

The Canvasback

HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM

Fall 2016
Vol. 26 No. 4

\$3.00

The CORMORANT *Revered & Reviled*





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(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.

ON THE COVER

This double-crested cormorant stands in its distinctive pose – one that is regarded as either Christ-like or satanic. Cormorants are ancient birds that trace their lineage to the time of the dinosaurs, perhaps to Antarctica before it was covered with ice. Shannon Dimmig of Elkton, Maryland has masterfully rendered the much-maligned cormorant in wood, and this highly refined carving has amassed 19 blue ribbons and other top honors.



FUNDED IN PART BY

**Harford County • City of Havre de Grace
Maryland State Arts Council**

The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is funded by an operating grant from the Maryland State Arts Council, an agency dedicated to cultivating a vibrant cultural community where the arts thrive. Funding for the Maryland State Arts Council is also provided by the National Endowment for the arts, a federal agency.



The Museum was incorporated in 1981 as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization which exists to document and interpret waterfowl decoys as this art form applies to the social and economic life of the upper Chesapeake Bay region. Contributions made to the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum Tax may be deductible.

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From the President...

Dear Museum Member:

Well, another busy summer has come and gone. This autumn 2016 issue of *The Canvasback* represents 25 years of quarterly issues of this wonderful journal. It is a tremendous value proposition that we provide to our members and other supporters, and it is also a tremendous effort to do and keep within a limited budget. Thanks to all who make it possible.

We have had a GREAT summer. June brought the welcome news that the Harford County Office of Economic Development would renew some much-needed grant money. We thank all who had a role in it, especially County Executive Barry Glassman. As always, we have the much-needed support of Mayor Bill Martin and the Havre de Grace City Council. We continue to draw visitors from all over the world, many of whom stay overnight, eat here, shop here, and visit other attractions.

The standout event of the summer was "F-cubed" – the first annual Fish, Fowl, and Folk Festival – held on the first Saturday in August. This was a partnership of the three Concord Point museums: the Decoy Museum, the Maritime Museum, and the Lighthouse. All of Concord Point was cordoned off, and the turnout was good despite the withering heat and a forecast of strong thunderstorms. For a first-time event, everyone was very pleased and we hope to grow it into a signature summer event for the city.

On a very sad note, August 29th brought the painful news that Ed Itter had passed away. Ed and Carol were great personal friends and great friends and supporters of the Decoy Museum. He had spent most of his 86 years both carving and mentoring, especially young people. His death is a great loss to the world of decoys.

In the previous issue of *The Canvasback* we featured the new exhibit of Bill Gibian's decoys that John Collier very kindly loaned to us. Our curator, Ginny Sanders, along with Kerri and Matt Kneisley, and John Sullivan got these magical carvings up here from the Annapolis area and arranged a stunning exhibit. It has been very popular with visitors, so come see it if you haven't done so already. Make a day of it and stay in town for lunch or dinner and visit the other museums, too.

We have some fun things planned to celebrate the Decoy Museum's 30th anniversary at the Museum on Saturday, January 28th. Mark your calendar! Details will be forthcoming.

We have four great prizes for the fall raffle, so watch for your tickets in the mail. The drawing will be the night of the Candlelight Tour – Saturday, December 10th. You have to play to win, and four lucky people always win. Give generously!

We accomplish a lot with slim resources. Our members, volunteers, staff, and directors generously devote time and effort to help keep the Museum's doors open 360 days every year, provide an unforgettable experience for our visitors, and keep the Museum relevant and growing. The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is a special place that we are all passionate about, and we value your loyalty and support.

Sincerely,

Pat Vincenti



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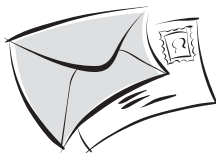
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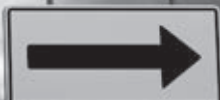
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Conowingo Dam

Bogeyman or Whipping Boy?

