning. In the short amount of time since the board adopted the definition the technology has improved to make this young regulation obsolete. The Department of Fish and Game suggests making changes to the existing definition based on the reasons listed below:

1. (B) was removed since technology has advanced to allow shorter crossbows that still follow the rest of the regulation. The term "draw length" is only used for vertical bows (archery equipment), the crossbow term for "the distance the string travels from point of rest to full draw" is "power stroke." The length of the arrow and the peak draw weight still prevent the use of smaller, ineffective crossbows which the original language was intended to prevent.
2. Under (C), switch to "arrow" instead of "bolt" because bolt is an outdated term. "Arrow" is the correct archery/firearm industry term and also the correct term approved by the North American Crossbow Federation.
3. Addition of new (E) language, which is borrowed from Maine's "Conditions on the Use of Crossbows," prevents the use of smaller, ineffective bows that can't harvest a big game animal quickly/ethically.

PROPOSED BY: Alaska Department of Fish and Game (HQ-C15-163)

PROPOSAL 13 - 5 AAC 92.080(11). Unlawful methods of taking game, exceptions; 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game, exceptions; and 92.990(a)(11). Definitions. Allow the use of crossbows in restricted-weapons hunts for hunters 65 years of age or older as follows:

Hunters over 65 years old may use crossbows during regular archery season; the same requirements for crossbow as stated in the 2014–2015 Alaska Hunting Regulations booklet, page 19.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Crossbow hunting during archery season for older hunters over 65 years old. Most hunters at this age no longer can pull bows back. We must give up bow and arrow hunting that we love.

PROPOSED BY: William Thomas Sr. (EG-C15-049)

PROPOSAL 14 - 5 AAC 92.080. Unlawful methods of taking game, exceptions; and 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game, exceptions. Allow the use of crossbows in restricted-weapons hunts as follows:

In order to allow more opportunity for those hunters wishing to use a crossbow while hunting during special hunts like the roadside "targeted hunts" for moose in Southcentral and the Interior, or while hunting in specific game management areas or state refuges around the state where either muzzleloaders or shotguns and bow and arrow are the approved hunting tools, I would ask the Board of Game to include the use of crossbows as a fourth approved hunting tool.

In addition to those wishing to hunt with a crossbow, there are those older or smaller hunters who, for whatever reason, cannot use a bow and arrow that meets the existing requirements. A person who cannot draw and hold a bow and arrow can normally still use a crossbow if that tool was legal for use.

What I am proposing is that the category of crossbow be added to the list of approved hunting tools for those hunts in game management areas, state game refuges, and special hunts where either a muzzleloader or shotgun is legal along with bow and arrow. For areas or hunts that are specified as bow and arrow only, nothing will change.

A crossbow has certain advantages over a bow and arrow and also has some major disadvantages compared to a bow and arrow. However, the two hunting tools are still relatively comparable in power and range. A crossbow does not even come close to a muzzleloader or shotgun in comparison. If a muzzleloader or a shotgun is legal to use, along with bow and arrow, then there are no practical concerns to not allow a crossbow along with bow and arrow in those areas or hunts which also allow a muzzleloader or shotgun.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There are currently several state game management areas, state refuges, and special hunts statewide which support weapons restricted big game hunts. Most of these hunts prohibit the use of centerfire, high-powered rifles and specify that only muzzleloaders, shotguns using slugs, or bow and arrow (or some combination of the specified implements) are allowed. Hunters choosing to use muzzleloaders or

bow and arrow must comply with existing regulation requirements for these hunting tools, i.e., things like muzzleloading caliber or the bow's draw weight.

These restrictions in areas or refuges or special hunts are done largely for safety reasons because all of the approved hunting tools are considered short-range compared to a highpowered rifle.

The Board of Game recently defined crossbows in regulation into their own category with requirements on power, bolt length, etc. This was done because crossbows as hunting tools are gradually increasing in hunting use for big game in Alaska during the general season and have become the fastest growing hunting tool in the Lower 48 for hunting animals like white-tailed deer and black bear. It was felt that a distinction between bow and arrow and crossbow was necessary.

Since crossbows are defined separately from bow and arrow, current regulations allowing the use of bow and arrow exclude the use of a crossbow for hunting during that same hunt.

PROPOSED BY: Howard Delo (EG-C15-037)

During the 2014–2015 Meeting Cycle, the Board of Game amended this proposal (Proposal 35) to apply statewide and deferred it to the Statewide Regulations meeting scheduled for March 2016.

