



The History Of The ABA

The Who, What, Why, and How's

In 1956, the Alberta Provincial Archery Association and the Edmonton Bowhunters joined to form the Alberta Bowhunters and Archers Association. In the time since the formation of the ABA, it has become the voice of bowhunters in the province of Alberta and there have been many successes along the way. The number one goal of this new association was to legalize bowhunting in the Province of Alberta.

This goal was achieved in 1957 and in 1958 a Bowhunter named Ray Anderson harvested the first legal animal in the Province of Alberta with a Bow and Arrow! Armed with his trusty 85 pound Howard Hill Longbow and using 3/8th inch birch dowl tipped with a Howard Hill Broadhead, Ray harvested a cow elk! The 42 members of the newly formed ABAA then set out on their next quest, to lobby government for changes to the Fish and Wildlife Act that related directly to bowhunters.

Bowhunters had to comply with the same rules governing gun hunters in respect to clothing, season length and even the Bucks and Bulls rule. The first "Bow and Arrow Only" zone was established and called Zone 8. This zone is still a Bow zone and is known world wide as WMU 410, the Canmore Corridor! In 1969 the ABAA was able to secure some changes in the F&W Act. Bowhunters are allowed to wear camo clothing. Seasons were lengthened for bowhunters. In 1970, the Government agreed to allow the use of aluminum arrows for the first time.

In 1974, the Government instituted a Bowhunting license (stamp) to better count the number of bowhunters in the province. The cost of this original stamp was \$3.00 and the first year there were 34 bowhunters licensed in the province. This number doubled the next year and with the phenomenal growth of the sport has increased to approximately 20,000 bowhunters in the Province of Alberta in 2014. In 1975, the Government set aside two more "Bow and Arrow Only" zones in the province. One surrounds the City of Edmonton in the northern part of the province and one around Calgary in the south. In 1976-77, the ABAA successfully won the fight for "archery only" (pre-season) seasons. Over time, the ABAA and then the ABA (acting alone or in concert with other stakeholders) were also successful in getting the Archery Antelope draw in place (1976/77), 410 and 408 Bighorn sheep season, Antlerless deer tags in 212 and 248, Antlerless elk tags in 212, Black bear baiting (1987), Sunday hunting in much of the province (2008 - 2011), Revamping of cougar management (2011) – including a general boot license tag, Successful lobby to keep crossbows out of the general archery season (2011), Successful lobby to retain Parkland County as archery only (2009), Successful lobby to stop further erosion of archery seasons by muzzleloaders (2011), Standardized start dates for archery (Aug 25 and Sept 1) (2011). (Resulting in increased days in the southern regions of Alberta), earlier start and later end dates to black bear seasons in southern portions of province (2011), allow non-trophy or trophy antelope to be taken in archery only season in all antelope zones (2011), allow hunting of red squirrel on private land (2011).

In 1991, The Alberta Bowhunters and Archers Association took a step to insure that the needs of both the Bowhunters and the target archers of the province were being looked after by people who were directly involved with each faction. The result was the formation of two child associations under the umbrella of the ABAA -- The Alberta Bowhunters Association (A.B.A.) & The Alberta Target Archers Association was formed. The umbrella association of the ABAA was dissolved in 2012 to enable both groups to better focus on their core mandates with the resources each had at their disposal

The ABA is involved in several working groups with government and other stakeholders (Alberta Game Policy Advisory Council, Hunting For Tomorrow, Alberta Outdoor Coalition) to lobby for changes to the hunting regulations (in general terms as well as for bowhunting in particular) as well as ward off threats to our hunting and bowhunting heritages, our outdoor recreational pursuits. We are involved not only provincially but internationally as well. We support the International Bowhunter Education Programs that teach bowhunters the right way to do things and the National Archery in the Schools Program that introduces archery to youngsters in a school environment (both administered by the Alberta Hunter Education Instructors Association). The ABA provides liability insurance to clubs and members, a network of directors from all regions of the province, we have a one-of-a-kind, internationally acclaimed Game Awards Program, a superb quarterly newsletter and a great website, an "ABA Bowhunter Challenge" 3D shoot format that focuses on bowhunting situations, are active in promoting youth in archery and bowhunting. In general, we are working hard to make sure our passions for archery and bowhunting are allowed to continue.

In order to do that, we need to be a strong voice and that comes from a strong membership and an active, dedicated executive. Everything you now do as a bowhunter in Alberta, you can attribute to the hard work of the Alberta Bowhunters Association, all of it by *volunteers*!! We are collaborating with other user groups and organizations to further those opportunities as much as possible. If you bowhunt, you need to belong to the ABA. If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem!!

JOIN NOW!!

For information on how to join the ABA go to www.bowhunters.ca