



Professional Bow Hunters Society Official Statement on the Use of Drones for Recovery of Game

At the PBS, Professional Bow Hunters Society, we represent ethical bow hunters in every state, as well as many members who reside internationally.

We live in defining times. With the world of expanding and groundbreaking technologies comes a web of ethical dilemmas. When it comes to hunting, the use of drones and their predecessor, the cellular camera, has been a topic of intense debate. We believe that proper legislation of these tools is vital to the protection of hunting as a tradition in any state.

This is why we propose and encourage the following policies and request amendments to legislation:

1: Our organization does not officially affirm or advocate for the use of drones for recovery of game. We remain deeply concerned with the long-term complications. We also find no specific need for drone recovery. Our involvement is due to the imperative of proper restrictions on drone use.

2: Licensing

We believe licensing and establishing a system for hunter and flight check-in requirements are critical to the management of drone use for both surveillance and recovery. This could be done similarly to systems already provided for wildlife management area check-in and game harvest reporting. The check-in/check-out model is already in place in many states.

3: Recovery Only

We believe drone recovery of game is the only ethical form of use during hunting season. We strongly oppose any law that would allow the possibility of drones being used for surveillance of game populations at any time during an open hunting season.

4: Legal Dispatch definition or prohibition

We find importance in defining legal dispatch or methods of take. Or prohibiting. These methods of take must not be aided by an active or in-flight drone.

5: Post-Flight Pursuit Legislation

We recommend a 48-hour or greater regulated post-flight timeframe that does not allow pursuit or assistance in pursuit following drone surveillance or recovery efforts within private property lines accessed by the "checked-in" hunter or their drone partner.

A current example of this would be same-day hunting regulations that exist in certain jurisdictions to eliminate hunting after aerial surveillance conducted by aircraft.

The PBS is proud to have been part of this historic legislation thanks to our dedicated Alaska members.

6: No Access to Drone Flights on Public and Walk-In Hunting Properties

Due to existing pressures and impacts on shared resources, we recommend against the use of drone recovery on public lands and privately owned public access partnerships.

7: Public Dissemination or Sharing of Drone Recovery Footage

Footage, images, and video of drone recovery and dispatch shall not be disseminated or published online or electronically at any time.

This final request may be the most important of all for the future of bowhunting.

Our requests for consideration are many, but we hope this emphasizes the Pandora's box that drone recovery opens. Our membership continues to be divided on this issue. Many of our members strongly oppose the use of drones during hunting season for any purpose. Our organization fully acknowledges and respects this conservative position. The only true compromise is the shared belief that proper legislation is vital. Without it, damage to ethical harvest traditions could be severe and irreparable.

Sincerely,

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