375425 - Is Hunting with Air Rifle Pellets Allowed?

the question

Our residential scholar in southern California couldn’t answer my question so I’m writing to you. My question being I live in an area in the country which is extremely rural and there is no permissible meat so I have decided to take up hunting. I don’t want to bother the neighbors with a loud firearm so have thus decided to go the route of a powerful BB-gun or air rifle as some call it. Anyways I wonder if a bb-gun is permissible to hunt with for the reason that the BBs or ammo typically used are round or blunted, not sharp or pointed, for the most part (though some do exist there still not all that sharp)? I ask all this because I want to know if I will have killed my game by “violet blow” if I use rounded blunted BBs? With BB guns since they are much less powerful then real firearms the name of the game is head shots and taking shots no further than 30 yards from target. The bb gun I’m getting is a .22 caliber, I’m told it's able to take down a fox by the airgun specialist, though I don’t know how humane a kill that would be regardless Typically with airguns you want to hunt small game like quail, squirrels, doves, and rabbits which is what I’m hunting. All game that’s permissible to hunt with a BB gun correct insh Allah?

Summary of answer

It is stipulated that the weapon used for hunting should be sharp so that it creates a wound and has an impact on the flesh by cutting or piercing. The pellets that are shot by an air rifle for hunting cut and penetrate the body, so it is valid to hunt with it.

Detailed answer

Praise be to Allah.

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It says in Al-Mawsu`ah Al-Fiqhiyyah (28/133):

“We may sum up the conditions on hunting tools as follows:

1. The tool should be sharp so that it creates a wound and has an impact on the flesh by cutting or piercing, otherwise [the prey] is not permissible unless it is slaughtered in the manner prescribed in Islamic teachings.

It is not stipulated that the tool should be metal. Therefore, it is valid to hunt with any sharp weapon, whether it is metal, wood sharpened to a point, stone knapped to create a sharp edge, or other materials that can penetrate the body.

1. The projectile should strike the prey with the sharp edge or point in order to wound it, and the hunter should be certain that death resulted from the wound, otherwise it is not permissible to eat it, because if it is killed by the blunt edge of the tool or by its weight, it is regarded as having been killed by a violent blow. Allah, may He be Exalted, says (interpretation of the meaning): {Prohibited to you are dead animals, blood, the flesh of swine, and that which has been dedicated to other than Allah, and [those animals] killed by strangling or by a violent blow …} [Al-Ma’idah 5:3].

It was narrated that ‘Adiy ibn Hatim (may Allah be pleased with him) said to the Prophet (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him): I shoot the game with a Mi`rad (a short, blunt, featherless arrow) and I hit it. He said: “If you shoot the Mi`rad and it pierces (the prey), then eat it, but if it strikes it with its edge, then do not eat it.” (Narrated by Muslim). According to another version narrated by Muslim: the Messenger of Allah (blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) said: “If you shoot and mention the name of Allah, and it pierces the prey, then eat. But if it does not pierce it, do not eat it. And do not eat it if you strike it with the edge of the Mi`rad, unless you are able to slaughter it in the prescribed manner. Also, do not eat what is stuck with clay pellets, unless you are able to slaughter it in the prescribed manner. (Narrated by Ahmad). It was also narrated that the Prophet

(blessings and peace of Allah be upon him) forbade using small pebbles [for hunting], and he said: “They are not useful for hunting and are not effective in fighting the enemy, but they may break a tooth or put out an eye.” (Narrated by Al-Bukhari and Muslim).”

It also says [in Al-Mawsu‘ah Al-Fiqhiyyah (28/135):

“Hunting with Bunduq (bullets or pellets):

The Arabic word Bunduq may mean several things, including what is eaten [hazelnuts] and what is made of balls of clay or lead that are shot at the prey when hunting. What is intended here is what is shot at the prey.

With regard to pellets made of clay, the jurists unanimously agreed that what is killed by being shot with a heavy ball of clay is not permissible to eat, because it was killed by the weight of the projectile and not by its sharp point or edge…

Al-Bujayrami (may Allah have mercy on him) said: Ibn ‘Abd as-Salam (may Allah have mercy on him) issued a Fatwa stating that it is prohibited to shoot with clay pellets, and this is stated clearly in Adh-Dhakha’ir. However, An-Nawawi issued a Fatwa stating that it is permissible, i.e., to shoot with clay pellets, but some of the scholars restricted it to cases where the prey does not usually die as a result, such as geese. But if the prey does die, as in the case of smaller birds, then it is prohibited. Yet, if the pellets strike it and cut its neck with the force of the impact, or decapitate it, it is prohibited. This discussion is the correct view…

All of this applies to pellets made of clay or lead that are launched without combustion.

As for projectiles made of metal that are shot by firing a gun, the jurists differed concerning that. The Hanafis and Shafi`is stated that it is prohibited …

Ad-Dardir (may Allah have mercy on him), who was one of the Maliki scholars, stated that it is permissible, as he said: As for lead, that which is shot with it may be eaten, because it is more powerful than other weapons, as is the view adopted by some scholars. Then Ad-Dasuqi (may Allah have mercy on him) explained the matter further, as he said: To conclude, hunting with lead

bullets is a matter concerning which there is no comment from the earlier scholars, because it is something that was introduced after the introduction of gunpowder in the middle of the last century.

The later scholars differed concerning that. Some of them said that it is not allowed, by analogy with clay balls, and others said that it is permissible, because it causes the blood to flow and kills quickly, as prescribed. Comparing lead bullets to clay balls is an invalid analogy, because there is a difference, which is that lead bullets pierce the skin and penetrate the body in a real sense, which is not the case with clay balls; rather all the latter do is cause pain and break bones."

There is no difference between a rifle that uses bullets and an air rifle, especially if what is hunted with it is small animals such as pigeons and rabbits.

For more details, please see the following answers: 109361 and 97216 .

And Allah knows best.