

The Canvasback

Summer 1996
Vol. 5, No. 3

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

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can•vas•back (kan'ves bak'), *n., pl. -backs*, (esp. collectively) - back. 1. A North American wild duck, the male of which has a whitish back and a reddish-brown head and neck. 2. A style of decoy made famous by carvers of the Susquehanna Flats region. 3. A quarterly publication of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.

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FROM THE EDITOR

These summer months have been a busy time for printed projects. We have three completed. The first project is one that has been started quite a few times but never finished. Under the guidance of Dr. John and Gail Carriere, the first Decoy Museum cookbook has been printed! We want to thank everyone who donated a recipe. Over 300 recipes were collected from Museum members, Honorary Chairmen, carvers and area businesses. We even have one from President Clinton! This cookbook is dedicated to all of the Honorary Chairmen, for all of the support they give the Decoy Museum. Look for the cookbook in the gift shop at the Museum.

In celebration of the Museum's 10th year, Karla Mattsson and C. John Sullivan have put together a Collection Catalogue. This album highlights select decoys from the collection and it will sell in the gift shop for \$12.95.

Last but not least, is a full color Museum brochure. The black and white informational flyers will be put to rest. This brochure took many hours of careful thought to ensure that it captures the essence of the Decoy Museum. If anyone can distribute these brochures at a show or has a place to put them out, please call the Museum and we will get some to you.

See you at the Duck Fair, September 14th and 15th!

Mary Jo Moses

ON THE COVER

A mallard decoy, made by the 1996 Duck Fair Chairman Ned Mayne, rests by the docked boats at Tydings Park. Photo by Mary Jo Moses.

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The Canvasback

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*From
the
President*



Dear Museum Member,

Six years have passed since the Decoy Museum unveiled its second floor addition. This

\$200,000 expansion made a tremendous impact on Museum operations, providing much needed space for new exhibits, effective artifact storage, and a library/classroom area. Most

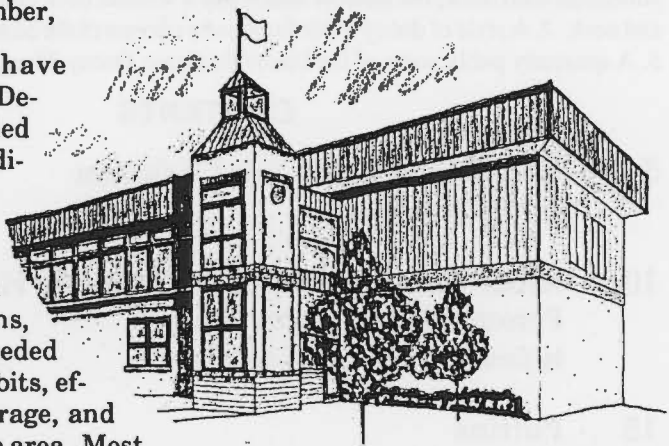
of our membership have enjoyed attending receptions and programs amidst special exhibits featuring some of the world's finest decoys. Every visit to the second floor is made complete by its panoramic view of the Susquehanna Flats.

Five years ago the Decoy Museum developed a long range plan to guide future Museum expansion. One of the most important issues identified was the installation of an elevator to enhance visitor access to the second floor. This need has been made even more compelling by the new American Disabilities Act, which is a Federal requirement to provide adequate handicapped access to all public buildings. An elevator is the only solution.

The Decoy Museum has already raised \$35,000 of the \$90,000 cost for the elevator's installation. I must call upon our membership to help the Museum meet its goal of acquiring the dollars necessary to comply with the new ADA regulations. Your contribution will make the second floor into an even greater asset as the Museum plans for the next century.

Allen J. Fair
President, Board of Directors

Tax deductible contributions can be made to the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. The museum was incorporated in 1981 as a non-profit organization which exists to document and interpret waterfowl as this art form applies to the social and economic life of the upper Chesapeake Bay region.



Ned Mayne

Duck Fair Chairman

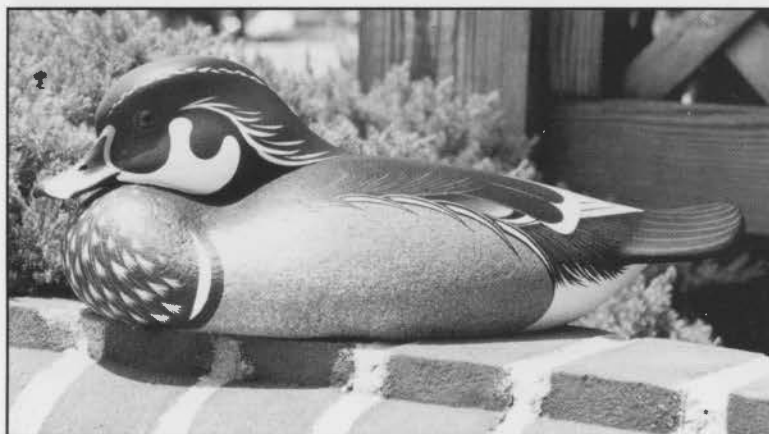
Karla Mattsson

In 1943, Ned Mayne was born in Wilmington, Delaware, an area rich in waterfowling, though not in decoy carvers. An avid outdoorsman since he was a small child, he not only learned to hunt and fish, but to enjoy the fragile beauty of nature. After serving several years in the Army, Ned enrolled at the University of Delaware for an art degree. He creatively put his schooling to work for Hercules Inc. in their engineering department. After a while, he resigned to carve decoys full time.

While still in college, Ned made his first decoys for his personal gunning rig. He experimented on his own until he developed a pattern he liked and improved his carving skills at the same time. A friend introduced him to noted collector and carver, Norris Pratt, who in turn introduced him to the work of top carvers such as Shang Wheeler and the Ward brothers. Ned still greatly admires their work, and continues to draw inspiration from their classic decoys.

Despite these great influences, Ned's style is decidedly his own. He takes the more unique and prominent features of each duck and exaggerates them to create a caricature of the real bird. Most of the decoys Ned carves are made from high-density cork, though he still makes solid wooden decoys as well. He likes to use traditional hand tools for his carving, even when doing decorative work. Ned also uses house paints on his decoys, same as the early carvers.

Early in his career Ned entered carving contests, but didn't care for what he saw. He felt that too many judges were unqualified. Ned is very supportive of the International Waterfowl Carving Association's stan-



Wood duck decoy. Photo by M. Moses.



Mallard drake attracting some attention. Photo by M. Moses.

dardization of contest rules, but wishes they would instigate a judge's certification program. He judged once or twice himself and decided not to do that again.

Thanks to one customer, Ned has carved every duck and goose that is native to North America. He greatly enjoyed the challenge of creating patterns for all of the unusual birds this collection included, such as the spectacled eider and fulvous whistling duck. The most challenging duck in the set was the extinct Labrador duck which required extensive research to reproduce. Ever excited by new projects, Ned now wants to experiment with European and African waterfowl. He said, "They are beautiful. It would be fun to research them and carve them too. It is always fun to do something different, something you haven't carved before."

Over the years he has also carved many unusual birds as well, including eagles, pelicans and penguins. He has carved a few songbirds and miniatures, but doesn't care for the miniatures as they are just as much work as a full size decoy. Amazingly, Ned has never carved a shorebird!

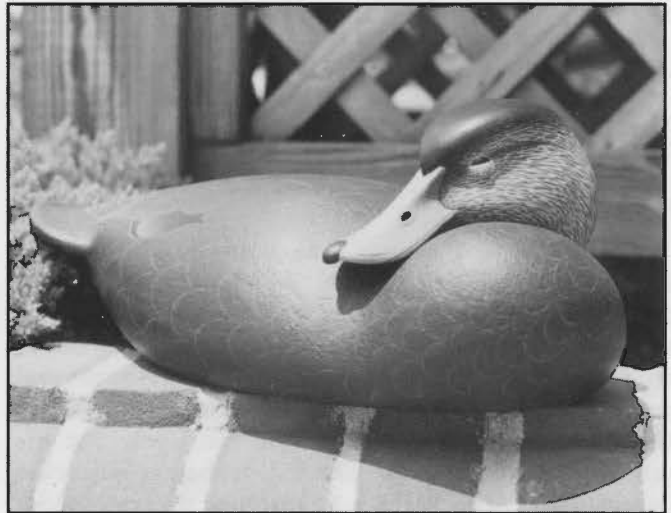
Ned is also an accomplished painter, working predominantly in acrylics. He strives for realism in a variety of genre including sporting subjects. He created the first Delaware State Duck Stamp and had the honor of producing a Delaware Ducks Unlimited Sponsor Print.

Even though Ned no longer hunts waterfowl,

he fondly remembers the days when he did. One hunt in particular reminds him of his youth when he swam the "hundred meter hip-boot free style" sinking his boat in deep water. It was a day that shook him up quite a bit and stands out vividly in his memory.