Some people assert that the efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay have failed because one major source of pollution has been ignored — the Conowingo Dam on the Susquehanna River. This is a powerful message. It's simple, frightening... and wrong.

Conowingo Hydroelectric Generating Station is a run-of-the-river hydroelectric power plant located on the Susquehanna River eight miles north of Havre de Grace where the Susquehanna Flats form the headwaters of the Chesapeake Bay. Owned and operated by Exelon Corporation, Conowingo has been providing electricity to the regional system since 1928. When constructed, Conowingo was the largest power plant ever built, had the largest turbines and generators to date, and became the second largest hydroelectric project in the United States, behind Niagara Falls. The water flow of the Susquehanna River provides the fuel for the 11 current turbine generators, producing 500 MW of electricity.

How the Problem Started

Since 1928, the Conowingo Dam has been trapping sediment and pollution flowing down the Susquehanna River from New York and Pennsylvania into Conowingo Lake, the reservoir behind the dam. But scientists estimate that Conowingo Lake is nearing full capacity. Under normal weather conditions, the dam still traps much of the sediment

and phosphorus pollution flowing down the Susquehanna. It traps only a tiny bit of nitrogen. Hurricanes and other large storms scour out, or dislodge, some of the sediment trapped behind the dam and flush plumes of sediment down the Susquehanna and into the Bay.

Impacts: Not as Bad as Originally Thought, but Worrisome

The Susquehanna delivers the greatest volume of water to the main stem of the Chesapeake Bay, as well as about half the nitrogen pollution and a quarter of phosphorus and sediment pollution. While scouring of sediments and nutrients from behind the Conowingo Dam does deliver additional pollution to the Bay during major storms, this pollution by no means “dooms” the Bay or negates the efforts of countless citizens, leaders, and communities to clean up the Bay.

A 2014 Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) study indicated that sediment and nutrients flowing past the dam during large storms have a relatively minor impact on dissolved oxygen in the Bay's main stem and little to no impact on other tributaries in Maryland and Virginia. The study shows that 80 percent of the Susquehanna's sediment pollution comes from the watershed above the dam with only 20 percent coming from Conowingo Lake scouring.



The Solution: A Blueprint for Reducing Pollution

The Bay is also affected by pollution runoff from rural and urban landscapes into other rivers and creeks in Maryland, Virginia, Delaware, West Virginia, and the District of Columbia. In 2010 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) exercised its Clean Water Act authorities by releasing enforceable pollution limits for nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution in the Chesapeake Bay. Subsequently, the six states in the Bay watershed, as well as the District of Columbia, released their plans to meet those limits by 2025.

These plans and their pollution targets for the Chesapeake and its tributaries comprise the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint — a plan to reduce pollution levels by 25 percent in order to make the Bay once more a safe and productive estuary.

It's working. Pollution levels are shrinking in the Susquehanna. In the past four years, practices have been put in place to reduce nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution by 20 million, two million, and 497 million pounds a year, respectively. Reducing pollution that reaches the dam from sources upstream should remain our chief focus.

Misinformation about the Dam

Opposition to the Clean Water Blueprint and concern over the cost of cleaning up local waters has led some to argue that focus should be on the Conowingo Dam, not local clean-up measures. The ACOE, the University of Maryland Center for Environmental Science, and other experts disagree.

The ACOE study estimated dredging costs of \$50 to \$270 million annually just to keep up with the sediment flowing into the dam. Indeed, we also must find the most effective means of dealing with pollution trapped at the dam in conjunction with Exelon Corporation, its owner-operator. But, nearly all nitrogen pollution in the Bay comes from sources other than Conowingo Lake scouring. Therefore, dredging (at enormous cost) would have minimal impact on the Bay's health and would not meet the requirements of the Blueprint. Fixing the scouring will do nothing to reduce the Bay's worst type of pollution.

Common sense tells us that we need to solve a problem at its source, and we can't neglect local clean-up efforts. Other Maryland and Virginia watercourses are fouled by farms, sewage plant spills, and additional local sources, not by pollution from the Susquehanna. Costs for that local work are coming down dramatically in many counties that have rolled up their sleeves. Programs to share the costs and help subsidize cleanup efforts are growing.

