

ATTN: Board of Game Comments
Fairbanks meeting March 2016
Fax: 907-465-6094
March 10, 2016

The Alaska Bowhunters Association Statewide Proposals 2016 Summary and Comments

Members of the Board of Game,

The Alaskan Bowhunters Association has submitted the following seven proposals for your consideration at the March Statewide meeting of the Alaska State Board of Game. We would encourage you to support all of these proposals. After these ABA submitted proposals, we would like to comment on several proposals that we feel affect bowhunting. Thank you for your time and consideration of our proposals.

Support:

Proposal 16: Require successful completion of a crossbow specific education course for anyone hunting with crossbows in Alaska. All bowhunters are required to have Bowhunting certification to hunt big game in Alaska beginning July 2016. Crossbows are a totally different weapon with different safety considerations and they should have to have their own specific education requirements. Not only rifle hunters who are new to crossbow hunting but also previous bowhunters who take up the crossbow should have specific education regarding the special safety considerations of crossbow use as well as the difference in ballistics, range estimation, followup, ethics and many other issues. Dr John Frost has a powerpoint presentation on this subject which provides more information. Some of the members of the Board have seen this presentation.

Support:

Proposal 46: Establish a Statewide Archery Season for Sheep .

For any area with open sheep hunts allow a August 1-9 Archery hunt. Archery only no crossbows. This would result in some spreading out of crowding in the normal opener (August 10th) of sheep season. It would allow much more hunter participation with a lower impact on the sheep population since long term archery success statistics from unit 14C show very low (less than 2%) harvest rates of mature rams with archery gear. Providing more hunting opportunity with minimal impact on the species should be a goal of the Board of Game. Nearly all states have special archery seasons preceding the regular seasons for big game. For the first few years it could be done as a registration hunt, which would give a good idea of the participation by bowhunters and give accurate reporting.

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Support:

Proposal 53: Remove the restriction that wounded game counts against the bag limit. Currently this regulation is in force for only six game management units and for only two species, bear and elk. No other state has this regulation. This limits ethical hunters but does not limit unethical hunters. Originally purposed by guides, it may be a disadvantage to guides if hunter demands to continue to hunt for the animal he wounded. An alternative to eliminating the restriction entirely (which makes the most sense) would be to insert the word "mortally" in front of wounded.

Support:

Proposal 62: Remove the requirement to remove all contaminated soil from bear bait stations. Difficult if not impossible to do. How is contaminated soil defined? No definition of what is to be done with the contaminated soil. Engenders an anxiety or paranoia in hunters that reduces the enjoyment of the hunt. All bait is eventually biodegradable anyway.

Support:

Proposal 64: Allow harvest of Brown Grizzly Bear at Black Bear Bait Stations. Wherever black bear baiting is legal brown/grizzly bear can be a problem and there is no reason to NOT allow their harvest at a black bear bait station (assuming it is during the open season in that unit for brown/grizzly bear). This would not allow setting up a bait station specifically for brown bear in an area where black bear did not exist such as units 8,9 & 10.

Support:

Proposal 65: Remove the requirement to salvage brown/grizzly bear meat when taken at a black bear bait station. Most people do not eat the meat of brown/grizzly bear and with the exception of subsistence hunts there are no other hunts in which you are required to salvage the meat of brown bear.

Support:

Proposal 97: Establish a point system for drawing hunts. There is general dissatisfaction with some hunters getting drawn for several hunts each year and other hunters who never seem to get drawn. The Board of Game did previously pass a bonus point system but the ADF&G apparently chose to NOT implement it. It can not be that hard to do because most other states that have drawing hunts either have a bonus point or preference point system.

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In addition the Alaskan Bowhunters Association would like to comment on the following proposals.

Support:

Proposal 17: Provide an age exemption for bowhunter education requirements. Only twelve states (including Alaska) have any specific bowhunter education requirements and many of those states have grandfather clauses. The Alaskan Bowhunters Association has numerous out of state members. Most non-resident hunters who come to Alaska to hunt specifically with archery gear are long time experienced hunters some of whom may well have passed a bowhunter education course long ago but have lost their cards.

Support:

Proposal 8: to allow the use of lighted sight pins in restricted weapons hunts. Lighted sight pins do not cast light upon the animal and do allow visually impaired hunters to more clearly see where they are aiming.

Oppose:

Proposal 9: to change the definition of a barbed arrow head. The original reason to outlaw barbed broadheads was to prevent wounded animals from being able to shed the arrow. Any gap between the shaft and the trailing edge of the blade will increase the risk of arrows remaining in the wound with the attendant decrease in ability of the wound to heal as well as the poor public relations generated. These "newer technology" broadheads are not any more accurate or lethal than older style broadheads. The fact that some Alaskan stores are selling these heads should not make us change our definition.

Oppose:

Proposal 11: to define crossbows as archery equipment and allow their use in archery restricted hunts. It is true that conventional archery gear and crossbows share many of the same features. States such as Wisconsin that keep separate statistics have shown that crossbow hunters are twice as effective as conventional bow hunters. This is because of the necessity of conventional bow hunters to draw their bow in the presence of the animal and to shoot off hand. Crossbow

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hunters can carry their weapons fully cocked and loaded and can shoot off of a rest. This ability significantly increases the success rate for crossbow hunters. The ABA does not believe that crossbows should be defined as archery equipment and simply lumped in with archery seasons. We are not opposed to Crossbows having their own separate seasons with strict crossbow specific education and reporting requirements. It should be noted that crossbows are currently allowed in all general hunting seasons in Alaska with no specific education or reporting requirements. Anyone wishing to hunt with a crossbow has ample opportunity without defining a crossbow as archery gear.

Partially oppose:

Proposal 12: (C) the arrow [Bolt]. This is a small objection to renaming a crossbow projectile, which has been called a bolt for centuries, to name it as an arrow. The ABA does not oppose the ADF&G setting standards for crossbows. However we see the simple changing of the name of the projectile to be politically favoring the crossbow industry. The crossbow industry has been pushing for inclusion of crossbows in regular archery seasons and renaming the projectiles is just another step in making even more people believe that there is no difference between crossbows and conventional archery gear.

Oppose:

Proposals 13 & 14: To allow hunters over age 65 or anyone using crossbows to hunt in regular archery seasons. These are simply two more proposals to insert crossbow hunts into regular archery seasons. First, in Alaska we already have long general seasons when anyone can use a crossbow. Second the argument sounds good that crossbows should be allowed in archery seasons for use by disabled, elderly, children and "small statured" individuals who are unable to pull a conventional bow. But how are these same individuals expected to properly butcher and care for their harvested game? Especially moose. Today's modern conventional bows are very capable of killing big game with low draw and holding weights and appropriate arrows and broadheads. The Bowhunters of New York State have developed many assistive devices to help impaired and weak hunters use conventional gear if they so desire.

Respectfully Submitted,
Jack Frost, Legislative VP The Alaskan Bowhunters Association