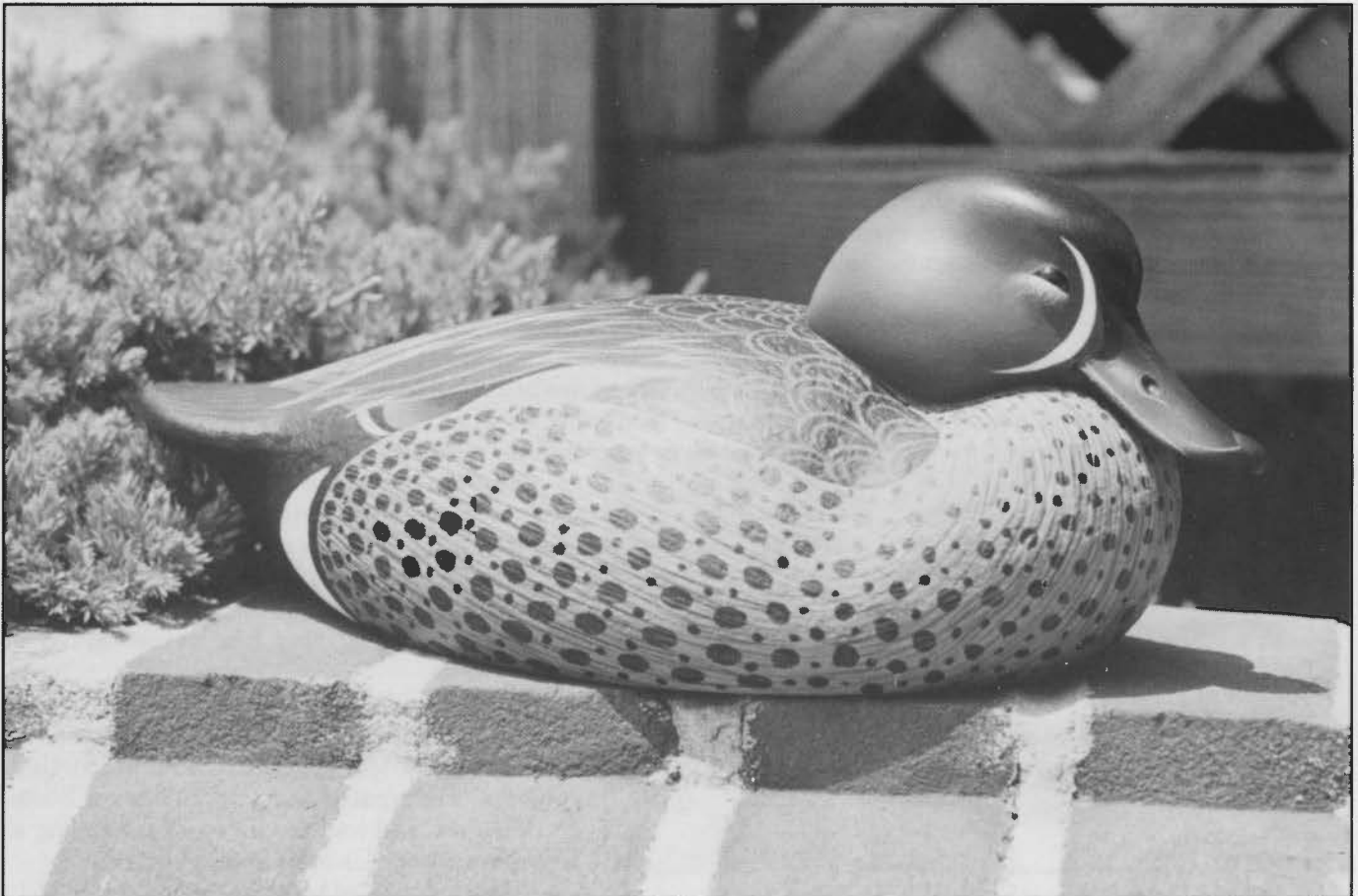
He explained, "About twenty five years ago I went overboard in December. I was over in the Delaware River in 18 or 20 feet of water. It was very choppy and rough and I sank the boat. As skinny as my legs are, I always fastened the knee-harnesses inside the hip-boots. When you do that you might as well just marry those boots because you got them for keeps, there isn't any getting rid of them. I went under three times and the third time I thought it might be the end of it, size 13 hip-boots hold a lot of water. By the time I made it to shore, I barely had enough strength to lift my face up out of the mud and just lay there. I'm not in good enough shape to do that today!"

Ned is still drawn to the outdoor life. His concern for the environment has led him to be a productive, long term member of Ducks Unlimited. Aside from donating decoys and prints for their fund-raising, he had served on the Delaware DU Committee for several years. He has also been very generous to the Decoy Museum. Ned taught carving classes in the Museum's classroom,



Black duck decoy. Photo by M. Moses.

inspiring many novice carvers. He has also donated his work to the small auctions the Museum holds throughout the year. The Museum is honored to have a carver as talented and caring as Ned Mayne, our 1996 Duck Fair Honorary Chairman.



Blue-winged teal decoy. Photo by M. Moses.

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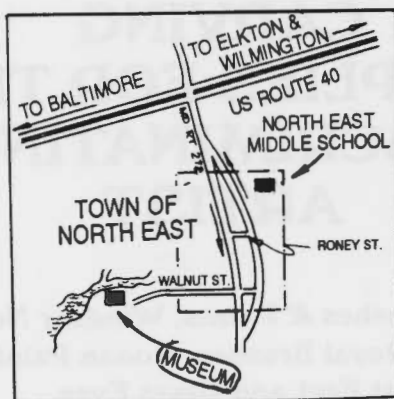
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Campbell Sr. fishing on the Potomac River c. 1968. Photo from Albert G. Campbell, Jr.

Albert Campbell

The Cecil County Heritage of a Potomac River Decoy Maker

James L. Trimble and Chad Tragakis

Across the Susquehanna River from Havre de Grace, lies the quiet, picturesque town of Perryville. Perryville can claim as native sons such prominent decoy makers as Ben Dye, Taylor Boyd and George Jackson, as well as the carving team of Asa Owens and Henry Davis. Additionally, this Cecil County town was the birthplace of a young man named Albert Campbell. Here along the Susquehanna Flats, Campbell was introduced to the world of gunning and decoy making. It was in Perryville that he formed his distinctive style, however, he is better remembered for the decoys he later created for use on the Potomac River, and for the fishing and duck hunting parties he led there.

Born in 1910, Campbell's formative years were enriched by the commercial and social activities associated with the heavy waterfowl populations migrating through this northern most part of the Chesapeake Bay. Life on the Flats was good for young Albert or "Ab" as nearly everyone called him. Leaving school at age thirteen, he began working at odd jobs along the waterfront. Childhood friends Stan Bailey (1910-1995) and Mert Owens (b. 1911), both retired Pennsylvania Railroad workers, fondly recalled the times they spent hunting, fishing and trapping muskrats with young Ab.

Campbell soon became a full-time employee of the A.H. Owens fish wharf in Perryville which was owned by Mert's grandfather. The Owens wharf purchased, skinned and cleaned the day's catch from commercial fishermen, then packaged and iced the fish for shipment to the nearby markets of Baltimore and Philadelphia. It was during this time that young Albert began to develop and hone his skills as a boat builder, and to try his hand at decoy-making. It was during this time that he developed a strong relationship with two commercial watermen with whom he worked closely: Asa Owens and Henry Davis.

The 1920 census lists Owens (1875-1956) and Davis (1876-1960) as "watermen, river and bay." Their fishing shanty, with pier and floating dock, was leased from the Pennsylvania Railroad and was situated on the Susquehanna River where the Perryville Yacht Club is now located. The Owens wharf, where young Campbell worked, was located down river a short walking distance away. Mert Owens, who is a distant cousin of both Campbell and Asa Owens, told of how "Ace" Owens and "Hen" Davis worked the water year round. Netting fish started with the spring run and lasted through the summer and into the fall. Eels were also caught during



Albert G. Campbell, Sr., c. 1954. Photo from collection of Albert G. Campbell, Jr.

the spring and summer and were sold primarily as bait to crabbers. Fall was heralded with the noisy arrival of waterfowl, and like many Bay watermen, Owens and Davis turned their attention to duck and goose gunning. In winter, ice was harvested and sold at the Owens wharf. During the late winter and early spring, these watermen would make and mend their gill nets and eel pots, refurbish their boats, carve, repair and

paint their decoys.

Campbell, through his work on the wharf, had regular contact with Owens and Davis. Mert recalled that young Albert was always helping them out with odd jobs, as he spent much of his spare time at their shoreline shack. Ab's father was a bridge builder and iron worker who was seldom home. The fact that neither Owens nor Davis had any children of their own only strengthens Mert's assertion that the pair treated Campbell like a son. Who better to pass on two lifetimes' worth of fishing tips, hunting techniques and decoy making pointers to, than this young man? This influence is most visible in Campbell's decoys which are so similar to the uniquely stylized, high chine-line birds of Owens and Davis.