In short, the fact that our children or dogs can't swim in our local creeks after a rain storm has absolutely nothing to do with Conowingo. It has everything to do with local pollution. Is there a problem at the dam? Yes, and management of the sediment in Conowingo Lake by Exelon is an important part of future strategies for reducing pollution. But is it a big enough problem to cause Bay restoration efforts to fail? Scientists say no.

What Can Be Done

Progress is being made toward restoring the Chesapeake Bay and all its tributaries, but there is much left to do. The Blueprint represents the best plan to do so. States and local governments below the Conowingo Dam need to stay on course with water-quality improvement efforts, continuing to reduce pollution to local watercourses using proven strategies, upgrading waste management infrastructure, and reducing polluted runoff from agricultural and urban areas. Everyone in the Chesapeake Bay watershed — including private enterprises and individuals — must do their part in order to restore the health of America's largest estuary.

SOURCES: *"The Conowingo Dam and the Chesapeake Bay", Save the Bay (Chesapeake Bay Foundation), Fall 2013 ; "The Conowingo Dam: Clear Facts On a Muddy Issue", Chesapeake Bay Foundation, September 2014.*



1. The dam is not the largest source of pollution to the Bay, the Susquehanna River is. The Susquehanna contributes roughly 33% of the sediment, 25% of the phosphorus, and 46% of the nitrogen flowing into the Bay.
2. The dam has little impact on nitrogen pollution loads, which are showing a downward trend on the Susquehanna. Nitrogen is water soluble so little is trapped behind the dam, unlike sediment and phosphorus (which is often attached to sediment). Therefore, even if the reservoir completely filled, the amount of nitrogen reaching the Bay would continue to decrease due to implementation of upstream pollution-reduction measures.
3. The Susquehanna mostly affects the central stem of the Bay. Many of Maryland's local creeks and rivers are on the EPA's "impaired waters list" and are polluted almost entirely by local sources — farms, sewage plants, septic systems, urban and suburban runoff, and other sources, which must be addressed locally.

Downsizing? Changing your collection?



If you have decoys, wildlife art, and waterfowling memorabilia packed away in closets, attics, garages, and basements that you just do not know what to do with — please consider donating these items to the Museum.

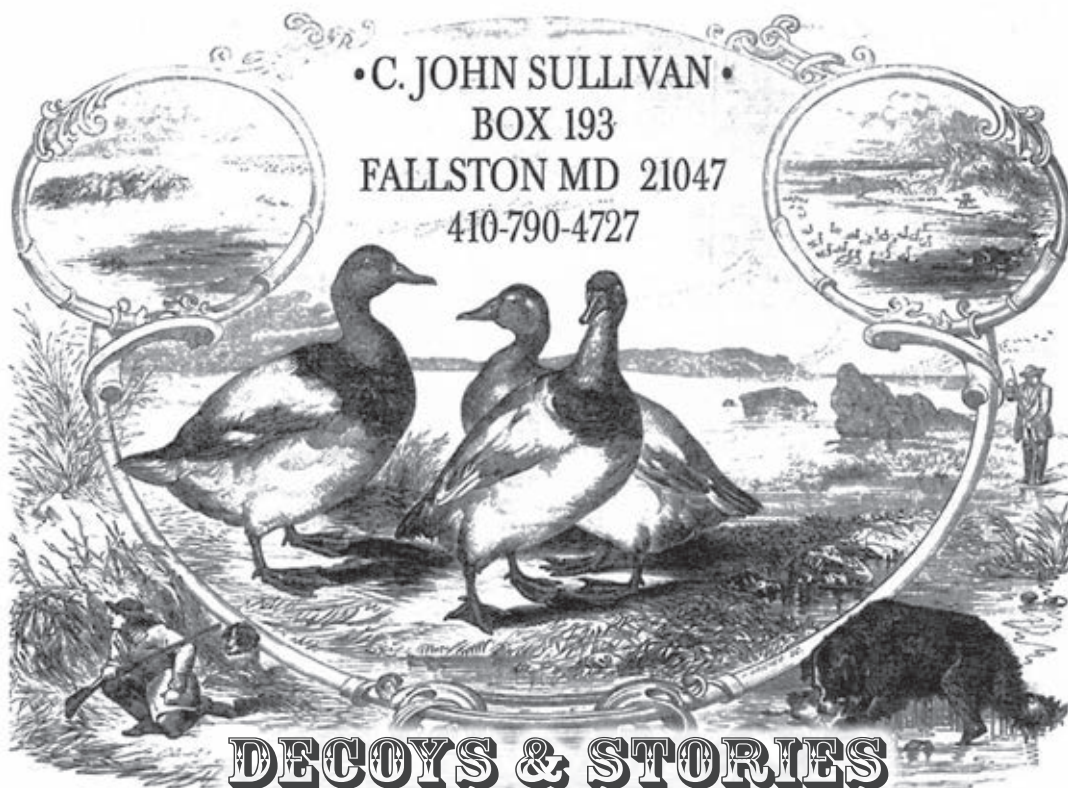
The Decoy Museum can turn your unwanted items into much-needed operating revenue. In-kind gifts will be gratefully received by the Museum and will help preserve history for generations to come.



