

How far is too far?

One of the first things to happen in a Bowhunter Education course is we hand out a 3 x 5 card and ask the participants to write down some simple introductory notes about themselves and their bow hunting experience. Also, they are asked to write down the distance they feel is the maximum range at which they would take a shot on game. This information is used during the field portion of the course.

One of the most important and pertinent parts of the course is to help the students determine their 'personal effective range' or 'personal accuracy range,' i.e. the maximum range that they should attempt a shot at game. Also important is the knowledge that this range is changeable and is based on their skill and shooting ability.

Several articles have been written describing ways of determining one's effective range, some even include factors to compensate for the variables that may be encountered under actual hunting sequences. A Bowhunter needs to consider how some of these variables affect their shooting abilities and which variables can rule out a shot potential or severely restrict their range. One system of determining a beginning effective range that some of us Bowhunter Education instructors are using was developed years ago by the Golden Eagle Archery Company and is called the Golden Eagle Effective Range or GEER. This system is simple but adaptable and easy for students to understand and apply.

First of all the system uses a six inch target rather than the usual eight-inch representation of a deer's vital. This concentrates the bowhunter's practice and yields a substantial margin for range estimation errors. Second, the system uses five of these targets placed at relative ranges. One target is placed at what the shooter considers their point-blank range, a second at their maximum range, the third at a mid range and the fourth and fifth at close and long ranges respectively. Stand hunters may measure their yardages but rovers should not until all arrows are scored. The Bowhunter then shoots one arrow at each of the five targets in random order, scores each arrow as a hit or miss, and repeats the sequence varying the order shot and repositioning the targets or shooting position (Be sure not to change the ranges by more than +/- 2 yards.) until 25 arrows have been shot and scored. Compute the percentage of hits at each distance (i.e. 4 out of 5 = 80%). The GEER score and the Bowhunter's effective range is the longest range (yardage) at which the bowhunter hits the target 80% of the time.

GEER

Golden Eagle Effective Range

Range	point blank	close	mid	long	max
Trial 1	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trial 2	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trial 3	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trial 4	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Trial 5	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %	_____ %

GEER SCORE = or less

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By practice and repetition a Bowhunter can increase their GEER score and thus their effective range. Once a Bowhunter has determined their effective range they need to practice under conditions that may be encountered in the field and observe how their effective range is affected. Variables may include quarry alertness and quarry size (your GEER score was determined on a deer sized animal), as well as others. A Bowhunter should never attempt shots that exceed their effective range as reduced by the conditions in which they are hunting.