Stan Bailey told of how they (Stan, Mert, and Ab) were always playing along the waterfront as kids. They would often hang around the Owens and Davis shack, and sometimes sneak out onto the pier, where they were not allowed. Bailey noted that Owens and Davis were forty-four and forty-three years of age, respectively, when the US-Canada Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918 effectively shut down their market hunting activities. Sport hunting continued to flourish however, and the two experienced watermen supplemented their incomes by providing guide services, decoys included,



This decoy with Rock Hall paint reflects a different tail design and is thought to be one of Campbell's early Cecil County stools. Photo from the Jim Trimble collection.



Relief carving of mallards by Campbell, Sr. Photo from Albert G. Campbell, Jr.

and through the making and selling their decoys to other hunters.

Bailey did not know if young Ab served in any guiding capacity for Owens' and Davis' clients. He did recall that Campbell was a regular "pick-up" guide for his father, William Bailey, meaning that Campbell would provide services to "sports" when he needed an assistant or was over-booked. The senior Bailey owned and operated *The Barbara*, a twenty-six foot long Eastern Shore dead rise work boat that could sleep six. The boat was moored at the Pennsylvania Railroad wharf and sailed every other day. It carried a double sinkbox and two bushwhacking boats. Bailey's parties would leave early, around two a.m., to allow enough time to set 500 to 600 decoys by sunrise. Stan Bailey remembered that Ab was producing a fine decoy by the time he was about fifteen, and several certainly must have seen use off the bow of *The Barbara*.



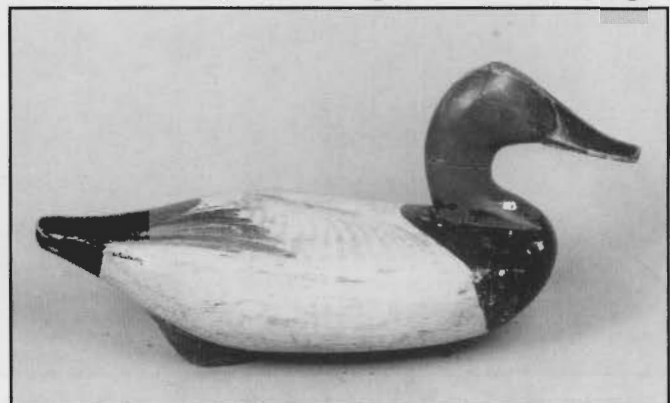
Notice the similarities of this Henry Davis and Asa Owens decoy to Campbell's decoys. Photo from "Decoys of the Susquehanna Flats and Their Makers," by J. Evans McKinney.

In 1929, at the age of nineteen, Campbell married his Havre de Grace sweetheart, Mary Ellen Blansfield. The two said goodbye to their hometowns and set out on their own. Like his father before him, Campbell worked for the American Bridge Company as a rigger. Over the next ten years, this work took him to many U.S. and foreign cities. Wherever his work brought him, Campbell took full advantage of the local hunting and fishing. His trophy catches ranged from deer, to alligator, to large drum (fish).

In 1939, his employer was awarded the contract to build the Morgantown-Route 301 bridge on the Potomac River. This job afforded the Campbells a long awaited return to their native Maryland. They settled in Charles County at La Plata, and Campbell soon fell in love with the Potomac and its abundant fish and game. When the Morgantown bridge was completed in 1943, Campbell chose to leave the bridge company and stay in La Plata. This decision was influenced both by three falls on the job and by his desire to stay in the Potomac River area he had grown to love. Campbell then worked as a rigger for the Naval Ordnance Lab at Indian Head, and later, worked in the restaurant business, which was thriving in southern Maryland.

Throughout this period, Campbell supplemented his income by netting and selling fish. He also made his own crab and eel pots, and built shallow, flat-bottomed skiffs for use on the creeks and marshes adjacent to the river. He established and maintained duck blinds on the Nanjemoy and Port Tobacco creeks and on the Wicomico and Potomac rivers. It was during this period that Campbell became a local legend: a man who knew how to hunt and fish the river. Although not a prolific hunting guide, Campbell was eagerly sought after by both local gunners and visitors. For over twenty years, his "ducking parties" included many coaches and players from the University of Maryland football team.

The decoys Campbell made in La Plata, from 1939 to about 1975 bear an uncanny resemblance to Owens and Davis birds. Like his mentor's work, each exhibits a wide deck, arched back and gentle camber sloping to

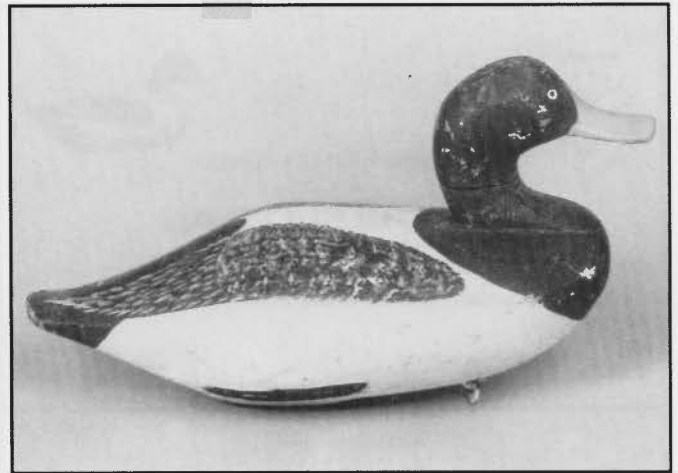


A later Campbell canvasback decoy. Photo from Jim Trimble.

a well-defined high chine line. They were obviously crafted with as much regard to overall sculptural form to species representation. Campbell's concern for sculptural form most likely stemmed from his earlier experience as a boat-builder. Like the rigs he made in Perryville years earlier, these later decoys were all hand-chopped from cut blocks, and finished with a draw knife, spokeshave and wood rasp

The cheeky heads are well carved, with flat foreheads, and crowns that round out at the base of the neck. The bills are thick at the end and cut deeply into the head. The paint patterns on these Potomac birds was quite elaborate, distinguishing them from their Cecil County cousins. He is known to have made canvasbacks, bluebills, a few ruddy ducks, and a handful of confidence swan decoys during this period. Although his production was limited, he did on occasion make and sell rigs to other hunters in addition to carving what he needed for his own blinds. He also repaired and repainted decoys for local hunters. In his later years, Campbell created beautiful miniatures and three-dimensional wall plaques of many waterfowl and game species.

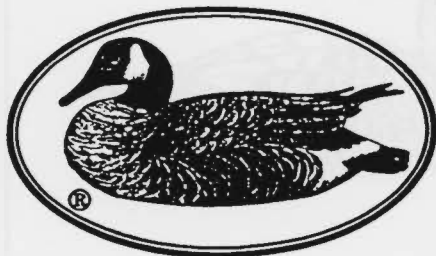
Campbell decoys have appeared sporadically on the collector's market over the past ten years, often misidentified. The Richard W. Oliver Auctions of 1986



Bluebill decoy by Campbell, Sr. Photo from Jim Trimble.

and 1987 sold properly identified birds, because the consignor purchased them directly from Campbell. Ab, who passed away in 1989, was one of only a handful of Potomac River decoy makers. Unlike other carvers however, Campbell's decoys truly reflect a style reminiscent of the rich history of the Chesapeake Bay's Susquehanna Flats. It is a wonderful legacy for any Maryland decoy.

The Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art • World Championship of Wildfowl Carving



NEWS RELEASE

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Frank W. Benson: His Sporting Art

A major exhibition of the sporting art of Frank W. Benson, the acknowledged founder of the sporting art genre in America, will be held from October 12, 1996, through January 12, 1997, at the Ward Museum of Wildfowl Art in Salisbury, Maryland.



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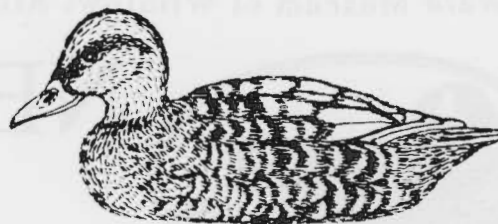
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Puffins

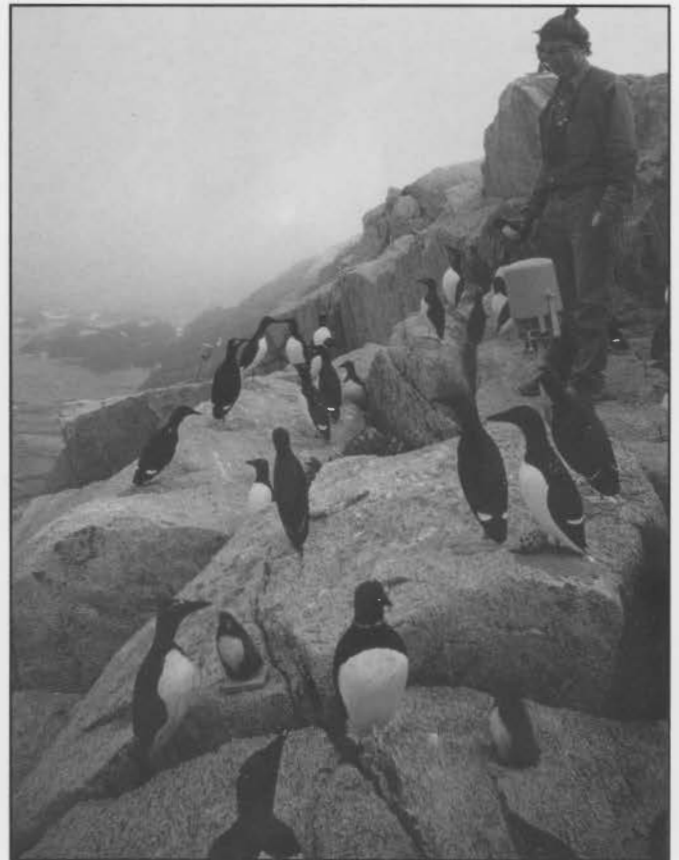
Linda Yoder

Nearly 100 years ago, the small seabirds known as common or Atlantic puffins were all but exterminated along the Maine Coast. Thanks to the work of research biologist Stephen Kress, PhD, the puffin population is making a spectacular comeback.

