

The Minnesota Bowhunter

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From the President

An eye toward the future

The fall of 2013 marked the lowest MN deer archery harvest since 2002. We also saw the lowest percent success rate in 24 years. So what happened???? The deer are no longer there.

Many do not realize it, but 10 years ago may well have been the best bowhunting we will ever see. Deer numbers may never again rise to the level we witnessed in the early 2000's. State agencies across the nation seem to have lost their affection for science based management, instead opting to let social pressures dictate deer numbers. Social often turns political, and unless we get some industry help (money), the hunters will struggle in a political fight against big ag and auto insurance. Many dismiss the above as conspiracy fodder. I call it the real world.

In 2005, 2006 and 2007, MN went through a stakeholder process to adjust deer density goals zone by zone for the entire state. The DNR led meetings were held with an agenda in mind, and some were shut down entirely when the selected teams would not toe the line. When the smoke cleared, a 9% reduction to the states deer herd was scheduled. Since then deer vehicle collisions as reported by the MN Department of Public Safety are off over 50%. MN Based P & Y entries are off 49% (consistent membership). Hunter satisfaction with deer seen on stand has dropped below 50%. Meat processors interviewed consistently report deer taken in well below DNR report zone trends. The herd was down 50% before last years rough winter.

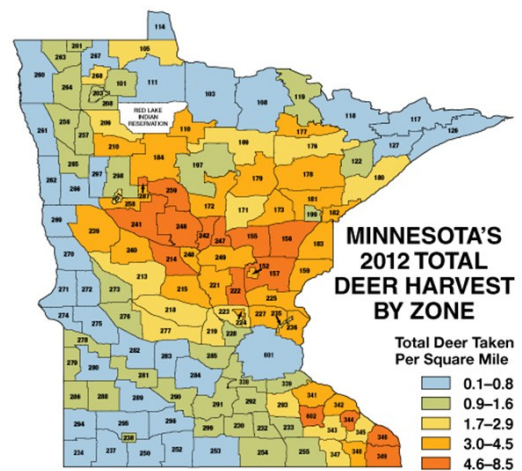
And the DNR continues claim the herd is in fine shape. Quotes are read weekly in various publications and online that the shrinking harvest, and tag reductions don't mean the herd is down. Either their eyes are closed, or they are still working an agenda that does not benefit the hunters of MN. I have sent well over 100 emails to DNR staff in the past year, and have come the conclusion that positive long term change will not come through them. The changes will need to be initiated through our elected. First an audit, and then a deer plan.

And the hunters of the state sit on their hands, believing that wind rain and corn are responsible for fewer deer sightings, and fewer deer harvested. The deer have not become smarter in the past 10 years. There are simply fewer deer in the woods.

I have met a lot of intelligent, reasonable, active hunters while trying to address the shrinking deer number situation in MN. I have also noticed there are not nearly enough of them in MN.

My math says a 9% scheduled reduction now sits at closer to 60%. Once the 2014, 2015 stakeholder proceedings are completed, it will be a much harder task to garnish long term change. Momentum is on our side, and if enough hunters embrace the chance, we can make a difference. Fred Bear once said 'If you are not working to protect hunting, then you are working to destroy it.' I believe we are posed to start losing bowhunters if something does not change. So get to work.

Send 3 emails to your elected asking them for help. Donate some money to MDDI on the MNBowhunters web page. Do something to protect the future of bowhunting in MN, and do it today.