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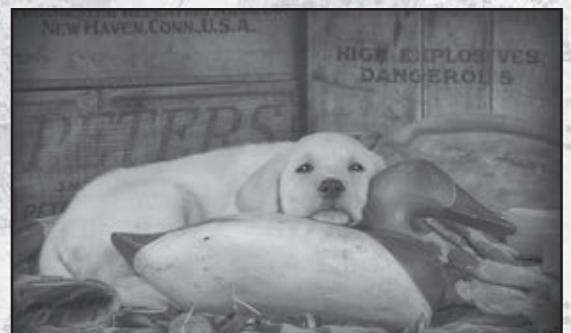
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10 Things You Didn't Know About the Bay

- 1 The Bay holds about 18 trillion gallons of water. That amount of water would fill more than fifty billion bathtubs to the brim.
- 2 Only about half of the water in the Bay comes from the ocean. The rest comes from the 64,000 square mile watershed, which extends approximately 524 miles from Cooperstown, NY to Norfolk, VA.
- 3 Roughly 51 billion gallons of water enter the Bay each day from the 100,000 streams, creeks, and rivers that feed it.
- 4 A person 6 feet tall could wade through more than 700,000 acres of the Bay without becoming completely submerged. The deepest part of the Bay, called "The Hole" is more than 170 feet deep.
- 5 Every year, new parking lots, driveways, roofs, and other hardened surfaces from development convert land in the Chesapeake Bay region from great green filter to hard grey funnel. Every four years, an area of land the size of Washington, D.C. is lost.
- 6 Most sewer drains don't go to the sewage plant – polluted runoff from your street runs into local waters and ultimately to the Bay. Your crab cake used to swim through that.
- 7 In fact, the Bay produces about 500 million pounds of seafood per year.
- 8 Seventy to ninety percent of all striped bass, known locally as rockfish, were spawned in the Bay.
- 9 The Bay's fishing industry used to harvest tens of millions of bushels of oysters. Today, harvests have fallen to less than one percent of historic levels.
- 10 Seventeen-million people live, work, and play in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Each of us directly affect the local rivers and streams in our backyards and the Bay. What will your impact be?



Photography by Scott Moody • Labrador Design



Reprinted with permission from the Chesapeake Bay Foundation (cbf.org)



It's Baaaaa-ack!!

