

# The world of 3D Archery

It was a warm, early fall day, as I crept down the trail through the timber, keeping my eyes peeled for any sign. I had my bow at the ready, just waiting for an opportunity for my shot at my elusive target. As I moved down the trail, I caught a glimpse of something, moved to get a better view, and then I saw it, under 40 yards away, unaware of my presence, presenting me an ideal shot. As I drew my bow, I tried to estimate my range for the perfect shot and pick my target area on this beast. As I found a clear shot through the brush, my finger found the release, I worked to control my breathing, keep steady aim, applied pressure to the release trigger, and watched my arrow fly, following it as it hit smack dead in the middle of the vitals... of a 6 foot tall Velociraptor!

3D archery shoots provide a great opportunity for archers to get out and hone their skills and have a lot of fun while doing so. As most archery hunters, and sport archers know, practice is key, and essential to being consistently accurate. Now it's one thing to be able to consistently hit the "X" on a target on an indoor range at 20 yards, and it certainly takes practice to get good at this, but it's a whole other thing to become proficient at taking shots through the bush, at awkward angles, through, around and behind cover, guessing yardages, and knowing where the "X" should be, on a not so defined target.

3D archery shoots provide just this opportunity. They are a very entertaining way to practice much required skills for archers, especially those that spend time hunting with their bows. 3D archery has two very important and required skills, first being your accuracy; as with any target shooting this is very important, and this gives you a chance to practice and test yourself in a different, more realistic environment. The other equally important aspect of 3D archery is your ability to estimate ranges. During most 3D shoots, the range you are shooting is unknown, and you need to be able to accurately estimate the range to make an accurate shot, much like when hunting. It doesn't matter how accurate you are with your bow, because if you misjudge the distance, your arrow isn't going to hit where you want it to anyways. There are some 3D events that

give you the range you are shooting on some of the targets, and some events allow you to use rangefinders, but these are event dependant. Generally though, you will know the max range you will be shooting, to give you some guidelines. There are different classes you can shoot in, depending on your skill level, and the class you are in will dictate the maximum range you will be shooting.

Here in Thunder Bay we are lucky enough to have the Lakehead Archers club just outside of town. Lakehead Archers is a not for profit organization, run by a group of knowledgeable and helpful volunteers, offering an indoor 20 yard range and outdoor 90 yard range, open 24/7 to members, as well as having a beautiful trail network throughout the vast wooded property where the 3D archery shoots are setup. They host a number of different events throughout the year, with the next one being the "Rubber Boot 3D Shoot". This is an annual event, held every spring, and is the first 3D shoot of the year, and is always a lot of fun. This event is sponsored by the Northwestern Ontario Sportsmen's Alliance and D&R Sporting Goods. It's a great chance to get your gear out after winter, and get outdoors and have some fun, and has a number of random draw prizes, giving people of all skill levels opportunities to win a prize. This year's Rubber Boot Shoot is being held on May 10th and 11th 2014, at Lakehead Archers on Vibert Road. Get more information at [www.lakeheadarchers.com](http://www.lakeheadarchers.com) and make sure to bring your boots! If you can't make this event, there will be another 3D shoot coming up on May 7th & 8th, the Garry's Auto 3D shoot. Check the website for upcoming event details, and potential weather related changes if winter decides to really stick around.

During these events, archers of all types are welcome; compound, recurves and longbows, and crossbows are welcomed, as long as everyone is shooting target points-no broadheads. There is usually a round of 30 targets setup throughout the trail network, with targets like life-size whitetail & mule deer, bears, moose, caribou, leopards, turkeys, supersized mosquitoes, even dinosaurs, and many more. They are setup throughout the trails, in realistic scenarios, with the shooting positions staked for you to shoot from, offering shots from different angles, and through a variety of cover and brush. There are elevated stands to shoot from, as well as some moving targets, giving you a vast array of experiences, giving you some great practice and some great entertainment. Whether you're a dedicated archer who shoots year round, new to the sport, or just someone who hasn't seen their bow in awhile, this is the perfect fun, pressure free environment for you to get outside, get some practice and have some fun.

*Corine Armstrong taking aim at a 3D deer.*

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OUTDOORS GUIDE

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