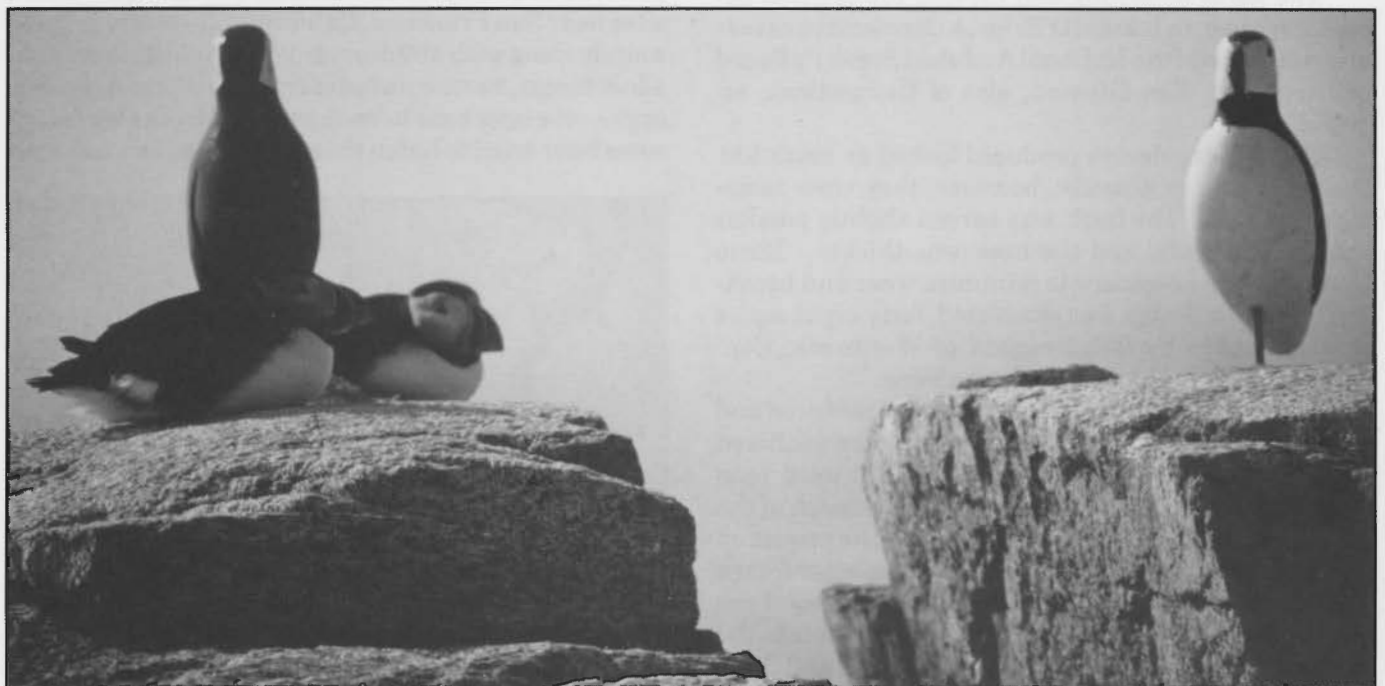
When Kress initiated his project to re-establish the puffin colonies back in 1970, he had no idea just how successful he would be. Neither did he imagine that twenty-six years later, his idea to use puffin decoys to attract live birds to former breeding grounds would be adopted by conservationists around the world to attract a variety of seabirds to traditional or new nesting sites.

In 1973, Kress, an employee of the National Audubon Society and a team of volunteers and staff members, began transplanting two-week old puffin chicks from Canada to tiny, seven-acre, Eastern Egg Rock, a treeless island off the coast of Maine near Rockland. Over the next eleven years, in cooperation with the Canadian Wildlife Services, 950 puffin chicks were transplanted here and to neighboring Seal Island. The chicks were placed in burrows and hand-fed daily by team members.

The puffins' independence makes them ideal for Dr. Kress's experiment. At six weeks of age, the



Dr. Steve Kress on Matinicus Rock with the new murre decoys, and a speaker which plays murre colony sound. The Decoy Museum has a murre decoy on display in "What is a Decoy." Photo by Steve Kress.



Puffins with decoys. Photo by Steve Kress.



A tern nest built right next to a wooden tern decoy. Taken on Eastern Egg Rock by Steve Kress.

fledglings leave their burrow beneath the rocks, jump into the sea and paddle off. It's very likely, Kress adds, the birds won't touch land again for two or three years. It will be five years before they mate and reproduce.

In his efforts to make the chicks feel at home and to draw them back to the island sanctuary later, Kress mounted thirty-eight puffin decoys on Eastern Egg Rock. He says the decoys indicate to any returning puffins that the island was a safe place for nesting. It was four years before the first of the transplanted, banded puffins returned to the island, and another four years before five pairs of the seabirds chose the island as a nesting place.

The job of designing and carving the original decoys was given to Donald O'Brien, a Connecticut carver and chairman of the National Audubon Society's Board of Directors. Ken Gleason, also of Connecticut, assisted him.

The pattern decoys produced looked as much like the real birds as possible, however, they were somewhat stylized. The beak was carved slightly smaller than a live bird's, and the neck was thicker. These changes were necessary to minimize wear and breakage. Once the design was completed, forty-eight copies were produced by Bob Nesgoda of Westbrook, Connecticut, on a multiple carving machine.

Two dozen floating decoys were also produced and set on a stringer near the island. They were anchored to the sea floor with cinder blocks, but were soon washed away by a storm. Kress notes that each of the decoys carried the name and address for the project on its' bottom. Sometime later he received a letter from a gentleman in Massachusetts saying he had found one of the decoys. However, he refused to return it to the project because it made a most "interesting and decorative" door stop.

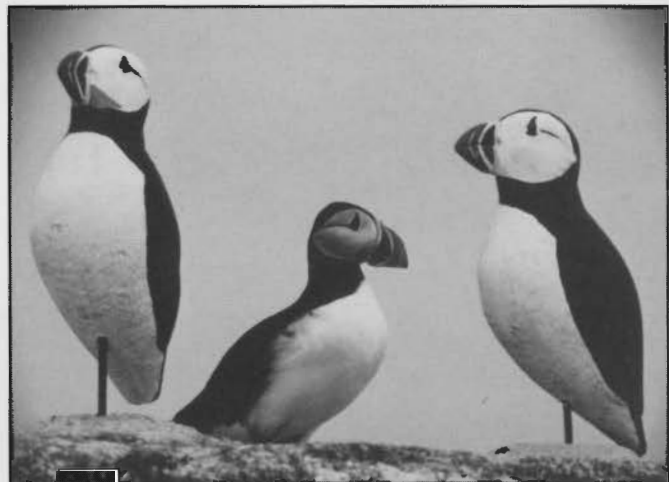
Today, seabird decoys are being used in a number

of national and international projects to repopulate coastlines, including the coasts of Hawaii, Maryland, Japan, England, and Italy. Species involved in these projects are short tailed albatross and terns, Japan; terns and puffins, England; laysan albatross, Hawaii; terns and gulls, Venice, Italy; terns and common murre along the Maine coast; and terns on the coast of Maryland.

Each project, Kress says, "incorporates as many decoys as it can afford. More is better." "The live birds respond differently to the decoys, according to species," he notes. The puffins often peck at the decoys' beaks, which is part of their mating ritual." Terns have been observed offering decoys fish, a part of their mating ritual, and even mounting the decoys. They also sit on the decoys sometimes, using them as perches. "Several of the species just like to sit close to the decoys, as though for comfort," Kress adds.

Kress notes that the National Audubon Society sponsors boat tours around the Maine islands where the various seabird projects are being conducted. Even though the reserves are off-limits, early in the program, a boat docked at one of the islands and some of the passengers had their pictures taken with the decoys, he tells with a chuckle. From the tour boats, he says, people can't tell the decoys from the real birds. The tour directors often tell the tourists that "the birds with one leg are decoys, those with two legs are live."