Source: MN DNR



Brooks Johnson
President MBI



Time is of the Essence

This time each year I look at the calendar to plan out when I can get into my treestand. And each time, I realize how hard it's going to be. Between my work schedule, work travel, now the kids active schedules and my wife's events it's tough to find the time to sit in a treestand. While not missing out on family time. The one thing that keeps me sane is that I know I'm not the only one struggling with the schedule. Those who say they don't are few and far between. But I guess that's what make me appreciate the treestand, the woods and enjoy being in the moment in the woods because I know it's precise but thankfully not few and far between. And as you will see in the coming pages I am more and more appreciative of technology. I am fortunate to have a profession in which I work from home and to that end, work in the outdoor industry. So my typical day consists of talking hunting, fishing, sport shooting and various other outdoor activities. I have a large geography and we all know work doesn't stop just because you aren't in the office. Thus, many times I have answered emails and text messages from the treestand thanks to my smartphone. Well, that is if I sit in my stand location that gets cell signal:) However, there are the moments when I leave the phone in the truck and hit the stand because honestly the quiet, scenic and therapeutic surroundings of the woods is what I truly need.

Even though I may not get in the tree as often as I like, it doesn't mean that I don't love bowhunting any less or pay attention to the varying options before me to get in the woods even more. I live in the southern suburbs of Minneapolis, but that doesn't mean I have limited hunting options—I just have to drive a little to get to the farms I hunt. I combat a lot of this by putting in for a variety of lottery hunts. Hunts like Metro Bowhunters Resource Base (MBRB), Camp Ripley and locally the Vermillion River Management Refuge bowhunt. There are many great reasons about these hunts. The biggest for me is that it helps me (and my family) completely plan out my hunts for the fall—well, if I get drawn that is. The other reason is the drive can be a little less and the opportunity at seeing deer are increased as populations in these places are typically pretty high.

So when you are feeling like you just aren't in the stand as much as you are wanting, know that there are many of us like you. Make the most of your time in the woods and if nothing else—check MBI out on Facebook and let's chat about hunting to pass the time.

In the mean time, happy hunting, stay in touch and shoot straight.

Matt Johnson
Editor



Muleys in SD?

A Professional and Honest Response to an Anti-Hunter

So I saw this on a forum I am a member of and thought it worth sharing for all of us to read and consider if we get confronted by an Anti-Hunter in any manner.

From: Sonia B.

Hello,

I just wanted to ask how I can get started in the animal killing business. I saw the pictures of you and your friends sitting with your victims and thought that you must be such talented and manly men to be able to kill these unarmed, defenseless creatures with only a shotgun? I was just thinking that something like that would probably take my 4 year old nephew about a week to learn so you must have learned in about 8-dyas or so. WOW! Anyway, I hope that your power-hungry egos are satisfied and fulfilled with these acts of murder, and that you've found some cheap excuse to justify yourself. I guess you're conscience was just as easy to kill as they were. Bye.

Sonia B.

Darrell's Response:

Sonia,

For your information, we are all "animal killers." This may be difficult for you to accept, but you also are the reason that animals die. Please let me explain: Do you eat meat? Do you go to McDonald's or have a little pepperoni on your pizza? Sorry to disappoint you, but that meat came from a dead animal. Yes, I kill deer and elk and other game animals, but at least my animals are treated with respect and allowed to live a free and wild life. Your meat is killed in "slaughter houses" after being penned and trapped for months being forced to eat what will make them tender rather than what they choose.

Oh, are you vegetarian? Guess what, you still are responsible for the deaths of countless animals. Do you realize that the farmers that grow your veggies regularly kill jack rabbits and other "pests" who interfere with the growing process of your veggies? Do you realize that they eliminated animals that once grazed on the land they now farm so that they can eat tofu? Do you own any leather? A purse, a belt, a pair of shoes? What about your automobile? Does it have a leather steering wheel or leather seats? Do you think that the animals that provide that leather did so and lived to tell about it? No, they dies so that you could have what you want.

Do you live on land that used to be habitat for some wild animals? Do you drive on roads that were paved over the top of rodents and that displaced the animals that once migrated across them? Since you are writing me from the ".edu" address, do you live in a dorm or an apartment? If you do, they must certainly spray to kill roaches and other pests as well as poison any mice and rats that find their way into your dwelling area.



When you are approached by an anti-hunter, pause and think before responding with emotion.



