

Michigan Celebrating 77 years of Bow Hunting Heritage

Though a relatively small amount of bow hunters were allowed to hunt deer with archery tackle during the traditional November 15-30 firearm deer season years before 1937, this bow hunting season marks the 77th anniversary of a separate archery season in Michigan. Through much effort a separate archery only season was



obtained through legislative process in 1937 and in portions of 2 counties only, Iosco and Newaygo from November 1 to November 14 and limited to bucks only. Thanks go to Jack Skanes who proved to lawmakers that archery tackle is effective by putting a Sitka spruce wood arrow with a bodkin armor piercing tip through a 3/16" boiler plate from his 65 pound longbow.

Under Michigan regulations pertaining to the new bow and arrow season those years, the archers were **not** allowed to buy a regular deer hunting license in addition to their special permit and must choose whether they prefer to pursue their favorite technique with its slim chances of a successful kill, or join the

thousands who rely on a sharp barking gun for their game. Archery permits were the same as regular deer license - \$2.25 for residents and \$25 for non-residents. That alone shows the dedication to the sport those 186 archers/hunters who purchased the new type of deer hunting license in 1937 had.

The first deer harvested in the new season, was a 3 point buck that weighed 115 pounds. The archer who took that buck, William VanVorst of Lowell, used a 70 pound yew bow and 27 inch barbless steel broadhead to put the arrow through the deer's body with both ends showing as the deer went a short distance before dropping. Regardless that only 3 deer were harvested that first limited and short archery only season of 1937, the majority of those participants who purchased the new license deemed the season a success. In their opinion, seeking game with a bow and arrow instead of a long range gun requires much more skill on the part of the hunter.

Some of those archers who fought to obtain a separate archery season and participate in it, later would become charter members of the Michigan Bow Hunters Association which was founded in 1946.

The picture to the right is Fred & wife Marie Bear on a previous hunt in Blaney Park of the Upper Peninsula during the traditional firearm season.

(Pictures courtesy of the Michigan Dept. of Conservation archives)

