



blunts *from the old* stump

By A. J. MICHELSON

President of the National Field Archery Association
3800 Mason Street, Flint 5, Michigan

CROSSBOWS AND GAME LAW VIOLATORS

In the August issue of American Bowman Review a featured article appeared extolling the virtues of the crossbow as a hunting weapon. It was pointed out that no skill was required in its use and that anyone who could shoot a rifle could shoot the crossbow, and that up to sixty yards it was as accurate as the firearm. It was also pointed out that not much physical exertion was required to cock the bow, as a woman could handle an eighty pound cross bow and two hundred pound crossbows were recommended for hunting for men. It was also suggested that in hunting, the crossbow be carried fully cocked, (thus eliminating the use of any excess physical energy.) But the important thing that this article did not mention was that the crossbow is a SILENT WEAPON.

What prompts this discussion is the fact that in our evening paper we read that Michigan Conservation Officers, on a routine check of vacationers returning from the north over the past Labor Day week-end, made a score or more of arrests for illegal game in possession, deer and game birds, out of season. This only served to remind us, that Michigan, as well as all game states, has its share of poachers, game-hogs and game law violators. Anyone who has hunted during the bow season, has heard those rifle shots of some gun hunters anticipating their season, and during the gun season heard those shots at night of violators shining deer. It is the sound of those tell-tale gun shots, that has enabled our conservation officers to do a pretty good job of cleaning up on the game violators.

But leave it to the archers! They would be the ones to start promoting the crossbow! The poachers, game hogs and game law violators will surely kiss them for that! Here is a weapon that requires no skill to use; as accurate as a rifle at short range; and above all, it is SILENT. Why shoot arrows in it? It will throw darts, slugs and bolts just as well. In fact that is what they used it for in the good old days. But it is the silent feature of the weapon that will appeal to them. No more tell-tale rifle shots to warn law enforcement officials that they are about their unlawful business.

CROSSBOW OUTLAWED IN MICHIGAN

We bow hunters in Michigan worked hard to get our first pre-season for deer in two counties in 1937. In 1939 we were successful in getting all deer hunting counties in the state opened up to bow and arrow hunting. One crossbow manufacturer in 1940 thought it would be a good idea to muscle in on the Bow season, got an offhand opinion from the Conservation Department that the crossbow would be O. K., and was prepared to flood the state with a crossbow campaign among riflemen. We bowhunters got wind of this and put up a vigorous protest. We went to the Attorney General of the State, and got his legal opinion that the crossbow was not a bow within the meaning of our Bow and Arrow Hunting Laws, and further that the crossbow could not even be used during the gun season. The crossbow is an illegal game weapon in the State of Michigan.

For the benefit of those who might have been considering getting crossbows and hunting in Michigan, and for bowhunters in other states who want to protect their hard won pre-seasons or special bowhunting areas from encroachment by the crossbow, we publish here the legal opinion of the Attorney General of the State of Michigan:

"STATE OF MICHIGAN
Office of the Attorney General
Lansing, Michigan, July 10, 1940

"Department of Conservation,
Lansing, Michigan.
Attention: H. R. Sayre, Chief Field Administration.
Gentlemen: We acknowledge receipt of your letter of July 9, in which you ask the opinion of this department as to whether or not a 'crossbow' can be used during that period

of the deer season which is allotted to those hunting with bow and arrow.

Please be advised that we are of the opinion that a crossbow was not contemplated by the legislature when it passed its act permitting deer to be hunted by bow and arrow. We call your attention to the following definition of 'bow':

'Bow: A weapon made of a strip of wood or other elastic material with a cord to connect the two ends when bent by means of which an arrow is propelled.'

Webster's New International Dictionary.

This has been the universally accepted definition of a bow and it is the accepted definition of the term in the sport of archery. That definition does not include the term 'crossbow', which is defined as:

'CROSSBOW: a medieval weapon for discharging quarrels, stones, etc., formed of a bow set cross-wise on a stock. Cf. 'arbalest.'

'ARBALIST: A crossbow consisting of a steel bow set in a shaft of wood furnished with a string and trigger and a mechanical device for bending the bow. It is served to throw arrows, darts, bullets, etc.'

Webster's New International Dictionary.

"We are definitely of the opinion that the statute in question would not permit the taking of deer with crossbows or arbalests, even though an arrow were used in the weapons, instead of a bullet, slug, dart or other missile.

"We likewise call your attention to Section 6218 of the Compiled Laws of 1929 as amended, which in Section 10a prohibits the use of a mechanical device for the purpose of capturing or killing any game protected by the laws of the state. It appears to us that a crossbow or arbalest would most certainly be a mechanical device within the meaning of this act. It is to be noted that the provisions of the act permitting the use of the bow and arrow state that it shall not be deemed to be a mechanical device within the meaning of Section 10a as above referred to.

Very truly yours,
THOMAS READ, Attorney General
By (Signed) Willard McIntyre,
Deputy Attorney General."