PROPOSAL 15 - 5 AAC 92.003. Hunter education and orientation requirements. Require certification for all big game hunters in Alaska using crossbows as follows:

All hunters pursuing big game with a crossbow in Southeast Region units must have passed a certification course presented by ADF&G and carry their certification card in the field. This regulation to be effective starting July 2016.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? The Board of Game passed a regulation stating that all hunters hunting with bow and arrow for big game must pass the IBEP Certification and carry their certification card while hunting starting in July 2016. The board did NOT include hunters who hunt with a crossbow in this regulation. There are safety issues involved with use of a crossbow which are unique to crossbows and do not apply to regular archery equipment or firearms. A crossbow is a different implement than bow and arrow but kills in the same fashion with sharp cutting of vital structures rather than shock as with a firearm. Firearms hunters who pick up a crossbow need to learn the limitations of the weapon, acceptable shot angles and target anatomy. In addition they need to learn appropriate follow-up and recovery techniques which may differ significantly from their experience with firearms. Crossbow hunters who wound animals may leave a visible projectile in the animal which can reflect poorly on not only crossbow hunters but also on bowhunters and impact on all hunters. I believe that all hunters who use a crossbow for hunting big game in Alaska should be required to pass a crossbow certification course developed and presented by ADF&G and should be required to carry their certification card while hunting big game with crossbow. The course should

include a field day in which the student demonstrates knowledge of safe use of the crossbow and a minimum level of shooting proficiency.

Nothing in this should be interpreted to imply that crossbows are the same as archery equipment. The course must be separate from the IBEP Certification and taught by instructors knowledgeable in use of crossbows and certified to teach the course. Also, nothing in this proposal should imply that crossbows are acceptable for use in special archery only areas or hunts.

This proposal is to cover all regions open for proposals for consideration by the Board of Game during their 2015 meetings. It is my intention to make the same proposal next year to apply to the Interior and Arctic/Western Regions. This proposal is to be effective starting in July 2016 which would align it statewide with the recently passed regulation for bowhunters and would also give ADF&G time to implement the education programs.

PROPOSED BY: John Frost (EG-C14-293)

PROPOSAL 16 - 5 AAC 92.003. Hunter education and orientation requirements. Require successful completion of a crossbow education course for those hunting with crossbows as follows:

Crossbow specific education course should be developed by the state of Alaska and should be a mandatory requirement to hunt any big game animal anywhere in Alaska with crossbow devices.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Crossbows are effective killing devices that have been legal to use in Alaska's general hunting seasons for years. However they have been rarely used when the option of using a firearm was available. The crossbow industry with intensive marketing has increased interest in hunting with crossbows. However crossbows are unique devices with their own set of safety issues and inadequately trained hunters using crossbows are a problem. Neither basic hunter education nor bowhunter education adequately train hunters to use crossbows. Crossbow hunters are even more in need of weapon specific education than muzzleloader hunters or conventional bowhunters.

PROPOSED BY: The Alaskan Bowhunters Association (EG-C15-100)

PROPOSAL 17 - 5 AAC 92.003. Hunter education and orientation requirements. Provide an exemption for bowhunter education requirements as follows:

If you were born before January 1, 1986 you are not required to have a bowhunter certification course or to carry your bowhunter certification card in the field in general season big game hunts. However you still are required to have the education and carry your card for all specific archery only hunts and areas.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? There are many experienced older bowhunters who have never taken a bowhunter education course yet are highly

experienced, ethical bowhunters. In addition there are many other older bowhunters who have taken the International Bowhunter Certification Program who no longer have their certification card and unfortunately there is no national (or often even state) registry of those who have completed the certification in the past. The new requirement that all hunters using conventional archery gear have a state or international certification AND carry their card while hunting big game with archery gear in Alaska may be a burden to them and prevent their hunting. Also, Alaska and many other states have a grandfather clause in hunter education requirements. For example in Alaska if you born before January 1,1986 you are not required to have basic hunter education to hunt in Units 7, 13, 14, 15 and 20.

PROPOSED BY: John Frost (EG-C15-115)

PROPOSAL 18 - 5 AAC 92.085. Unlawful methods of taking big game; exceptions. Prohibit the use of slingbows as follows:

Prohibit the use of slingbows in the stateof Alaska for the taking of all big game.

What is the issue you would like the board to address and why? Prohibit the use slingbows (slingshot bows) for the taking of big game in the stateof Alaska. These are low poundage weapons and not very accurate which would increase wounding loss.

PROPOSED BY: Bob Ermold (EG-C15-110)