Since the inception of the puffin project, Kress says recordings of bird calls have been added to the programs. The calls are broadcast using CDs and solar-powered sound systems. One of the common murre sites near San Francisco, California, currently is using sounds along with 400 decoys. While he originally used adult decoys, he now includes chick decoys and ceramic eggs — the eggs have been so accepted by the birds that some have tried to hatch them. "We used two postures



A puffin (middle) with two puffin decoys. Photo by Steve Kress.

for the adult decoys," he says. "We tried flat, cut-outs, but it was soon learned that three-dimensional decoys attracted more attention. The decoys are most effective with birds that normally colonize."

Most of the decoy carvers are from the northeast coastal area, Kress says. When O'Brien first contacted them, they were both curious and very optimistic about the project, he adds. "Even though the decoys were carved from the same pattern, each individual carver added touches of his own style, which is okay," Kress says. "Some small variations are fine."

Just how successful is the decoy program? Barren, isolated little Eastern Egg Island, where Kress's idea was first put into practice, had sixteen nesting pairs of puffins last summer, while Seal Island, the second phase of the project, had twenty-five pairs plus an increasing number of "loafing" or unpaired birds.

Kress says the projects are funded by public contributions and donations from the National Audubon Society. There is also an Adopt-A-Puffin program, wherein the donor's contribution entitles him/her to a photo of a puffin chick wearing a leg band bearing the donor's name. Some monies also come from the tour boat guides who regularly carry tourists among the Maine islands.

Contributions to the Seabird Restoration Program may be mailed to: National Audubon Society, Project Puffin, 159 Sapsucker Woods Road, Ithaca, NY 14850. For additional information about the project, Dr. Kress may be contacted at the same address.



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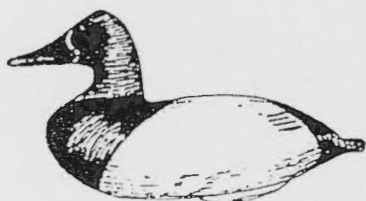
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Bob White

Delaware River

Decoy Collector and

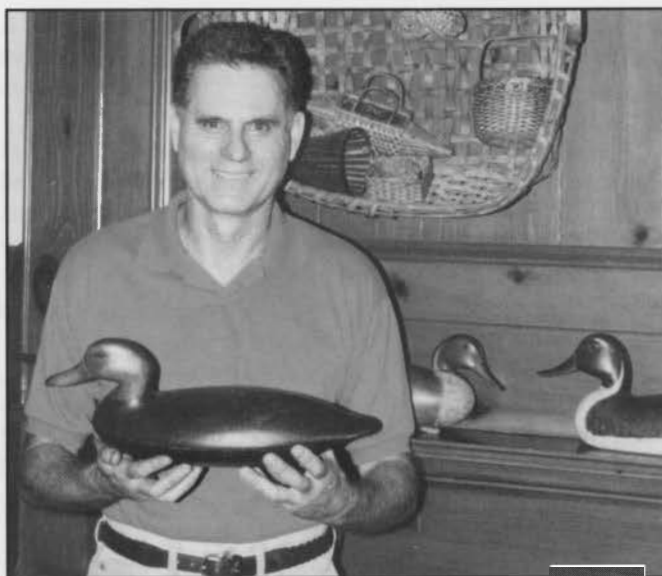
Historian

Allen E. Linkchorst

Bob White began collecting decoys over thirty-nine years ago and his enthusiasm has not dampened yet! Bob began collecting decoys as a teenager and over the years, his hobby of making and selling decoys has evolved into a full-time business.

Born Robert L. White in Trenton, New Jersey on August 9, 1939, Bob lived there until his marriage to Pauline in 1961. The couple initially resided in Bristol, Pennsylvania until they purchased their present home in Tullytown, Pennsylvania.

Bob's older brother Jim, an avid duck hunter and decoy carver, introduced Bob to duck hunting and decoys. As a small child, his brother would show him the "day's catch" and quiz him on the identity of the species.

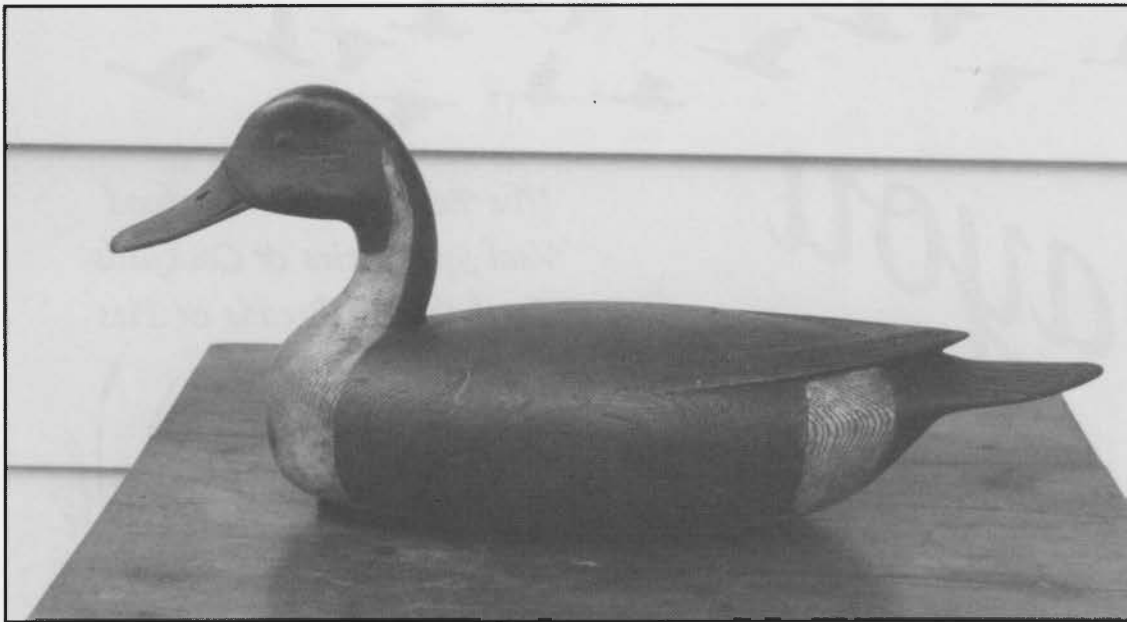


Bob White holding a John Blair black duck. Photo by Allen Linkchorst.

Bob's fascination with decoys started as a young man and he can trace his collecting days back to 1957 when he purchased twenty-seven decoys, made by John English and painted by John Dawson, from a Trenton, New Jersey sporting goods store. The decoys were from Dawson's personal rig and were in perfect condition. He paid forty-six dollars for these decoys which he used for gunning. Once the word had spread about Bob's



From his collection, a John English hen bufflehead. Photo by Allen Linkchorst.



A Jess Heisler pintail drake. Photo by Allen Linkchorst.

purchase, collectors started coming to his house, interested in buying the decoys for their collection. Up to this point, Bob had always looked at decoys as only functional tools to hunt with. All of the interest in Bob's newly acquired decoys by collectors changed his whole outlook on decoys. Bob now started looking at decoys as folk art, an item to collect.

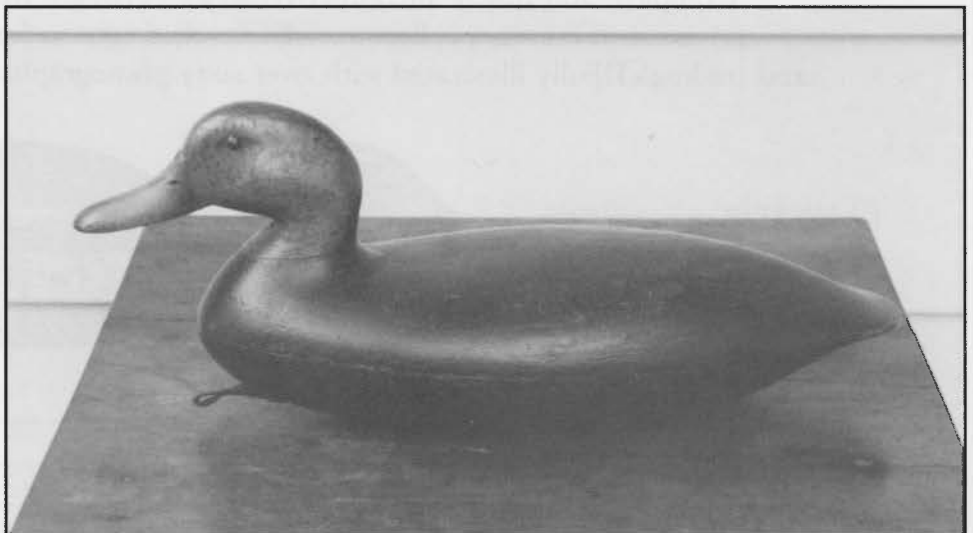
In the early 1960's, Bob became a decoy buyer for noted collectors Lloyd Johnson, Bill Mackey and Johnny Hillman. He would buy some decoys, keep one or two and sell the remainder. He was also carving his own decoys and selling his competition decoys in order to buy older Delaware River decoys, a practice that continues even to this day.