"LB:rb"

CROSSBOW ENDANGERS OUR BOW HUNTING PRIVILEGES

We, who enjoy the privileges of special areas or special seasons to hunt with the bow, won then a little at a time. We had to convince sportsmen that our sport was clean and convince the public that the bow is as humane a weapon as any used in hunting. Game Commissions soon recognized that bow hunting is a tough sport and that the kills are few and far between. Our chances of bagging a deer are 25 to 1 as against a rifle hunters chances of 3 to 1. Shooting accurately with the bow requires skill, acquired only after persistent practice. Year after year of failure doesn't discourage the true bowhunter. He keeps on practicing and hopes that this will surely be the year to bring home that trophy. Bowhunters are universally recognized as good clean sportsmen. We have received our special areas and seasons; retained and expanded them with the help of sportsmen's clubs made up of gun hunters. What will happen if we acknowledge the crossbow to be a blood relation of our beloved bow, and approve of the use of the crossbow during our bow seasons? How can we be assured that the crossbow addicts will shoot arrows with them, so as to qualify their weapon as a "bow and arrow" under the hunting laws of your state, if they are more liberal than in Michigan? They don't even call their missile an "arrow" but a "bolt", the recommended length of which is 12 inches. Presumably the "bolts" are made of wood with feathers

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EXPERT BOWMAN CLASS:

1. Bonnie Touth, Malibu Archery Club.....	94-348	150	438
2. Betty Richardson, Flint Bowmen.....	105-387	50	435
3. Lois Martin, Malibu Archery Club.....	98-370	50	420
4. Lulu Stalker, Flint Bowmen.....	86-324	90	414
5. Marian McAllaster, Nutley, N. J.....	97-363	50	413
6. Eureka Schomaker, Roseville, Mich.....	120-442	—40	402
7. Marie Donelson, Intervalley Club.....	84-310	90	400
8. Rose Dundas, Flint Bowmen.....	88-328	70	398
9. Lou Neeley, Malibu Archery Club.....	82-298	100	398
10. Betty Hendershot, Malibu Archery Club.....	376	—30	346

BOWMAN CLASS:

1. Beth Cole, Oregon Trail Archers.....	80-293	150	443
2. Sue Miller, Oregon Trail Archers.....	74-264	170	434
3. Lois Ketzler, Flint Bowmen.....	73-259	160	419
4. Marge Stewart, Pasadena Archers.....	57-221	190	411
5. Cora Bower, Cascade Field Archers.....	54-202	170	372
6. Edna Howatt, Intervalley Archery Club.....	50-168	190	358
7. Viola Maul, Pasadena Archers.....	56-192	150	342
8. Olive Willsher, Flint Bowmen.....	41-141	190	331
9. Mary Taylor, Flint Bowmen.....	55-201	80	281

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3. Charlotte Rendley, Intervalley Club.....	60-216
4. Margaret Hathaway, Clallam Bowmen.....	56-202
5. Jane Hall, Flint Bowmen.....	53-195
6. Lillian Timenson, Pasadena Archers.....	48-178
7. Mabel Lindberg, Clallam Bowmen.....	40-156
8. Ida Guillard, Intervalley Club.....	39-147
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HIGH SCORES

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A. L. Harrison.....	690	Euretha Schomaker.....	442
Bob Poppe.....	688	Betty Richardson.....	387
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Tiny Munson.....	618	Marian McAllaster.....	343

Blunts from the Old Stump.
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for vanes. But how long before their bolts will be of steel, shorter and more effective? Will they still be arrows? We can conceive of a 200 pound crossbow shooting a steel or iron bolt through a deer and making a bigger hole than could be done with a rifle, and with more crippling results if a vital spot is not hit. Once you have sanctioned the crossbow as a hunting weapon, how can you police the type of missiles that will be used? With a weapon that requires no skill to use, and as accurate as a rifle at the short ranges deer are shot in most states, how long do you think Game Commissions, other sportsmen and the public will tolerate special seasons or areas for us? Once we adopt a weapon on a par with the shotgun or rifle as a game getter, we are going to have to hunt in competition with and during the same season as the gun hunter. The time for us to take a stand on the crossbow is now, when they are talking of "muscling in" on our bow hunting seasons! If we embrace the crossbow as the hunting companion of the bow, it will be too late! If the crossbow enthusiasts want to hunt during the gun season, we see no objection, as that is where they belong. Bowhunters in every state must be on their guard lest through ignorance or good nature, we sanction a weapon that will surely cost us the special bow seasons or areas we have worked so hard to obtain.

BOW vs. CROSSBOW

If anyone asked you how you happened to take up the bow as a hunting weapon, he would get about the same

answer that he would from anyone of us. Perhaps it was the romantic historical background of archery that got us interested. Or possibly the exploits of Maurice and Will Thompson, Chief Compton, Art Young or Saxton Pope, or even our modern day bowhunters. Many of us old time gun hunters were looking for new thrills and interest in hunting. We wanted to go hunting for hunting's sake with weapons that taxed our skill and gave our game bigger odds. We love the feel of the bow; it feels good to flex our muscles in drawing the bow; we thrill at the flight of the arrow, conscious that ours was the energy that sent

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It on its way. We shoot the bow for relaxation and exercise, and we hunt for the joy that is in it. We are aware of the inefficiencies of the bow as a hunting weapon. We don't want a weapon that is just as accurate or nearly so, as a gun. If we did we would hunt with the gun. That it takes little physical exertion to cock a crossbow doesn't appeal to us nor does the fact that you can shoot good scores with a crossbow "without tiresome practice." Most of us archers will be striving to our dying day to improve our technique and shooting skill. Compared to the bow, the crossbow was shortlived. The bow was in existence and use for tens of thousands of years before the crossbow and survived the advent of gun powder. The crossbow died with the invention of fire arms. We, as archers, are not interested in digging up its remains, and trying to resurrect it in the name of archery.

CROSS BOW NOT ELIGIBLE FOR NFAA MEMBERSHIP

The National Field Archery Association was organized for those who use the bow for field shooting, or the hunting of large or small game. The crossbow shooter does not qualify for membership in our organization. We do not recognize him as either an archer, Bowman or bowhunter. Let the crossbow enthusiasts organize their own association and if they want to use their weapon as a hunting weapon, they can hunt with the gun hunters where they belong, or get their own special hunting privileges. We will resist any attempt to pass the crossbow off as a bow, or use it during our Bow Hunting Seasons. We cannot speak for the National Archery Association, and can only voice our opinion as a member of that association, that crossbow shooting is not archery.

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