

7.2.2014

BOWHUNTING IN FINLAND 2014

Legislation

Finnish Bowhunters Association estimates that there **are about 15 000 hunters** who use the bow for hunting. As in Finland there is no mandatory extra training for bowhunters neither a mandatory shooting test, it's not possible to give an exact figure of the bowhunter numbers.

Bowhunting **has never been banned** in Finland. Before 1993 there were no regulations concerning bowhunting, but it was fully **legal when hunting small game**.

In 1993, Finland adopted a new hunting law and statutory regulations. The bow and the arrow were defined roughly - minimum 40,5 pounds draw weight (180N) and the arrow tip has to be direct killing, which means - designed for hunting.

In 2001 hunters were allowed to use the bow and arrow for **roe deer** (*Capreolus capreolus*) and both Canadian (*Castor Canadensis*) and European **beaver**. (*Castor Fiber*) The new regulations changed only the definition of the broadhead when used for roe deer or beaver. The minimum width of the broadhead for roe deer and beaver is 22 mm, and if the bow is used for beaver hunting the arrow has to be equipped with a line to allow retrieving the beaver.

Crossbows are totally banned in hunting In Finland

Eventual problems

In some countries there has been discussion about **poaching** with bows, which are quiet weapons. In Finland this has **never been a problem**. There are some obvious reasons for this: Traditional bows and even modern compounds are demanding to use. It's need to practice archery and hunting skills to get close enough to game and to release a good shot. One cannot shoot with a bow from a car and bows are difficult to use in the dark. So there are much easier tools for hunting criminals. In Finland it is for example legal to use a silencer on a rifle. Crossbows could more easily be a choice for poacher, but that's one reason why they are totally banned in hunting.

The **wounding** of animals is the other issue of worry. In Finland we have made no special research about wounding, but we have either observed **no special problems** in this matter. It seems we could refer direct to the studies made in other countries.

Bowhunters do not wound more animals than other hunters. From aspect of animal welfare, shotgun hunting of birds is the most critical point in Finland.

Bowhunting can be seen as a **safe hunting method**. In Finland we have insurance for hunting accidents included into state hunting license fee. Until now we don't know any reported hunting accidents caused with bow and arrow. The obvious reasons for safety are: Close shooting distance to animal makes it surer to verify the target. One does not walk with a loaded weapon, so there are no unintended shots with bow. Arrows fly a much shorter distance than bullets.

Future plans

Just now in Finland there are **plans** to allow hunters to use the bow for all **deer species**. The concerned ministry and hunting organizations have seen this as a next step in bowhunting development in Finland. The final decision has been waiting for the correct moment, when the deer hunting regulations will be developed.

This change will probably bring the mandatory **shooting test** to bowhunters when pursuing the deer species. Small game can be hunted without the test.

Helsinki 7.2.2014

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Reijo Orava', is positioned above the typed name and title.

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