Did you visit Havre de Grace this summer? Or did you take in the truly spectacular view across the Susquehanna Flats from the city's new "Decoy Cam" on the Decoy Museum's second floor deck? If so, you may have been one of many who asked us, "What's that stuff?" That stuff is submerged aquatic vegetation or SAV. The Susquehanna Flats were once blanketed with SAV, but environmental changes over the past 60-odd years have nearly wiped it all out. Our decoy-carving and waterman friends are thrilled to see the SAV back on the Flats in great spreading beds of green that are visible for miles. If your first reaction is that that stuff looks like gunk or it will surely wrap itself around your keel or prop...well, get over it. SAV means life. This is where the fish and crabs breed and the waterfowl feed. We quickly identified wild celery, milfoil, and redhead grass. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation identified five more species, but they did it all in Latin. We know one thing for sure...SAV means ducks. In particular, more wild celery – *Vallisneria americana* – means more canvasbacks – *Aythya valisineria*. (We took Latin, too.) To see SAV in such abundance gives hope that the Bay's health is improving. The big question now is whether this year's verdant display is an anomaly or the beginning of a trend. The latter, we pray. Stay tuned.



Photography by Will Parson • Chesapeake Bay Program



Cormorants

The Miraculous Comeback of a Misunderstood Bird

By Tom Pelton

Double-crested cormorants are peculiar-looking fishing birds — with black feathers; long, snake-like necks; webbed feet; and hooked beaks. They often have a pair of shaggy tufts — double crests — on their heads that give them the appearance of disheveled professors. Cormorants nest in colonies and sing in grunting croaks that sound like a chorus of pigs.

Around the Chesapeake Bay, you may have seen cormorants standing on channel markers in their trademark pose: with their black wings held out sideways, to dry in the sun. It is this vampire-like posture—and the fact that cormorants eat fish—that has made the birds reviled by fishermen and misunderstood for centuries.

Long a symbol of bad luck and evil in Western literature and myth, cormorants have been persecuted and slaughtered by fishermen and governments, according to a new book called *The Devil's Cormorant* by Richard J. King.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has a policy of destroying cormorant eggs in some areas of the Chesapeake Bay. The Humane Society protests that this killing of cormorants is inappropriate, because cormorants are a native Bay species.

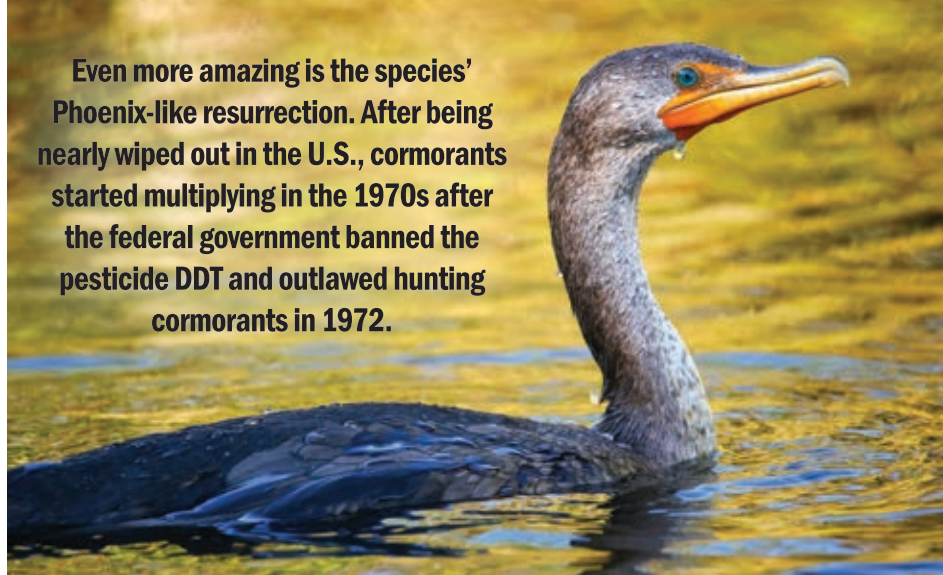
“It is really interesting to see how far back it goes, this sort of anti-cormorant feeling in literature and art,” King said. “Milton famously described Satan sitting like a cormorant on the tree of life. Shakespeare uses cormorant imagery four times in his plays. And in Shakespeare’s time, being ‘cormorous’ meant being greedy or insatiable.”