Response to an Anti—continued

As far as here I get my justification, I get it from the ultimate author, God himself. Genesis 9:2-3 *After the flood, God told Noah: "The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth and all the birds of the air, upon every creature that moves along the ground, and upon all the fish of the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything."*

In Acts 10, he tells Peter "Rise kill and eat."

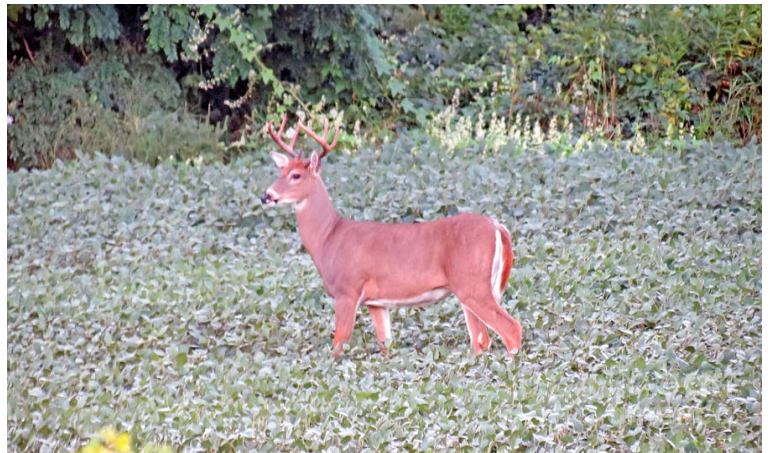
As far as skill goes, hunting is a skill that requires much work, experience and insights. Also, for your information, I hunt with a bow and not a shotgun, though I have no problems with my hunting brothers who use a shotgun.

If, in a few years, your 4 year old nephew is interested in learning how to hunt, I will be more than happy to take him with me and show him some of the ways of the wild. I will show him how to read tracks in the sand and in the snow. I will show him the incredible power of the majestic elk. I will teach him how to try and outsmart a bull elk by imitating the calls of the elk. I will show him how to make a clean, humane kill. One that causes the least amount of suffering possible. Then, I will show him how to take care of the meat so that it can be enjoyed by himself and others. It will do him well to learn that he was created at the top of the food chain and doesn't have to live a life destined for tofu and veggie burgers. I will show him how to hunt with honor and how to appreciate the incredible creation that God has for us. I will show him why we need to protect our National Forests and other places where wild animals are allowed to roam free. I will teach him many things, but most important, I will teach him about his creator who loved him so much that he came and died for him.

I apologize if my hunting offends you. I ask, however, that you give some real consideration to the big picture. Yes, I kill animals, but so do you. The difference is only that I for myself AND YOU HIRE SOMEONE ELSE TO DO IT FOR YOU!

Have a great day,

Darrell B.



*Rationale
thought and
facts will
always win
out.*

Bowhunting the Family Tradition Continues

By Tony Kuehn

I started hunting in 1973, for old-timers that is only a short time after there was no deer season. This bow hunting tradition was taught to me by my Father, his classmate, an uncle or two and my brother. More than 40 years later here I am taking my son out on his first bowhunting experience. He has gone with before, but this is the first year with a bow in his hand. Thanks to the new requirements all he has to do is pull 30#. At age 11 a free license is available, all he has to do is go with Dad to the sporting goods store and provide basic information in addition to his SSN. Not entirely sure, but I think a Kuehn generation has participated in bow hunting ever since there has been an archery season in Minnesota. On the paternal side of the family there is some Native American blood so they have been bowhunting for an epoch or so.

For some reason he turned down the offer to use the compound bow I set up for him and his sister. Sights, Whisker biscuit and even an release if he wants it.



