

Facts Sheet -- Crossbow Hunting in West Virginia

The West Virginia State Legislature took action earlier this year to legalize the use of crossbows during big game firearms seasons. They also instructed the Division of Natural Resources to establish a separate crossbow hunting season and identify those game species that could be hunted during this crossbow season. The following points are provided for your information and should serve to clarify the new crossbow hunting opportunities available during the fall 2015 hunting seasons.

Crossbow Hunting during Archery Seasons

- The Natural Resources Commission established a separate crossbow season that will run concurrent with the various archery seasons. Game species may be taken with a crossbow during their respective open archery seasons.
- Hunters must be properly licensed to hunt with a crossbow during the respective archery seasons. Depending upon the game species being hunted with a crossbow, a hunter will be required to possess the required licenses and stamps (e.g., base license, species-specific stamps and additional species-specific stamps).
- Game species harvested with a crossbow shall apply to the archery bag limit restrictions for that species (e.g., a properly licensed hunter may harvest no more than 3 deer with a crossbow or bow during the concurrent crossbow and archery deer season.).
- Resident hunters may harvest one deer on a base license (X, XJ, A plus CS plus BG, Lifetime, etc.) and up to two more deer if they have purchased two RB stamps.
- Nonresident hunters may harvest one deer after they have purchased the appropriate license combination (E plus CS/LE plus UU, XXJ, etc.) and up to two more deer if they have purchased two RRB stamps.
- Crossbows may not be used to hunt deer in Logan, Mingo, McDowell or Wyoming counties during the archery season; however, Class Y/YY license holders may still use crossbows in these counties during the archery seasons.
- Crossbows may be used during special deer hunts (e.g., urban, homeowner associations, state parks, etc.). Entities conducting these special deer hunts are allowed to establish more restrictive rules; therefore, they may limit the use of crossbows.
- Existing crossbow specifications (i.e., draw weight, safety, etc.) still apply.
- Big game harvests must be checked using the electronic game checking system and identify the crossbow as the weapon used.

Crossbow Hunting during Big Game Firearms Seasons

- The West Virginia State Legislature legalized the use of crossbows during big game (i.e., deer, bear, wild boar and wild turkey) firearms seasons.
- Hunters must be properly licensed to hunt with a crossbow during the respective big game firearms seasons. Depending upon the game species being hunted with a crossbow, a hunter will be required to possess the required licenses and stamps (e.g., base license, species-specific stamps and additional species-specific stamps).

- Game species harvested with a crossbow shall apply to the firearms bag limit restrictions for that species (e.g., a properly licensed hunter may harvest no more than 2 deer with a crossbow or firearm during the buck firearms deer season.).
- Resident hunters using a crossbow during the deer firearms season must possess a base license (X, XJ, A plus CS plus BG, Lifetime, etc.) and may purchase one RG stamp to take an additional deer.
- Nonresident hunters using a crossbow during the deer firearms season must possess the appropriate license combination (E plus CS/LE, XXJ, etc.) and may purchase one RRG stamp to take an additional deer.
- Resident hunters using a crossbow during the deer muzzleloader season must possess a base license (X, XJ, A plus CS plus BG, Lifetime, etc.) and may purchase one RM stamp to take an additional deer.
- Nonresident hunters using a crossbow during the deer muzzleloader season must possess the appropriate license combination (E plus CS/LE plus VV, XXJ, etc.) and may purchase one RRM stamp to take an additional deer.
- Resident hunters using a crossbow during the bear firearms season must possess a base license (X, XJ, A plus CS plus BG, Lifetime, etc.) plus a bear damage stamp (DS) or an XS license.
- Nonresident hunters using a crossbow during the bear firearms season must possess the appropriate license combination (EE plus CS/LE, XXJ, etc.) plus a bear damage stamp (DS).
- Resident hunters using a crossbow during the wild turkey season must possess a base license (X, XJ, A plus CS plus BG, Lifetime, etc.)
- Nonresident hunters using a crossbow during the wild turkey season must possess the appropriate license combination (E plus CS/LE plus WW, XXJ, etc.).
- Resident hunters using a crossbow during the wild boar firearms season must possess a base license (X, XJ, A plus CS plus BG, Lifetime, etc.)
- Existing crossbow specifications (i.e., draw weight, safety, etc.) still apply.
- Big game harvests must be checked using the electronic game checking system and identify the crossbow as the weapon used.

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