

PLEASE NOTE: Legislative Information **cannot** perform research, provide legal advice, or interpret Maine law. For legal assistance, please contact a qualified attorney.

An Act To Allow Crossbow Hunting during Muzzle-loading Season

Be it enacted by the People of the State of Maine as follows:

Sec. 1. 12 MRSA §10953, sub-§1, as amended by PL 2011, c. 61, §2, is further amended to read:

1. Species and seasons. Except as provided in this Part, a person may hunt bear with a crossbow during the open season on bear as provided in section 11251 and may hunt deer with a crossbow during the open firearm season on deer as provided in section 11401. This subsection does not authorize a person to hunt deer with a crossbow during an expanded archery season established under section 11403 or in an expanded archery zone ~~or during the muzzle-loading-only deer hunting season established under section 11404~~, except as provided in subsection 1-A.

Sec. 2. 12 MRSA §10953, sub-§1-A, as enacted by PL 2011, c. 61, §3, is amended to read:

1-A. Hunting with a crossbow; 70 years of age or older. A person 70 years of age or older may hunt deer with a crossbow during an expanded archery season established under section 11403 or in an expanded archery zone or during the ~~muzzle-loading-only~~muzzle-loading deer hunting season established under section 11404.

This subsection is repealed January 1, 2015.

Sec. 3. 12 MRSA §11404, as amended by PL 2005, c. 280, §§1 and 2, is further amended to read:

§ 11404. Muzzle-loading deer hunting season

1-A. Muzzle-loading open season on deer. There is a special muzzle-loading open season on deer immediately following the regular deer hunting season established under section 11401, subsection 1, paragraph A for the purpose of hunting deer only with:

- A. A muzzleloader as defined in section 10001, subsection 42-A that is 40 caliber or greater and capable of firing only a single charge;
- B. A muzzle-loading shotgun as defined in section 10001, subsection 42-B; or
- C. A traditional muzzleloader as defined in section 10001, subsection 62-A that uses projectiles that are 40 caliber or greater or that uses buckshot.

The commissioner may terminate this open season at any time in an area if, in the commissioner's opinion, an immediate emergency action is necessary due to adverse weather conditions or severe hunting pressure. The length of the special muzzle-loading season is as follows.

The commissioner shall establish by rule the length of the special muzzle-loading season. The commissioner may establish seasons of different lengths in different regions of the State. The season may extend for no more than 12 hunting days in any part of the State.

1-B. Crossbow allowed during muzzle-loading open season. A crossbow as defined by rule pursuant to section 10953, subsection 2 and licensed under section 11109, subsection 9 may be used during the muzzle-loading open season.

2. Applicability of laws. The following provisions apply during the muzzle-loading open season.

- A. The commissioner's authority to regulate the harvest of antlerless deer under section 11152 is applicable during the muzzle-loading hunting season.
- B. Deer tags for the muzzle-loading open season must be issued for use in the same manner as regular deer tags.
- C. Except as provided in this section, the provisions of this Part relating to deer apply to the taking of deer with muzzle-loading firearms.

SUMMARY

This bill allows a licensed crossbow hunter to hunt deer during the muzzle-loading deer hunting season.