



WISCONSIN LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL ACT MEMO

2013 Wisconsin Act 61
[2013 Assembly Bill 194]

Crossbow Hunting

2013 Wisconsin Act 61 requires the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to create a crossbow hunting season for residents and nonresidents.

Current law authorizes the DNR to establish open hunting seasons that allow the hunting of specified game animals. If the DNR establishes an open season for hunting certain game animals with a firearm, the season must also be open for hunting those game animals with a crossbow and a bow and arrow. Under prior law, if the DNR establishes an open season for hunting those animals with a bow and arrow but not with a firearm, the DNR may not open that season for hunting with a crossbow except by a person who is at least 65 years old or is disabled and holds a permit from the DNR that authorizes the use of a crossbow. [s. 29.014 (1m), Stats.]

2013 ACT 61

Act 61 eliminated the age and disability requirements for using a crossbow and, instead, requires the DNR to establish new resident and nonresident crossbow hunting licenses that may be obtained by hunters of any legal age and without regard to disability. The Act requires that if the DNR establishes an open bow and arrow season for a species, it must also open a crossbow season for hunting the same species. The Act requires such a crossbow season to be concurrent with the bow and arrow season for that species only for the 2014-15 and 2015-16 hunting seasons. After these two seasons, the crossbow season dates could be changed by the DNR by administrative rule.

The Act also specifies that the DNR may determine, by rule, the open seasons during which antlerless deer harvest tags are valid and the types of weapons authorized to be used under such permits, and allows the DNR to promulgate temporary rules to initially establish the expanded crossbow hunting opportunities under the Act. If the DNR requires a person who kills an animal to register the animal with the DNR, then the Act requires that the DNR must make a record of the type of weapon that was used to kill the animal.

This memo provides a brief description of the Act. For more detailed information, consult the text of the law and related legislative documents at the Legislature's Web site at: <http://www.legis.wisconsin.gov>.

The Act also allows a hunter who holds a crossbow license that purchases an archer license, or a hunter who holds an archer license that purchases a crossbow license, to obtain the second license at a reduced fee of \$3.00. It also provides that resident hunters under 18 years of age may purchase a crossbow license at a reduced rate, similar to the resident junior archer license, and provides that the fee for a duplicate of a reduced fee archer or crossbow license may not exceed the original reduced fee.

Lastly, the Act prohibits a person born on or after January 1, 1973, from obtaining a crossbow hunting license unless the person completes a hunter education or bow hunter education course.

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