He preferred to use a recurve. However his bow only topped out at 27# at his draw length. Lucky his big sister was shooting a similar recurve. Her bow topped out at about 32 # at his draw length. So we were in business. One more roadblock his sister only shoots 3-D and paper, not interested in hunting yet. So where should he get some arrows and broadheads. Well ask Mom, she used to hunt with Dad and doesn't shoot her bow any more. A quick look in

storage and we find some nice cedar shafts tipped with two blade Zwickey heads (remember that classmate of Dad's I mentioned earlier??). The arrows are fletched with some nice pink, white and blue feathers. His sister's bow has pink finger tabs. OK not to worry seems that my son is secure enough in his masculinity it doesn't make any difference.

Opening weekend, Sunday we decide the weather is looking good, chores and school work are done so a good day to be in the woods. We drive up North, don some camo, explain the compass one more time and start scouting. We found some tracks and looks like the clear cutting of Dad's favorite woods has finally stopped. We rest near some deadfalls and wait for deer. After a few hours my son gets a little restless and we move on. Look over a few swamp access points, funnel areas, thickets that will be good later in the year. There is a lot of standing water on the logging roads so we see quite a few frogs. To make a game of it try to shoot a few of them as Dad has a "small game" license too TWACK!! My son finally connects, it's a big frog too. Right between



*A Wildlife
Refuge open
to hunting.*



A Family Tradition—continued

the eyes, so it's a quick kill. I remind my son : "Hey if you kill it you eat it. " OK I will " He fires back -with a grimace. (we will see).

My Son the Froghunter

Just before sunset we finish our scouting, stalking and could report that we saw a lot of frogs, three rabbit's, a grouse but no deer. Change out the clothes, place them into the scent bags, unstring the bows and head for town to get a late dinner. While driving out of the hunting area parking lot: "Woah. What is that??" Five deer right next to the road, two of them are bucks too. Take some pictures get ready to leave them four more come from the other side of the road. Slowly we move forward and the deer scatter. This goes on for the next mile of farmer's fields and small wood lots. In about 3 miles we see 50 deer. Counting number 51 crossing the road, slowing down again... BAM!!! Uh oh, didn't see that one come up out of the ditch. Small doe, crushed pelvis. Need to finish it off in the bushes. Quick use of a hunting knife and its done.



BAM!! Uh, Oh, didn't see that one come up out of the ditch.

This is generally not the way a hunting outing ends up , but it is a good lesson on why we hunt. To control the populations, keep the habitat healthy and prevent more car crashes. That is an easy explanation for a seasoned hunter but the little guy took it pretty hard. He wants to take a break for a few weeks, then hunt again. After all we did see all those other deer, and yes about a dozen of them were bucks...



St. Croix State Park Bowhunt

By Dwayne Nelson

For years I have heard bowhunters talk about their desire to hunt in St. Croix State Park. This year the DNR decided to have a drawing and allow 100 lucky bowhunters a chance to do just that. Never considering myself to be on the lucky side of any drawing I nevertheless entered the drawing with two of my hunting buddies, Roger and Chad. I certainly was surprised when in mid-August I received a DNR email saying "Congratulations on drawing the 2014 St. Croix State Park Archery Hunt #996." Immediately I had many questions along with concerns stacking up in my mind. I have spent my 40+ bowhunting years chasing whitetails in farm country and the bluff country of SE Minnesota. I can't remember the last time I tried hunting them in a big woods much less a park consisting of over 50 square miles! I guess I will find out if all the deer stories were truthful or mere urban myths.

DNR had 308 parties successfully apply with 651 applicants total. In order to participate in the hunt all successful applicants have to attend one of two orientation meetings. We attended the Sept. 13th orientation with about 60 or so other applicants. Karl Sieve, assistant park manager, made the presentation and did a good job of giving us some background about why a bowhunt this year as well as the rules and requirements for the hunt. Karl graciously agreed to send me the presentation so I could post it on the MBI website for the hunters to review as necessary and for others who may be interested. [St Croix Archery Hunt Orientation Presentation](#)

We attendees learned that Mother nature had a significant role in the decision to hold an archery hunt. A 2011 tornado swept through the park and blew down so many different wooded areas that one state forester said "It really does look like Paul Bunyan stepped across the landscape." Because of these areas the DNR had safety concerns about allowing the normal number of gun hunters this year. Gun hunting has been the DNR's deer management tool in the past because gun hunters can harvest the desired number of deer in a relatively short time compared to bowhunters. I understand that perspective but also strongly believe that bowhunters are tax payers also and should also be able to hunt deer as well as other game in state parks! I am thankful that Karl, park manager Rick Dunkley, and other DNR staff were supportive and worked to put together this archery hunt.