When asked what he liked best about the "old days" Bob replied "the thrill of meeting and talking to the old gunners and carvers, men in their seventy's, eighty's, and even a ninety year-old gentleman." These old timers would tell Bob about their days of gunning on the Delaware River and of the ducks they shot and decoys they carved. They provided a clear picture of those by-gone days. Bob also enjoys meeting new collectors. He appreciates their eagerness and enthusiastically shares information about collecting.

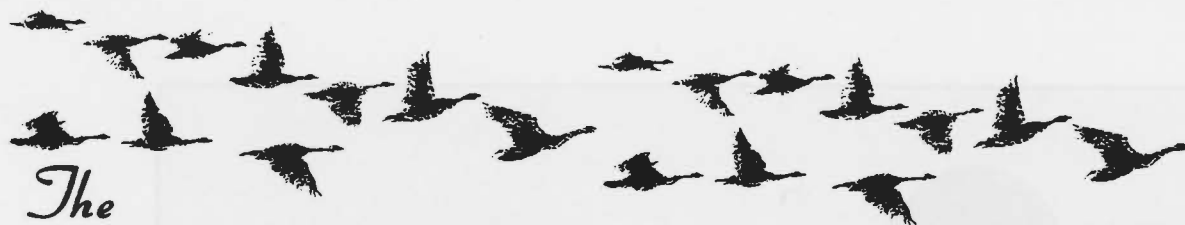
Over the years, Bob was exposed to great decoys from all over the country. While Bob admires all the decoys from the masters, he remains true to his

roots and concentrates on collecting Delaware River decoys. The Delaware River had some old pros who received the majority of their income from duck hunting, decoys, and duck-boat building. These pros, including John English, Dan English, Jess Heisler, and Tom Fitzpatrick. All produced collectable decoys as did Bill Quinn and Joe King who carved personal rigs. In Bob's opinion, the refined, smooth flowing classic lines of an English decoy places them right at the top of his list.

This fall will be Bob's thirty-ninth year of collecting decoys. Bob has matured as has his collection of decoys. He joined decoy collecting in its infancy and grew with it. Bob is proud to be a carver carrying on the tradition and a decoy historian who shares his knowledge of Delaware River decoys.



A favorite, a John Blair black duck. Photo by Allen Linkchorst.



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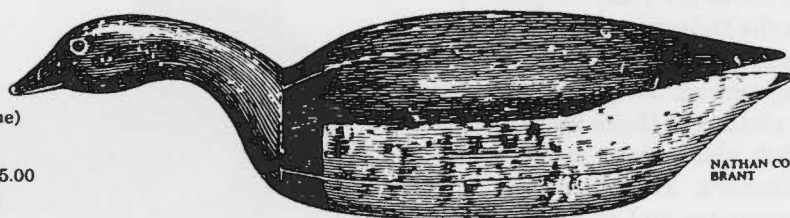
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“Shoe-Bill” Al

From the Collection

Karla Mattsson, M.A.

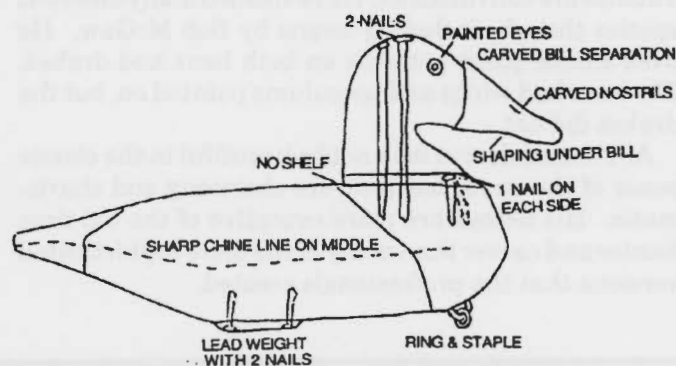
Albert Thomas was without a doubt, a decoy carver with his own style. Born in 1873, Al lived and worked in the Aberdeen area most of his life. He ran the Bush River Boat Works, a boat yard which actively built and repaired boats. During his off hours, Captain Thomas hunted ducks on the flats and carved decoys, primarily for himself. Most of his decoys were made in the thirties. Even though he was close to skilled carvers like Bob McGaw, decoys by Al show little of their influence.

Hand-chopped and roughly finished, these decoys look more like a caricature of a duck than like a portrait. Most of their character is in the head, which has a droopy demeanor. It is worked down from a two by four, the full width remaining at the base of the neck and the bill. The crown is well rounded as is the throat. The bill angles downward with a pronounced bill separation. Curves are shaved from along the lower mandible creating Al's trademark “shoe-bill” shape, seen on the underside of the bill. The eyes are painted on, but nostrils are carved low on the bill.

The head is generally attached to the body with two

large nails in the top of the head, and two smaller nails, one on either side of the base of the neck. There is no shelf for the head to rest on. Each Al Thomas decoy body is unique in its shape and proportions, but the overall feel is the same. They are rough hewn and angular with none of the planes rounded out. The chine line is in the middle of the body, usually rising into the tail. You can practically see every stroke of the hatchet in the lines of his decoys. The tail is broad and blunt, but not particularly heavy. His decoys have ring and staple attachments for the anchor line. Lead weights are attached with two nails, but the weights themselves are not consistent.

The only known decoys completely carved by Al

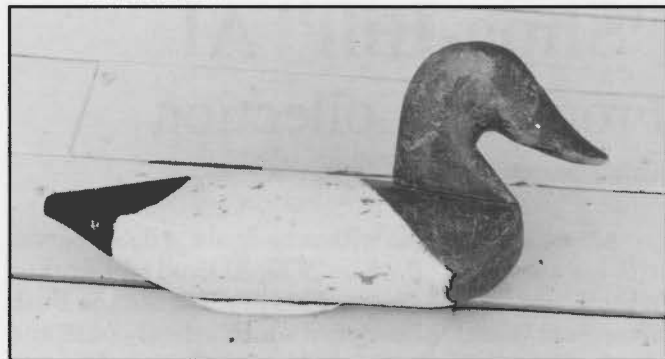


Canvasback hen on loan from Rodney Boggs. Photo by J. Engers.





"Shoe-bill". Photo by M. Moses.



Canvasback drake on loan from Dr. Carriere. Photo by M. Moses.

Thomas are canvasbacks. He re-headed many different species though, including swans by Bob McGaw. He used simple paint patterns on both hens and drakes. The hens had wings and speculums painted on, but the drakes did not.

Al Thomas decoys may not be beautiful in the classic sense of the word, but they are charming and charismatic. His decoys are more evocative of the old time hunter and carver than many of the more sophisticated versions that the professionals created.

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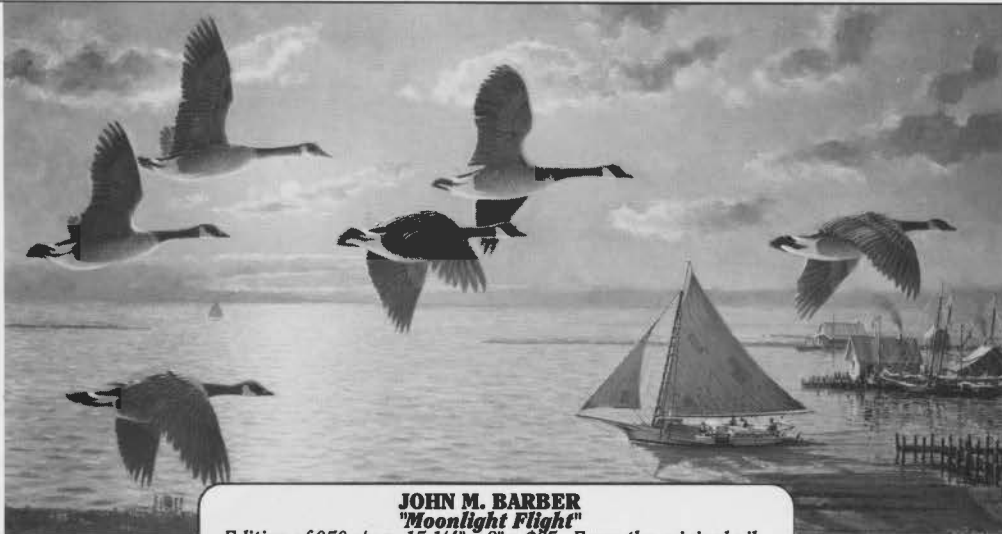
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R. Edward Gosnell at (717) 733-1512
- September 6-8**
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- September 14, 15**
9th Annual Duck Fair. Havre de Grace, Maryland
Held at the Decoy Museum and on the Bayou Condominium grounds. Sponsored by The Record. (410) 939-3739
- September 20**
Unveiling of Charles Joiner's Figure and Reception
7 p.m.
- September 20-22**
Fall Classics Festival, Charlestown, Maryland
Judged boats and cars, crafts, food, decoys, and other exhibitors
Call Bill Ames at (717) 838-8387
- September 21, 22**
Western Pennsylvania Wildfowl Carving Open.
Ligonier, Pennsylvania
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Call Loyalhanna Watershed Association (412) 238-7560
- October 19, 20**
29th Annual Upper Shore Decoy Show.
North East, Maryland
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- October 26**
Chestertown Wildlife Exhibition & Sale.
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We can not say thank you enough to all of our dedicated volunteers that helped us out at the 15th Annual Decoy, Wildlife Art & Sportsman Festival. We appreciate you! Keep up the great work!



