

The often-heated discussion that has arisen over use of the crossbow during the big game archery season is not the first debate over bow technology. It is reminiscent of the controversy that arose in both hunting and target archery circles in the late 1960s and early 1970s with the introduction of the compound bow. Acceptance ensued and everyone moved on.

The NYSCC's objective is to support hunting in New York both as a sporting tradition and as part of the management program for a healthy wildlife population. The use of crossbows provides an opportunity to bring more hunters into the fields and to keep them coming back in the future.

Crossbows are nearly identical to compound bows in terms of ballistic performance. The principal difference is that they provide this performance in a form that is much more accommodating to hunters without the upper body strength or mobility to effectively use compound or recurve bows.

With 20% of hunters over the age of sixty-five, the crossbow provides a chance for older hunters to return to bow hunting. It also provides an opportunity for others who have physical limitations and for those who just find the crossbow a challenge in its own right. This is beneficial for both the management of the deer population and for the contribution hunting provides to the economy, particularly in underserved rural areas.

While the legislature is the representative of the people and is responsible for establishing the broad policies reflecting the objectives for wildlife management, the DEC should have the freedom to develop and administer the methodologies needed for implementation.

We believe that the professional staff at the DEC should be empowered to manage the methods to be used and within what parts of the season. Management of habitat and wildlife is complex, requiring both professional training and the experienced gained through actual boots on the ground. This is particularly important in those areas where there is a burgeoning deer population and the use of firearms is precluded.

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