Much more recently, a sports fishing blog described the birds as “gangly, gluttonous rats with wings.” The article’s headline: “I Hate Cormorants.”

Despite this bad rap in Western culture, cormorants are miraculous and wonderful in their own way. They migrate thousands of miles, swim deep beneath the water with their webbed feet, and are trained as fish-catching pets in Japan and China.

Tom Pelton served
as Senior Writer and Investigative
Reporter for CBF.





Even more amazing is the species' Phoenix-like resurrection. After being nearly wiped out in the U.S., cormorants started multiplying in the 1970s after the federal government banned the pesticide DDT and outlawed hunting cormorants in 1972.

Cormorants have been associated with evil in Western literature because of their "gluttonous appetite." But, they are miraculous in their own way, and, in Asia, are beloved and trained as pets.

Maryland was home to zero nesting cormorant pairs in the 1970s. But by 1990, there were 55 couples reproducing here. And today, there are about 4,000 nesting pairs in the state, according to David Brinker, a wildlife biologist with the Maryland Department of Natural Resources. Thousands more are breeding in Virginia's part of the Chesapeake Bay.

"I view cormorants as a good sign," Brinker said. "Here's a new species that adds to the diversity of fish and wildlife populations." Double-crested cormorants have long migrated through the Chesapeake Bay in the spring and fall, as they flew from their nesting grounds in New England to their wintering areas in Florida and back again. Since the 1970s, their nesting territory has spread south from New England, as the bird population has multiplied. But whether cormorants ever nested in the Chesapeake Bay in the past is a matter of dispute.

One author, back in 1610, described cormorants in Virginia rivers "in such abundance as are not in all the world to be equaled."

Bryan D. Watts, Director of the Center for Conservation Biology, said it is "absolutely possible" that cormorants nested in the Chesapeake Bay hundreds of years ago, before being driven away by fishermen or other factors.

"Many water birds have expanded and contracted their ranges up and down the Atlantic Coast in recent decades," Watts wrote in an e-mail. "So there is no reason to believe that cormorants couldn't have done that several times in the past."

There are some nuisance issues associated with cormorants. The birds tend to nest in such densities that their waste kills grasses and trees on parts of the islands where they breed. They eat about a pound of fish a day, but not enough to impact overall fish populations or the fishing industry, scientists say.

Nevertheless, in 2013, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service intentionally destroyed about 3,200 cormorant eggs on Popular Island in the Chesapeake Bay.

Peter McGowan, a wildlife biologist with the federal agency, said he and his colleagues sprayed a portion of the colony's eggs with vegetable oil, which suffocates the embryos. He said wildlife managers worry the booming cormorant population would crowd out other, more threatened birds. Common terns, glossy ibises, and snowy egrets are competing with the cormorants for nesting space, McGowan said.

"There are other species that are (more threatened)," McGowan said. "I wouldn't say they have preference, but they utilize habitats that are quickly being lost in the Chesapeake Bay. And we need to focus on trying to provide the nesting habitat for those [threatened] species, otherwise we are going to lose those birds from the Chesapeake Bay."

Stephanie Boyles Griffin, a director at The Humane Society of the United States, said the destruction of cormorant eggs is inappropriate — and an example of how the birds are still being unfairly persecuted.

"The Humane Society of the United States is strongly opposed to any lethal efforts to control cormorants," Griffin said. "They're a native bird. The reason that fishermen and wildlife managers want to manage them at all is because of land-use decisions that we as humans have made. We have taken up residence in most of the coastal areas of the Chesapeake Bay, and this is all colonial nesting and shorebird breeding ground."

Development and rising sea levels are forcing birds to compete for a shrinking number of secluded waterfront nesting sites. People are trying to pick the winners and losers in this competition, and a misunderstood black bird is paying a fatal price.

APPEARANCE: The mostly dark cormorant has orange and white markings on the face and bright blue eyes.

