



## “No Crossbows in Archery Season” Talking Points

### Should crossbows be legalized during archery hunting season?

1. Crossbows are not bows. Crossbows have mostly rifle-like characteristics such as a gun stock for shoulder mounted shooting, trigger safety, optical sights, locked and cocked at full draw by a mechanical device, carried loaded and ready to shoot, rigidly controlled internal ballistics, minimal movement to shooting position and can be shot from a rest. (1)

2. For the purpose of qualifying for bowhunting records, the Pope and Young Club has defined a bow as a longbow, recurve bow or compound bow that is hand-held and hand-drawn, and that has no mechanical device to enable a hunter to lock the bow at full or partial draw. (2)

3. Crossbows legalized for use during archery season could more than double the number of hunters participating in the archery-only deer hunt, according to studies conducted by the Ohio and Arkansas game departments (3). If your state has 400,000 licensed firearms hunters, 160,000 of them may migrate to archery season if crossbows are legalized, according to the Tonkovitch study. Over crowding of public hunting areas could result diminishing the quality of the hunting experience.

4. “Out of the Box” accuracy, requiring little or no practice, will attract firearms hunters to the early archery season equal to 40% of the licensed deer hunters in a state according to data published by Ohio and Arkansas game departments (3). Crossbows are extremely easy to master (1). Over crowding of public hunting areas will result.

4a. “Survey data from the late 1990s suggest that approximately 32% and 37% of Ohio and Arkansas deer hunters, respectively, participated in their state’s crossbow season. Therefore, for modeling purposes, conservative estimates for hunter success and participation might be 20% and 40%, respectively. Participation will likely begin much lower and gradually increase to this level.” (3) (emphasis added)

5. In the hands of a shooter of average ability, crossbows have at least twice the effective range of a conventional bow. For typical hunters-those having firearm or handheld bow

experience but who were not competitive shooters, crossbow shooters had an effective range of 64-yards compared to 26-yards for handheld bow shooters (1).

6. In side-by-side tests, first-time crossbow shooters had average shot groupings that were better than top competitive handheld bow shooters. (1).

7. Shooting a crossbow requires no mastery of the mental or physical aspects of shooting a bow. (4)

8. More than 70 state and provincial bowhunting organizations have signed on to a letter stating "...in order to preserve the integrity of bowhunting, it is vital that crossbows not be permitted in bow season or archery-only hunting areas." (5)

9. Hunting with a crossbow is not bowhunting.

10. Bowhunting is the gold standard for the Rule of Capture (6). Bowhunters highly value self-reliance and have long supported the idea that some effort, some labor is a necessary component of the hunt. Getting close to game is difficult. One of the cornerstones of bowhunting is that the taking, the killing of game should not be easy but should take labor. It should be challenging.

11. Attaining good shooting form, the primary requirement for becoming an efficient bowhunter, requires constant practice and significantly more time to maintain a significant level of competency than a crossbow. That's what bowhunting is all about – the challenge.

12. The Archery Trade Association (ATA) believes crossbows are viable shooting and bowhunting equipment because the Internal Revenue Service makes crossbow manufacturers pay the archery excise tax. (7).

13. Crossbows have played no part in the evolution of bowhunting. Who can stand as an icon of crossbow hunting? Where is their Maurice Thompson, Ishi, Saxon Pope, Art Young, Glenn St. Charles, Fred Bear, Ben Pearson, W. J. "Chief" Compton? Bowhunting has a heritage, crossbows do not. Our heritage is build upon strong values of community service and conservation partnerships. (8)

14. The aforementioned early bowhunters accepted the personal challenges of bowhunting big game and set extremely high standards of sportsmanship for all hunters that followed in their footsteps.

15. None of the bowhunters in the National Bowhunting Hall of Fame got there by hunting with a crossbow.

16. Crossbows played no part in establishing bowhunting in America. (9)

17. Crossbows don't fit in bowseasons. There are no crossbow user groups, no clubs, and no state associations like bowhunting has built over eight decades of dedicated service to the public, satisfying their thirst for archery and bowhunting activities. (8)

18. Research has shown that a large number of hunters will utilize crossbows only if they are legalized in archery season. Otherwise, hunters will continue to reject them and leave them behind on the junk pile of hunting gadgets. Crossbows are devoid of any following because they lack any historical foundation as a hunting weapon. (8) Their history is as a weapon of war.