Mrs. and Mr. Bill MacIntyre at the ticket table. Photo by H. Miles.



MaryJo Moses with volunteers Ken Moretz and Vicki Ferguson. Photo by H. Miles.

The Decoy Museum sends a special thanks to Dr. Barry Parekh. After learning of our need for more sponsorships for our Decoy Festival carving competitions, on his own accord, he approached some of his medical colleagues to donate to this worthy event. Each of the doctors listed gave \$100.00 and enriched our competitions by \$1,900.00. We gratefully appreciate all of the doctors' support of our museum.

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1995 Decoy Festival

Contest Winners

Head Whittling

- 1st Joey Jobes, Havre de Grace, MD
- 2nd Steve Clark, Havre de Grace, MD
- 3rd Dan Carson, Havre de Grace, MD

Brant Painting Contest

- 1st Ed Itter, Pasadena, MD
- 2nd Andrea Shreiner, Baltimore, MD
- 3rd Mary Larrimore, Boring, MD

Duck & Goose Calling

Senior Duck

- 1st Darvin Gebhart, Windsor, PA
- 2nd Albert Dager, Newark, DE
- 3rd Allan Stanley, Dover, DE

Senior Goose

- 1st Fred Zink, Clayton, OH
- 2nd Joshua Neuwiller, Cordova, MD
- 3rd Albert Dager, Newark, DE

Novice Duck

- 1st Benjamin I. Kose
- 2nd Justin Campell, Rockville, MD
- 3rd Tim Hearne

Novice Goose

- 1st Benjamin I. Kose
- 2nd Michael Luango
- 3rd Rob Heslep, Pocopson, PA

Atlantic Flyway Classic

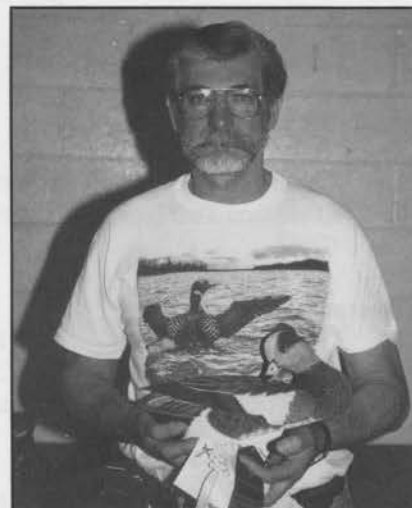
Decorative Floating 1996

Open

- | | | |
|-----|----------------|------------------------------|
| 1st | Cinnamon Teal | Robert G. Muth, Timonium, MD |
| 2nd | Blue Wing Teal | Robert G. Muth, Timonium, MD |
| 3rd | Widgeon | George Strand, Timonium, MD |

Intermediate

- | | | |
|-----|-------------|----------------------------------|
| 1st | Buffel Head | John H. Miller, Kimberton, PA |
| 2nd | Widgeon | Stan Long, Millers, MD |
| 3rd | Merganser | Margaret Kennedy, Earlsville, MD |



George Strand, 3rd Best of Show with this widgeon, Decorative Floating.



Dr. Robert Muth, 1st (cinammon teal) and 2nd (blue wing teal) Floating Best of Show, Decorative Floating.

Robert Hostetter. Female merlin, 1st Best in Show, Decorative Non-Floating.



Novice

- 1st Widgeon
2nd Cinnamon Teal
3rd Grebe

John Bartkowski, Fallston, MD
Charlie Egbert, Leesburg, MD
Guy X Kuhn, York, PA



Jeff Beach, 2nd Best in Show, green wing teal hen Decorative Slick.

Decorative Non Floating Open

- 1st Merlin (hen)
2nd Cinnamon Teal (pair)
3rd Quail

Robert Hostetler, Elkton, MD
Dan Williams, Owings Mills, MD
Ernie Muechimatt, Springfield, PA

Intermediate

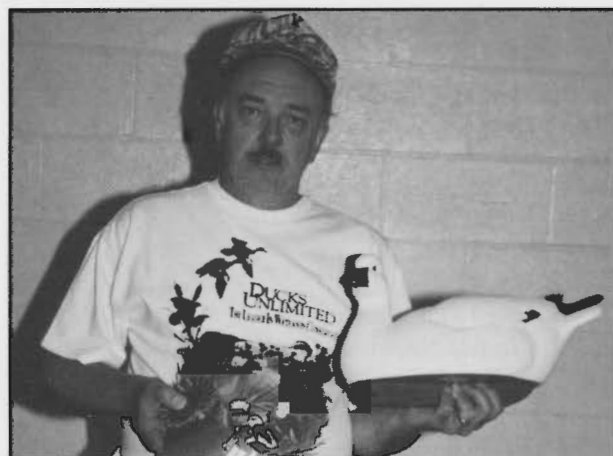
- 1st Green Heron
2nd Chickadee
3rd Kingfisher

Elsie Burton, Annapolis, MD
Ken Clodfelter, Baltimore, MD
Thomas E. Logullo, Newark, DE

Novice

- 1st Robin
2nd Arctic Terns
3rd Green-winged Teal

Charles Egbert, Leesberg, NJ
Cathy Emory, Centerville, MD
Ronald Thomas, Baltimore, MD



Charles Prinz, 1st Best in Show for this snow goose, Decorative Slick.

Miniature Open

- 1st Blue Heron
2nd Cardinal
3rd Long Billed Curlew

Eddie Cheezum, Hillsbor, MD
Patricia Szostak, Birchrunville, PA
Richard Schepis, Wall, FWP, PA

Intermediate

- 1st
2nd Bufflehead
3rd Turkey

....
John Miller, Kimberton, PA
Ted Alderman, Pomeroy, PA

Novice

- 1st Great Owl
2nd Yellowlegs
3rd Flying Canvasback

George Hanna
J. Donald Kennedy, W. Chester, PA
Vincent Tamburo, Annapolis, MD

Decorative Slick

- 1st Snow Goose
2nd Green-winged Teal
3rd Widgeon

Charles Prinz, Dayton, OH
Jeff Boach, Pikesville, MD
Michael B. Harde, Marlborough, NH

Youth

Best of Show

Joseph Laber



Joseph Laber with judges J. Vincenti and G. Carrier.

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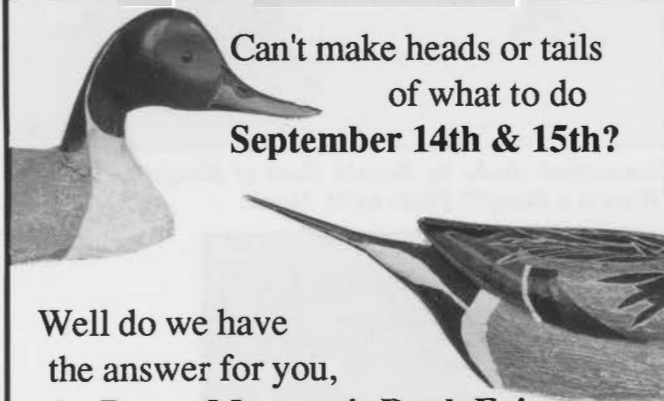


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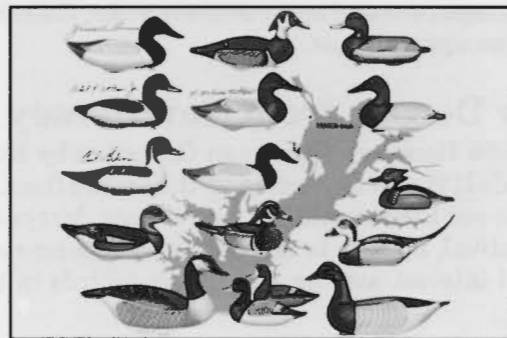
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EXHIBIT UPDATE

Decoys by Dan Brown

Thanks to the interest that noted collector Joe French has taken in the Decoy Museum, we will be exhibiting miniature decoys by Dan Brown from early August to late October. According to Dan, curator at the Ward Museum, these are examples of his early work. This collection contains a diverse selection of species which will be individually labeled for the budding birders that visit the museum during the fall migration.

My Favorite Factories

Also coming this fall is a large collection of factory decoys on loan from Lisa and Ken Trayer. This long term loan is the next installment of "What is a Decoy?" and features top decoys by famous factories like Mason, as well as many of the lesser known companies like Acme. There will be some unusual and interesting items in this exhibit, sure to peak your interest in this genre. Remember, we are still looking for donations of older decoys from around the country.

