

PROJECT IDEA STARTER

Crossbow

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Have you tried archery and are ready for something more? Do you like being on the range but want to try something different? Do you have basic rifle skills too? If so, crossbow might be right for you. Crossbow is not an introductory shooting sports discipline. Archery, rifle, and hunting skills are needed before shooting and hunting with a crossbow.

Hunting and archery combine in the shooting sport discipline of crossbow. The crossbow itself is a combination of a traditional compound bow and the modern rifle. Those interested in shooting a crossbow are typically using it for hunting, so hunting skills are also needed. The crossbow is designed to provide increased power stroke and accuracy for a clean, humane kill. Crossbow also can be used for target shooting, which is typically on three-dimensional animal targets.

The crossbow is more than 2,000 years old. It has been used for military fighting and for sport hunting. Ohio and Arkansas were the first states to allow crossbow hunting in the mid-1970s. Tests showed crossbows are a safe, humane, and user-friendly tool for harvesting deer. Now, crossbows

are legal for hunting in most states. They are useful in controlled hunting situations in suburban areas where firearms are not allowed.

Crossbow hunting is a good way to introduce people to hunting because it spans all physical abilities and can be used in versatile situations. Hunting comes with responsibilities including being an ethical hunter and showing a demonstrated respect for the land, the animal, and the property owner. Proper ranges and targets should always be used when shooting a crossbow.

As with compound bows and rifles, crossbows are available in different styles and types with lots of options for accessories. A crank allows people with various physical abilities to cock the crossbow and shoot successfully with the use of a balancing

This project must be completed under the direction of a certified 4-H shooting sports instructor. As with all shooting sports program projects, members must be 9 years old as of January 1 of the current year. In addition, Ohio 4-H strongly recommends completing an archery, rifle, or hunting/wildlife project before taking crossbow.

PLAN YOUR PROJECT

Use this idea starter AND publication 4-H 365 *Self-Determined Project Guide* as the starting place for your crossbow project. The *Self-Determined Project Guide* is available from your county OSU Extension office or at ohio4h.org/selfdetermined. You may choose to do a little or a lot depending on your level of interest. Be sure to register your project with your county OSU Extension office.

tripod. Crossbow sights can increase accuracy.

Hunters have many location options with crossbows. Pop-up and ground blinds are often popular for disabled and able-bodied hunters. Elevated stands are also an option, however, additional safety considerations are required when shooting from an elevated stand. Tree stand safety requires a full-body harness to be worn at all times. All safety instructions must be closely followed.

Crossbow hunting can be rewarding for all ages (age 9 and above) and abilities. Complete this project under the direction of a certified 4-H shooting sports instructor. Continuing your learning with the *4-H Hunting/Wildlife* project book is a great opportunity to improve skills and compete in fair judging with other shooting sports members.

AREAS OF INTEREST AND THINGS TO DO

Every self-determined 4-H project can be broken down into areas of interest. These are the specific areas members want to address during their project adventures. The first area of interest, **Crossbow Safety**, is mandatory. Using *4-H 365 Self-Determined Project Guide*, identify at least two other areas of interest with at least three activities per area to explore. Take your ideas from the list below or make up your own.

Crossbow Safety—Required

- Explain why shooting at an organized range with certified instructors is necessary prior to taking a crossbow into the field.



- Learn and follow range rules and commands.
- Explain the importance of a safe tree stand system or hunting blind when using a crossbow.
- List all the safety equipment you should have when shooting or hunting with a crossbow.
- Practice shooting crossbow while performing safe practices.
- Teach a peer how to safely shoot a crossbow under the direction of a certified 4-H shooting sports instructor.

The Sport of Crossbow

- Research and report on the pros and cons of one of these topics: 1) crossbow having its own season, 2) crossbow being allowed during archery season, or 3) crossbow as a good replacement for firearms when hunting nuisance animals in urban areas.
- Name some opportunities that crossbow opens up. Think of

possible drawbacks. Do the opportunities outweigh any drawbacks?

- Organize a crossbow debate at your 4-H or shooting sports club or park organization. Record important points made by each side and validate them. Ask an adult experienced in shooting sports to assist with facilitating your debate.
- Attend a meeting where crossbow rules or use are being discussed. Report on your observations.
- What is the earliest age children should be allowed to use a crossbow? Discuss this with your club leader, shooting sports enthusiast, or crossbow trainer. Write a summary of the important points of this discussion.

Crossbow Hunting

- Complete a hunter's education course. Visit this website for information about Ohio Department of Natural Resources' courses: **wildlife**.

ohiodnr.gov/education-and-outdoor-discovery/hunter-and-trapper-education

- After researching your options, obtain a proper hunting license.
- Research laws and regulations for crossbow hunting in your area.
- Plan a crossbow hunt.
- Scout for a crossbow hunt.
- Learn regulations and laws for disabled hunters.
- Review options for a blind or a tree stand for disabled hunters.
- Organize a hunt for disabled hunters.
- Assist a disabled hunter.
- Partner with an organization who assists disabled hunters.

Your Crossbow and Equipment

- Label the parts of a crossbow and related equipment.
- Learn about different types of crossbows and how to select a crossbow for yourself.
- Shoot different types of crossbows and learn the purpose of each type.
- Select proper and correctly fitting safety equipment.
- Research options, and pros and cons of different types of hunting blinds and tree stands.
- List supplies and equipment needed for a successful crossbow hunt. Make an inventory of the supplies and equipment you own.
- Learn how to safely check

your equipment, specifically arrow sharpness.

- Talk with a bowhunting equipment industry professional.
- Invite a wildlife conservation officer to speak to your club about crossbows.

RELATED RESOURCES

National Bowhunter Education Foundation, “An Addendum to a Hunter Education or Bowhunter Education Course,” **nbef.org**

Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Division of Wildlife, **wildohio.gov**

Ohio 4-H Shooting Sports, **ohio4h.org/shootingsports**

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