

Urban Archery Season – Frequently Asked Questions

Can hunters hunt anywhere they want in the city?

No. The Urban Archery Season does not obligate private landowners to allow hunting on their property, nor does it eliminate the ethical requirement to obtain permission from the landowner before hunting. Hunters are legally required to obtain written permission to hunt on posted property. City officials determine where hunting occurs via the map they submit with their letter of intent to participate.

My children play outside and I like to walk our dog through the neighborhood.

How safe is bowhunting? Archery hunting is very safe. Most injuries result from falls from tree stands. There has never been a non-hunter injured in a bowhunting accident in North Carolina, even though there is a great deal of bowhunting that takes place. Other than treestand falls, there has never been an archery related fatality of either a hunter or non-hunter in North Carolina. Approximately 104,500 of North Carolina's deer hunters use archery equipment, and North Carolina has had a deer archery season for many decades. Currently, the regular archery season ranges from 21 to 54 days, with approximately 12,000 deer harvested with archery equipment each year. A great deal of this archery hunting takes place in suburban areas. While there are, of course, no guarantees, bowhunting poses an exceedingly low level of risk to the non-hunter.

Don't we need to have some regulations (minimum acreage, elevated stands, certification, etc) to further ensure that bowhunting is safe?

Not necessarily. Risks to human safety and property are extremely slim with archery hunting. Cities should be cautious about unnecessarily imposing additional regulations that may limit the effectiveness of bowhunting. Safety concerns are more a matter of perception rather than reality.

Will bowhunters be stalking through the woods slinging arrows at any sign of movement?

No. While very lethal, archery equipment has a very limited range. Most bowhunters use a stationary stand or blind and take shots of around 20 yards at a calm, stationary deer. Stands and blinds are erected in safe locations, and bait is often used to lure the animal to a precise spot. In general, the maximum distance an arrow could travel from a missed shot would be no more than 50 yards. After being shot, deer typically die quickly after running 30-100 yards into the thickest cover they can find.

How many deer are in our city? Who will conduct surveys and monitor the harvest? It is not necessary that the WRC or the city know the exact number of deer in the area. The Urban Archery Season is appropriate when residents are having problems with deer, such as vehicle collisions, damage to landscape plants, damage to gardens, etc. Though it can lower deer numbers substantially, hunting will not eradicate or decimate the herd. Hunting pressure is self limiting-- as deer become scarce, hunting pressure and harvest will decrease. Similarly, surveys are not needed to gauge success, as feedback from residents will answer this question. The WRC does track harvest numbers through

the mandatory Big Game Reporting System, and these harvest numbers are available to help evaluate the program.

Will our city be liable for damage or injuries if we participate in the Urban Archery Season? From the standpoint of WRC regulations, hunting is legal anywhere in North Carolina. However, many cities choose to prohibit hunting by implementing ordinances regulating the use of weapons. It is hard to envision how failing to prohibit a practice that is legal throughout the rest of the state would increase a city's liability. However, if a city takes a more active role in regulating hunting, such as certifying hunters or stipulating the manner of hunting, there may be a valid concern about increased liability. An alternative question is, "Is the city liable for damage in deer-vehicle collisions if they have neglected to manage the deer problem?"

Is the Urban Archery Season the only opportunity for hunting in our city?

No. If cities do not prohibit hunting by regulating the use of weapons, then hunting is legal during any of the regular deer hunting seasons. Archery and/or firearm hunting can be allowed by ordinance from mid-September through December. The Urban Archery Season is simply another opportunity for cities to utilize hunting as a management tool. The timing of the season (January - February) should help encourage hunter participation, result in relatively few conflicts with other outdoor uses, and allow for effective harvest rates.

I'm a hunter. What do I need to do to participate?

The requirements are the same as for any other deer hunting season. You simply need your normal hunting licenses, big game harvest report card, and permission to hunt on land in the city. You can also obtain and use Bonus Antlerless Deer tags. The NCWRC has no other special licenses, quota permits, or certification requirements. If a specific city chooses to enact more restrictive regulations by city ordinance, you would need to comply with those as well.

Isn't there a better way to solve our deer problem without hunting?

Probably not. Hunting is the safest, most practical and economical method to reduce deer numbers in urban areas and housing developments. Sharpshooting and culling programs can be effective, but are extremely expensive and often just as controversial. Other techniques such as birth control, trapping/relocating, and supplemental feeding are simply not effective at solving the problems associated with an overabundant deer herd.

How do we know our deer herd is overabundant?

This question cannot be answered by an exact number or population level. In the public's eye it can be more easily addressed by considering the following type of questions: Does our vegetation show a browse line? Do we see large groups (5-10 or more) of deer at one time? Are deer-vehicle collisions common? Do residents use fencing and netting to protect their shrubbery and gardens from browsing? Do deer stand on their hind leg to browse vegetation? Are deer seen in unusual areas?

How does a city participate?

City officials should submit a letter of intent on official letterhead and a map by April 1st of the preceding year. A city does not have to include the entire city limits, but the map needs to clearly show the area(s) to be included. The area(s) should be easily recognizable in the field as well. The letter should also indicate if city officials desire to have contact information (i.e., telephone and/or website) printed in the North Carolina Inland Fishing, Hunting and Trapping Regulations Digest. This contact information is for individuals desiring information on the city's participation in the Urban Archery Season. Letters should be addressed to Director Gordon Myers, but mailed to Amy Willis in the Wildlife Management office (NCWRC – DWM, 1722 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1722). Wildlife Mgt staff will compile and deliver the letters to the director's office. If cities have ordinances that regulate weapons or hunting, they may need to change those through their normal procedures. In subsequent years the city will be mailed a confirmation letter, which should be returned to the WRC, asking city officials to indicate if they desire to continue or modify (e.g., change area(s) where season applies, update contact information, etc...) their participation in the Urban Archery Season.

Our city's participation in the Urban Archery Season will likely generate a lot of phone calls from both hunters and residents. Who handles these phone calls? The NCWRC can answer general questions about the season and hunting regulations (dates, license requirements, etc). Any questions related to a specific city issue (city limits, city requirements, etc) would need to be addressed by the city. Cities are encouraged to have contact information (e.g., telephone and/or website) printed in the North Carolina Inland Fishing, Hunting and Trapping Regulations Digest. Providing contact information in this manner will limit the city's number of misdirected calls and/or handling of calls, and will ensure both the hunting and non-hunting public receives correct information regarding the city's participation in the Urban Archery Season.

Will the NCWRC be responsible for enforcing regulations during this season?

NCWRC enforcement officers can and do enforce state hunting regulations (including the Urban Archery Season) to the best of their ability. Cities should be aware that personnel limitations affect NCWRC's presence, and that city law enforcement assistance can help to deter any problems.