Beaucoup Books

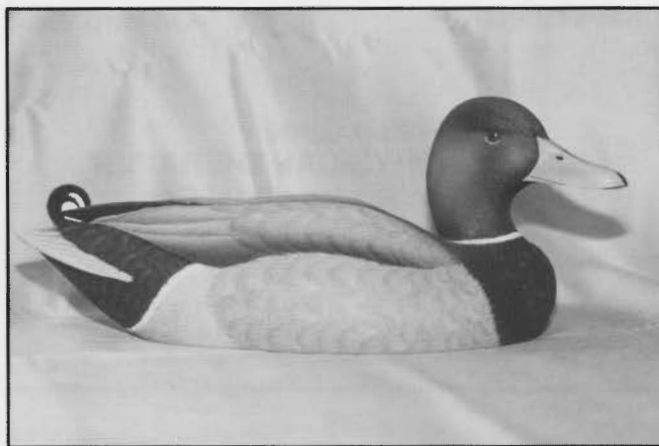
Once again the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum has received a generous grant from the Easton Waterfowl Festival for our research library. Last year's grant built the shelves, and this year's grant is buying books to stock them. The library already has a comprehensive collection of decoy books, but now we can expand on waterfowl and the environment. This resource is available to members and non-members alike. Call ahead to make an appointment.

New Decoys from New Jersey

The 1996 Honorary Chairman Collection by Harry V. Shourds II is now on display on the second floor. If you did not see these beautiful New Jersey decoys during the festival, be sure to stop by and see them now. Of special interest are the elegant shorebirds in the exhibit.

Fallons Featured

The miniature decoys carved by Joe Fallon are on display in their own exhibit case. Long a feature in the main gallery, this exquisite collection is now gracing the second floor where Joe's work can be appreciated for its artistic merit in an appropriate setting. For the first time, all of the carvings donated by the late Anita Higgins will be on display at once.



Decorative mallard decoy by Dan Williams in "What is a Decoy?" Photo by M. Moses.



Canvasback decoy by Ronald Gant of Mesquite, Texas in "What is a Decoy?" Photo by M. Moses.



The new research library. Photo by M. Moses.

Weekend Carving Demonstrations at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

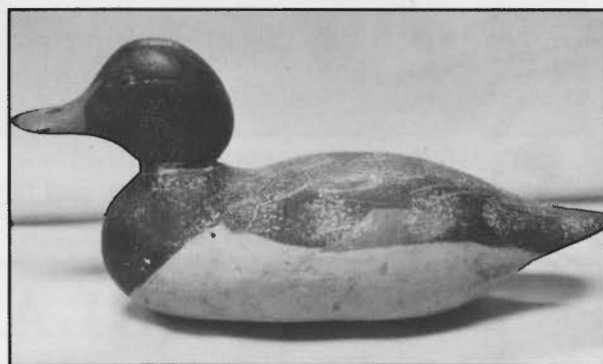
August 3,	George Stram	September 1,	OPEN	October 5,	Wayne Thayer
August 4,	John Ingoglia	September 7,	Butch and Mary Carol	October 6,	Barb Wachter
August 10,	Charlie Bryan		Larrimore	October 12,	Butch and Mary Carol
August 11,	Bill Weaver	September 8,	OPEN		Larrimore
August 17,	Butch and Mary Carol	September 14,	DUCK FAIR	October 13,	OPEN
	Larrimore	September 15,	DUCK FAIR	October 19,	Ken Clodfelter
August 18,	OPEN	September 21,	Joe Cook	October 20,	Joe Cook
August 24,	Noble Mentzer	September 22,	OPEN	October 26,	Noble Mentzer
August 25,	Barb Wachter	September 28,	OPEN	October 27,	OPEN
August 31,	Vernon Bryant	September 29,	Bill Weaver		

Auction News — Decoy Festival Auction

Auctioneer Dave Hartzell did a phenomenal job finishing this large auction in exactly three hours (we promise to keep it smaller next year)! The one hundred and fifty four lots sold for \$30,310 before the buyer's premium was added. This year the auction was a very successful fund raiser since a large number of carvers donated their work to the museum. We would like to thank the following people for their kindness: Mike Affleck, Charlie Bryan, Vernon Bryant, Whitey Franck, Fred Gillotte, Richard Grealey, Jeff Moore, Mark Strohman, Bill Veasey and Ed Watts. The museum is dependant on the support of men like these. If you would like to donate or consign decoys for next year's Decoy Festival Auction, please call the museum at (410)939-3739. We will be taking consignments until April 1, 1997, but for advertising purposes we would prefer to have the decoys by the end of February. An advance list will be made available by April 10, if you would like a copy, ask to have your name placed on the Decoy Festival Auction Mailing List.

Top 15 lots of May 4, 1996 Auction

Description (Catalogue No./Bidder No.)	Price
Harry Shourds Collection (00/450)	\$2,100
Bob Litzenberg pair wood ducks (113/391)	\$1,500
Bob Litzenberg pair red-breasted mergansers (114/328)	\$900
Bob Litzenberg pair blue-winged teal (42/375)	\$675
Bob Litzenberg pair buffleheads (72/302)	\$650
Charlie Joiner pair canvasbacks (1 1/342)	\$625
Jeff Moore pair decorative canvasbacks (107/322)	\$600
Bob Litzenberg black duck drake (115/327)	\$525
Charlie Bryan wood duck drake (28/309)	\$500
Mike Affleck pair mini green-winged teal (29A/345)	\$475
Bob Litzenberg pair redhead wing ducks (41/375)	\$475
Bob Litzenberg pair mini green-winged teal (44/310)	\$475
Bob Litzenberg mini swan (45/372)	\$450
Paul Gibson pair goldeneyes (91/401)	\$450
Paul Gibson pair buffleheads (90/375)	\$425



Duck Fair Auction Lot 5. Mason Factory tack-eye red-head hen. Photo by M. Moses.

Duck Fair Auction, September 14, 1996

This year, due to popular demand, we are changing the Duck Fair Auction around. It is now a larger auction featuring consignments of good old decoys from around the country, as well as donations from contemporary carvers and Duck Fair exhibitors. This will be a great chance to add to your collection while enjoying the casual atmosphere of the Duck Fair. Jay Edwards will be the Volunteer Auctioneer. A partial list of auction items will be available mid-August. If you would like a copy ask to have your name put on the Duck Fair Auction Mailing List.

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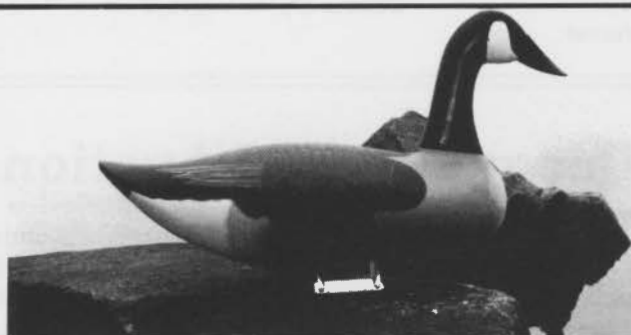
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CLASSIFIED

For our members we offer free classified ads to buy, sell, and trade decoys or related objects. Please keep it under 15 words. For non-members, it will be \$5.00 for 15 words. Mail your classified ads to: Decoy Museum, P.O. Box A, Havre de Grace, MD 21078.

Decoys, including flickers from Crisfield, MD. Various species carved by the famous Cap't Bill Zack Ward. Call C.J. Sullivan (410) 879-1850

FOR SALE: Old wooden decoys. For list send S.A.S.E. to John Freimuth, 12123 S. 71st Avenue, Palo Heights, IL 60463. (708) 361-4343 (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.)

FOR SALE: New Emesco bench drill and engine, foot operated, Orig. \$560, asking \$350. Red Wing lathe with quick chuck/changer, Orig. \$500, asking \$325. Annette Stafford, Wilmington, De (302) 475-0702.

WANTED: Pacific Coast Decoys. Call Decoy Museum at (410) 939-3739

Walker Decoys

221 N. Lapidum Road Havre de Grace MD 21078

(410) 939-4310

Species	Price
Bald Pates	\$40 ea
Black Duck	\$40 ea
Black Heads	\$40 ea
Blue Wing Teal	\$40 ea
Blue Geese	\$50 ea
Brant	\$50 ea
Buffleheads	\$40 ea
Canvasbacks	\$40 ea
Cinnamon Teal	\$40 ea
Coots	\$40 ea
Gadwall	\$50 ea
Green Wing Teal	\$40 ea
Goldeneyes	\$40 ea
Mallards	\$40 ea
Pintails	\$40 ea
Red Heads	\$40 ea
Ringnecks	\$40 ea
Ruddy Ducks	\$50 ea
Shovelers	\$40 ea
Snow Geese	\$50 ea



Species	Price
Common Mergansers	\$130pr
Red-Breasted Mergansers	\$130pr
Hooded Mergansers	\$150pr
Swan -Flat Bottom	\$350ea
Swan -With Keel	\$400ea
Wood Ducks	\$350pr
Canada Goose	\$80 ea
Loons	\$60 ea
Pigeons	\$35 ea
Doves	\$35 ea

Oversize	Price
Canvasbacks	\$50 ea
Red Heads	\$50 ea
Black Heads	\$50 ea

Decoy Lamps (most)	Price
1/2 Swan Lamps	\$120ea
3/4 Size Swan	\$125ea
1/2 Swan	\$75 ea

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