

EBF statement on poaching

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When discussing the concept of bowhunting, EBF is often confronted with the argument that the legalisation of bowhunting would lead to increased poaching activity due to the quietness of this weapon.

Although EBF appreciates these concerns we feel such fears are unfounded and strictly the result of inadequate information about this hunting method. Therefore, we would like to clarify the following points:

1. Poaching with a bow and arrow would expose the poacher to a great risk of being detected due to the time and effort required for taking game. Statistics from Europe as well as the U.S.A. clearly demonstrate that a bowhunter needs to spend 10 to 20 times more time in the field to harvest game, comparing to a gun-equipped hunter.
2. In case of a missed shot or if an hunting arrow cannot be recovered after a pass-through the projectile can be found and traced back to a poaching action for a long time thus greatly decreasing the chance of a criminal to hide the poaching activities.
3. Shots taken by a poacher are usually aimed at the head/brain for immediate recovery, a fragmenting bullet hitting the brain/central nervous system will immobilize the game immediately. Bowhunters typically do not aim at the head in a hunting situation due to the excessive risk of wounding and a very complicated recovery in this case.
4. A recent survey of U.S. Fish and Game agencies indicates that they do not see the bow as a primary tool for poaching.
5. The bow and arrow is strictly a short-range hunting weapon and the average shooting distance is statistically determined to be 20 to 25 meters, which is highly unsuitable for most poaching.
6. To use the bow effectively requires regular practice, a characteristic which doesn't fit the common profile of a criminal.
7. Nowadays, criminals have access to very "efficient" poaching weapons and tools such as silencers, night-vision scopes, spot lights, etc.
8. If a person wants to take game illegally during normal hunting hours he/she can easily claim that the shot was "aimed at a fox", that it was "a

missed shot”, etc.

9. The most efficient bowhunting method is hunting from treestands. This requires much highly visible preparation work, so chances of remaining undetected are slim. The “modern” poacher mostly hunts at night and often shoots directly from a car (very impractical with a bow), using precision or even automatic rifles with the aid of night-vision scopes or even spotlights.

All these factors combined show clearly that bowhunting is a highly demanding hunting method and that the bow and arrow is not a very suitable poaching weapon. These days, criminals and unethical hunters have much easier ways to poach game without the inherently higher risks related to the use of bow and arrow for such activities. Even in states, where poaching and bowhunting is widespread (like the U.S.), poaching is never used as an argument against bowhunting by official authorities and fish and wildlife agencies (see point 2).

Therefore, EBF is willing to inform and educate national hunting officials about the concept of bowhunting, thus ensuring that such arguments against our traditional hunting method would not be used (purposely or by ignorance) to prevent the further acceptance of hunting with the bow and arrow in Europe.