The hunt begins on Monday, September 29th and ends on Friday, Nov. 7th. Treestands were allowed to be put up seven days before the hunt so on Monday (Sept. 22) Roger and I headed to the park from the Twin Cities. We scouted numerous locations after the orientation and decided to put our stands in two different areas. After a long day of scouting, stumbling over blowdown debris, and shuttling stands we ended up with three stands in what appears to be good locations... check out results at the MBI webpage.



*For years
bowhunters
wished to hunt
St. Croix State
park and this
year they got too.*



Make sure you understand the relationship between speed and consistency

Draw Weight: How Much is Too Much?

By Mark Huelsing via Bowhunting.com

As a Pro Staff member for a bow manufacturer, I get to attend numerous hunting trade shows and expos each year. At the consumer-oriented shows we let anyone and everyone shoot our bows, and are happy to do so.

There are always several guys at these shows act like they have something to prove, and insist that their draw length is much longer than it really is, and that they “only shoot 70-pound bows”. Yet, when I watch them shoot, it becomes very obvious that they shouldn’t be pulling 70-pounds. I’ve been there before. It has taken me a while to set my ego aside and realize that shooting as much weight as I can possibly draw isn’t always the best option. In fact, it is rarely the best option.

How do you know when you’re pulling too much draw weight? The answer is actually pretty easy to find out. Here are four shooting tests that provide insight into how we are handling the draw weight of a bow.

1) Breaking Parallel

If you’re drawing too much weight, then your shooting form is going to break-down from the very beginning. The need to perform a “sky draw” is an indicator that your draw weight is too high.

Test this by setting a target that isn’t it an extreme up/down angle or height, then hold your bow out in front of you - putting it roughly in the position that you will be holding it when you’re aiming at full draw. Now, try to draw the bow without raising the bow or angling it up so that the arrow would miss above the target.

Can you draw the bow while keeping it aimed on target, so that the “draw stroke” is horizontally parallel with the path to the target? Or, are you raising your bow arm up and pointing it to the sky as you draw?

Also check to see if your form remains vertically parallel. When you setup before your draw the bow, your head should be squarely in the middle of your feet, and your hips shouldn’t be cocked to one side or the other. If you notice that your head shifts over your back foot and your hips shift towards the target as you draw the bow, then you’re pulling too much weight.



If you have to “sky draw” your bow there’s a good possibility you may be shooting too much draw weight. You want to keep your bow arm parallel to the ground as you draw.

Draw Weight—continued

2) Put It On Hold

In addition to peak draw weight, also consider your “holding weight” - which is the amount of weight that you are holding at full-draw. For example, a bow with a 70-pound peak weight and a 80% let-off should have a holding weight of around 14-pounds.

The question that you need to consider is, “How long can I hold my bow at full draw and still make a controlled and accurate shot?”

There are many different schools of thought regarding what minimum amount of time a bowhunter should be able to hold at full-draw for. Personally, I think most bowhunters should be able to hold for at least 30 seconds, and I often practice holding for a minute or more.

But remember, there are two parts to the question that I said you need to ask yourself. The second part, “making a controlled and accurate shot,” is extremely important! Being able to hold a bow at full draw for 30 seconds is great, but if you’re shaking, struggling, and exhausted at the end of that time, then you’re not going to be able to make an ethical shot.



How long can you hold your bow at full draw and still make a clean shot? If it's less than 30 seconds you may need to reduce your draw weight or practice more often.

