

CONSERVATION COMMISSION

13 AYER ROAD HARVARD, MA 01451

978-456-4100 EXT.321

www.harvard-ma.gov



FAQs about walking on Harvard Town Conservation land during hunting season.

Is hunting allowed? Bow hunting is allowed during the fall hunting season on selected Town conservation areas as part of the Conservation Commission's deer management program run by the [Deer Management Subcommittee](#). Hunting with guns or for animals other than deer is not allowed on conservation land. Only hunters participating in the Town program are permitted to hunt on these lands and all are required to carry identification stating they are approved for the program.

Where is there hunting? Orange signs are posted at trailheads or at access points to conservation areas without trails. Conservation areas in the controlled hunt (archery only) program are shown on this [map](#). Hunting with bows or guns may be allowed by owners on private land and is permitted on the State-owned Delaney Wildlife Management Area and Bolton Flats and the Oxbow National Wildlife Refuge.

When is the hunting season? The 2023 archery season for deer in MA opens October 16th here in Zone 9 and ends December 30th. One area in Harvard, Daman/Stephenson, east of 495 is in Zone 10 and opens October 2nd. MA Division of Fisheries and Wildlife regulates hunting across the State in zones with different periods for hunting with various weapons. Click [here](#) for more information. No hunting is allowed on Sunday in MA.

What is a controlled hunt? Lands are not open to general hunting. A limited number of hunters are selected, having completed safety training and been tested for bow-shooting accuracy and screened for being a responsible hunter, to join the program that is carefully administrated by the Deer Management Subcommittee. Hunting activity is monitored and logs are maintained. Hunters in the program carry a permit and display a notice in their vehicle when parked to scout or hunt. Their stands are tagged with a permit and hunters are required to wear orange during shotgun (November 27 – December 9) and primitive firearms (December 11 – December 30) seasons.

Is it safe to walk where there is bow hunting? Yes, there has never been an injury from bow hunting to a person walking in an area with bow hunting in MA since hunting was first regulated by the State. Archery is conducted from stands up in trees so arrows travel down into the ground. Hunting activity is set back 500' from homes, 150' from roads and 75' from trails. Archery is used in deer management programs by other towns, land trusts and organizations like Audubon, Sudbury Valley Trustees and The Trustees.

What precautions should I take? It is good to be aware of hunting since it is taking place all around the region. Wearing an orange hat or vest is not required for walkers in areas with archery-only hunting, but is a good practice in fall if you walk in a variety of locations. It is recommended for people to stay on trails and to keep dogs near or on leash in areas hunted. Deer and hunters are most active at dawn and dusk and are unlikely to be encountered mid-day. As an exception, the rut, when deer are sexually active and move around the most, takes place during the last three weeks of November.

What if I have questions or concerns? Harvard Conservation Agent, Liz Allard, is available Monday-Thursday at 978-456-4100 ext. 321. If you are concerned about illegal/unsafe hunting activities call the MA Environmental Police anytime at 800-632-8075 and for other safety concerns, Harvard Police Dispatch at 978-456-8276.