19. Crossbows are a weapon looking for a season – a season of profit. (8)

20. Bowhunters and bowhunting organizations are long time partners of state conservation agencies, helping to promote clean, healthful outdoor activities with bow in hand and in promoting bowhunter ed and kids shooting programs.

21. Crossbow use in archery season is an advertising push of the crossbow manufacturers, facilitated by the Archery Trade Association and other surrogate marketing agents. No sportsmen's groups are petitioning for this legalization of crossbows, only the profiteers. (8)

22. Crossbow manufacturers are pushing for a “blended” bow season under false pretences. They tout fake taglines like:

- Crossbows are the same as bows
- Crossbows are easy for old people to shoot
- Crossbows are easy for kids to shoot
- Crossbows are easy for women to shoot
- Crossbows will recruit more hunters
- Crossbows will kill more deer
- Crossbows will provide new opportunity
- Crossbows will help reduce urban deer numbers

23. But, it's all smoke and mirrors. Crossbow manufacturers and their surrogate marketing agents are trying to “mainstream” crossbows into bow season. It's all bunk! Without a special season crossbows do not appeal to sportsmen.

24. Who are the eager, ardent crossbowmen yearning for, petitioning for a hunting season with the archers? Why haven't we heard from them? Why, because there are no crossbowmen craving a season with bowhunters. They don't exist. (8)

25. The thousands of crossbow hunters that manufacturers say will buy the new crossbow-hunting permit are only “tick marks” on the company's business plan. Open a new hunting season **first** and they will come. And, by the way, none of them yet own a crossbow! (8)

26. Huge profits are the crossbow manufacturer's motive in pushing for the legalization of their product in archery season. They, not sportsmen, want crossbows legalized in archery season. Without a special season, crossbows are just another product category.

27. Commercial interests, like crossbow manufacturers, should not be given privilege when hunting opportunities are allocated by game agencies (10). To do so is to betray the public trust held by state natural resource authorities.

28. Crossbowmen are not petitioning for change.

Bowhunters are not petitioning for change.

Sportsmen are not petitioning for change.

Only crossbow manufacturers are petitioning for change and their motive is profit.

29. State game agencies should not give in to the promise of increased permit fees for their dwindling budgets just so crossbow manufacturers can make more profit. Wildlife management for profit sets a dangerous precedent.

30. The crossbow issue is a bowhunter's issue. Those outdoor writers, radio and TV outlets and commercial bowhunters that hold financial agreements with all of those companies who stand to profit from the inclusion of crossbows in archery season, don't have a dog in this hunt. Their motives are profit. Our motive is the protection of bowhunting as we know it today. (8)

31. The U.S. Supreme Court held, in *Geer v. Connecticut*, that "the development of free institutions had led to the recognition of the fact that the power or control lodged in the State is to be exercised, like all other power of government, as a trust for the benefit of all people, and not as a prior or exclusive right or privilege for the advantage of the government or for the benefit of private individuals as distinguished from the public." (10)

32. There must be a line drawn on what constitutes a primitive weapon in a primitive weapon season. Crossbows cross that line in the bowhunting season just like fully automatic rifles and night vision scopes cross the line in general rifle season.

33. There is no technical impediment to producing 500 pound-pull crossbows today that would be vastly more efficient than at present. Crossbow designs have advanced significantly in the past few years but they're still not as potent as many historical designs (1).

34. The most fundamental difference between crossbows and conventional bows is that most modern crossbows are now drawn with a winch and braced with a rigid stock. These two factors alone are why all types of conventional bows made have pretty well reached their design/performance limits, and why crossbows are already capable of a vastly different level of performance.

35. “The organizational representatives at the Bowhunting Summit were unanimous in their opposition to crossbows being allowed in bow seasons. The position taken is that crossbows are not bows and therefore they should not be allowed in bowhunting only seasons except where the states already have exemptions for qualified physical disabilities. The NABC will not stand in the way of present laws/regulations that allow disabled archers the use of crossbows in archery season” (11). Except for use by the truly physically challenged, crossbows should not be allowed for use in bow seasons.

### **“No Crossbows in Archery Season” Talking Points References**

The following references were cited in responding to the following question:

#### Should crossbows be legalized during archery hunting season?

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6. Baumeister, Thomas and Tom Dickerson. “Who Calls the Shots?” IHEA Journal, Winter 2006.
7. McAnnich, Jay. “ATA Position Statement About Crossbows”, Chatfield Version, August 2005.
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10. Posewitz, Jim. “Inherit the Hunt”, Falcon Publishing, 1999.
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