3) Take A Seat

This simple test can be eye opening. How well can you draw your bow when seated? Try it from a standard folding chair or office chair. Better yet, try it from a chair or stool that’s designed for hunting out of ground blinds. Want a real challenge? Try drawing your bow while sitting “indian style” on the ground.

I tend to be less strict about having perfect parallel form when drawing from a seated position, but you should still be able to get the bow back and anchored without too much extra movement. If you can’t get your bow back when seated, or are struggling to maintain decent technique while doing so, then you’re trying to draw too much weight.



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Make it a kill shot. Put pressure on yourself. Convince yourself your 3D target is a 150" class 12 pointer at 17 yards and you've got one opportunity to send an arrow right through his heart.

Draw Weight – continued

4) Get Out of Bed

Get out of bed after a long night's sleep and go straight to your bow. Do you struggle to draw it back effectively when your muscles are tired and stiff?

That sounds like a silly test, but this actually helps replicate what it is like to draw your bow after you've been sitting and waiting on that buck for hours. And if you're sitting in the cold, it'll only be harder.

If you struggle to draw your bow first thing in the morning, then you might be trying to draw too much weight



Why These Tests Matter

If we only test our draw weight during pre-season practice - when the temperatures are warm, our bodies are conditioned, and we are at the apex of our shooting abilities - then we are fooling ourselves about how much weight we can effectively handle in a hunting situation.

These tests help replicate some of the stressors and inhibitors of a real hunting scenario, and tend to be quite revealing concerning our abilities.

If you can't effectively hunt with as much draw weight as you thought, don't worry. Modern bows are typically so efficient that you'll still be a capable, ethical hunter - even if you loosen those limb bolts a bit.

And always remember that a well-placed arrow from a lower-poundage bow is better than an erratic arrow that's flying with blazing speed.

MBI MEMBERSHIPS FOR MINNESOTA ARCHERY CLUBS

In case you didn't know, MBI offer's two types of memberships for archery clubs in Minnesota – 100% Clubs and Affiliated Clubs.

100% Clubs: 100% Club memberships are where all members of the Club are required by the Club to belong to a state archery organization. As a 100% Club member of MBI, an individual annual MBI membership for the Club members is \$15 (\$5 less than regular members). Also, the Club is granted one seat on MBI's Board of Directors.

Affiliated Clubs: Affiliated Club memberships are where all members of the Club are not required to belong to a state archery organization. As an Affiliated Club member of MBI, up to five Club officers are granted one-year memberships to MBI for a total membership cost of \$75.



Although MBI's primary focus is bowhunting, MBI knows how important the Clubs are to the success of bowhunting in Minnesota. We appreciate all that the Clubs do for archery in our state. If you belong to an archery club, please consider your club becoming either a 100% Club or Affiliated Club member of MBI. Visit <http://www.mnbowhunters.org> to become a member. We welcome your support.

ATTENTION ALL ARCHERY SHOPS!

If you're an archery shop and free advertising sounds good to you, then consider becoming an MBI Booster. MBI offers a MBI Booster membership to any business for just \$50 per year. In return, your business gets one year's worth of free advertising



on MBI's website. Your ad will consist of your logo and a link to your shop's website. For more information, please send an email to MBIPresident@gmail.com or go to <http://www.mnbowhunters.org> to become a member. MBI welcomes your support.

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Minnesota Bowhunters Inc.
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Continuing the tradition...



Minnesota Bowhunters Inc. (MBI) is a statewide organization that has been representing, protecting, and promoting bowhunting since 1946. MBI is a non-profit organization registered with the IRS as a 501(c)3 and the State of MN. As a community of bowhunters our mission is to ensure that future generations of bowhunters will be able to enjoy the great sport of bowhunting as we have. It is with dedication and commitment to that end that the current board and membership devote our time and talents. It will only be with that same dedication of new and future generations of bowhunters that we will be able to