



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Patrick M. Gallivan

DEC Sets Crossbow Hunting Regulations

PATRICK M. GALLIVAN August 28, 2014

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NEW LAW TAKES EFFECT FOR FALL 2014 HUNTING SEASON

Senator Patrick M. Gallivan (R-C-I, Elma) says the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has adopted final regulations to allow for the use of crossbows for big game and small game hunting in New York State starting this fall. The regulations stem from legislation first introduced by Senator Gallivan in 2012. The new law was included in the 2014-2015 state budget.

“This law gives hunters new opportunities, especially those who are unable to use traditional bows due to age or injury. Crossbows are becoming more and more popular and it’s important for New York to support sportsmen and women who are looking for an alternative to traditional forms of hunting. Outdoor recreation, including hunting and fishing, are a vital part of the state’s economy, especially in Western

New York and the upstate region. Crossbow hunting will bring additional revenue and help support local communities,” Gallivan said.

According to the DEC, the final regulations include the following:

General

- Crossbows may not be used for hunting any wildlife in Suffolk, Nassau, or Westchester counties.
- Crossbows may be used only by licensees who are 14 years of age or older.
- With landowner permission, crossbows may be discharged within 250 feet of a home, school building or playground, public structure, farm structure in use, or occupied factory or church.
- A crossbow may not be possessed in or on a motor vehicle unless it is un-cocked.
- When you are in a vehicle and using a spotlight to look at wildlife, a crossbow may not be possessed unless it is unstrung or taken down or securely fastened in a case or locked in the trunk of the vehicle.
- Anyone hunting with a crossbow must have:
 1. completed a Standard Hunter Education course offered by DEC on or after April 1, 2014; OR
 2. completed a DEC-approved on-line or other training program. Hunters must carry a signed self-certification in the field when hunting with a crossbow as proof of compliance.
- Crossbows may not be used to take carp or any other fish species.

Crossbow Specifications

- A legal crossbow consists of a bow and string, either compound or re-curve, that launches a minimum 14-inch bolt or arrow, not including point, mounted upon a stock with a trigger that holds the string and limbs under tension until released.
- The trigger unit of a crossbow must have a working safety.
- The minimum limb width of a crossbow is 17 inches (measured from the widest part of the limbs, un-cocked). Crossbows must have a minimum peak draw weight of 100 pounds and a maximum peak draw weight of 200 pounds.
- The minimum overall length of a crossbow from butt-stock to front of limbs shall be 24 inches.

Big Game

- Crossbows may not be used to take deer or bear in WMU 4J in Albany County, WMU 8C in Monroe County, or any part of Suffolk, Nassau or Westchester counties.
- For licensing, the new law treats crossbows as a "muzzleloader." Hunters must possess a muzzleloader hunting privilege to legally hunt with a crossbow during any muzzleloader season OR during open

portions of the early bowhunting seasons. The muzzleloader license privilege is not required when hunting with a crossbow during the early bear season or the regular firearms seasons.

- Crossbows may be used to take bear during the early bear season, early muzzleloader season in the Northern Zone, regular firearms seasons in the Northern and Southern Zones, and the late muzzleloader season in the Southern Zone.
- Crossbows may be used to take deer during:
 - o early and late muzzleloader season in the Northern Zone and late muzzleloader season in the Southern Zone using Bow/Muzzleloader tags, deer management permits (DMPs), deer management assistance permit tags (DMAPs), or an unfilled Regular Big Game tag (late season only);
 - o regular firearms seasons using a Regular Big Game tag, DMPs, or DMAP tags.
- Crossbows may also be used to take deer or bear during limited portions of bowhunting seasons as follows, provided that the hunter possesses the muzzleloading privilege:
 - o During the last 14 days of the early bowhunting season in the Southern Zone (i.e., November 1 - November 14, 2014);
 - o During the last 10 days of the early bowhunting season in the Northern Zone (i.e., October 15 - October 24, 2014; this includes the 7-day early muzzleloader season in the Northern Zone);
 - o Only Bow/Muzzloader tags, DMPs or DMAPs may be used during these times.
- Junior big game hunters (age 14-15) may not use a crossbow to take a deer during the Youth Deer Hunt weekend (October 11 - 13, 2014). Adult mentors who accompany a junior big game hunter on the Youth Deer Hunt weekend may not possess a crossbow or firearm while afield on those days.

Small Game

- Wild turkey - crossbows may be used to hunt wild turkey in either the fall or spring.
- Crossbows may not be used to take waterfowl or other migratory game birds.
- Crossbows may not be possessed afield in the Northern Zone when hunting small game (except coyotes) with the aid of a dog or when accompanied by a dog.
- Crossbows may be used to take any other small game or upland game birds during their respective open seasons, or to take unprotected wildlife (e.g., red squirrels and woodchucks) at any time.

Details of the final rule can be viewed in the August 27, 2014 publication of the New York State Register and on DEC's website at www.dec.ny.gov