SIZE: Double-crested cormorants measure 28 to 35 inches in length with a wingspan of 45 to 48 inches. They are heavy-boned birds that can weigh over 5 pounds each.

GEOGRAPHIC RANGE: Double-crested cormorants can be found from the Aleutian Islands in Alaska to Florida and Mexico.

FEEDING: Cormorants are expert underwater fishermen and can dive to depths over 20 feet for up to 70 seconds, propelled by their webbed feet.

MATING: Cormorants are monogamous. Males perform elaborate courtship dances. And, after forming a pair, the male loses his crests.

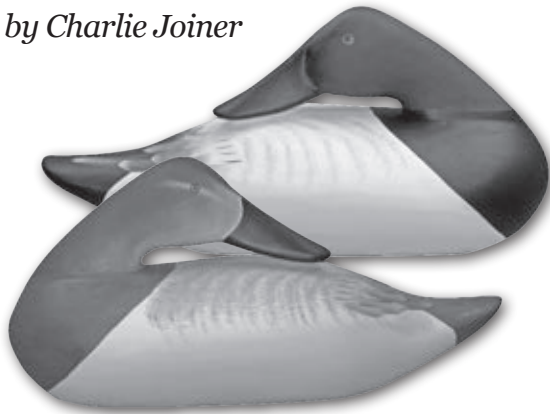
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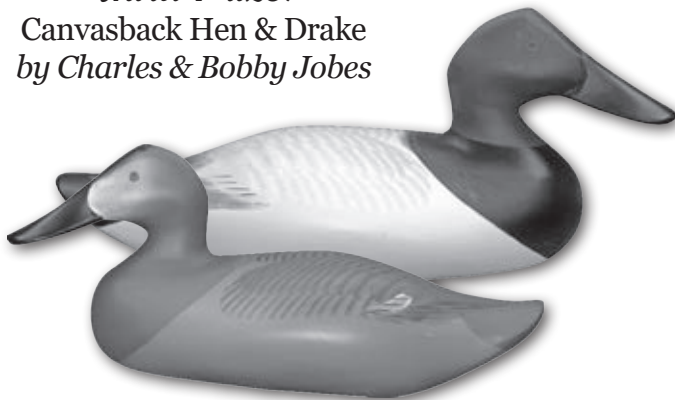
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Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

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HUNTING & FISHING COLLECTIBLES SHOW AT THE LEVEL VFC



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THE CORMORANT IN WOOD:

*A Bird Revered
& Reviled*

by James W. Carroll, jr.



Robert J. Mitchell
Asheville, NC • 2007

Sean Sutton
Paulsboro NJ • about 2010

“Cormorant”

is a contraction derived from the Latin name *corvus marinus*, meaning “sea raven”, which was the usual term for cormorants in Germanic languages until about 1600.

*Forrest "Bud" Jennings
Shamong, NJ
2001*

The words
cormorant and
decoy don't
seem to belong
in the same
sentence, and the
bird is a set of
contradictions.

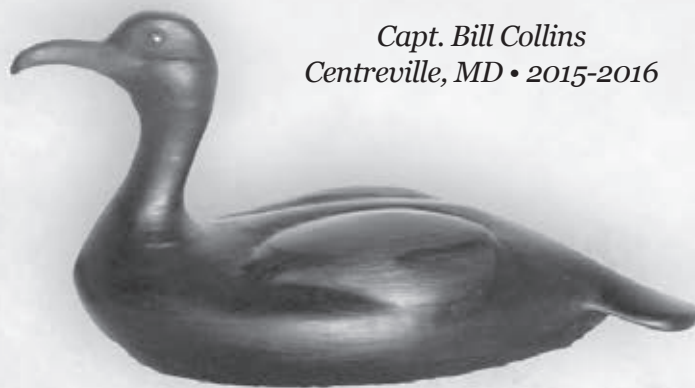
*Kenneth Scheeler
Vineland, NJ
2001*

*Shannon Dimmig
Elkton, MD • 2003*

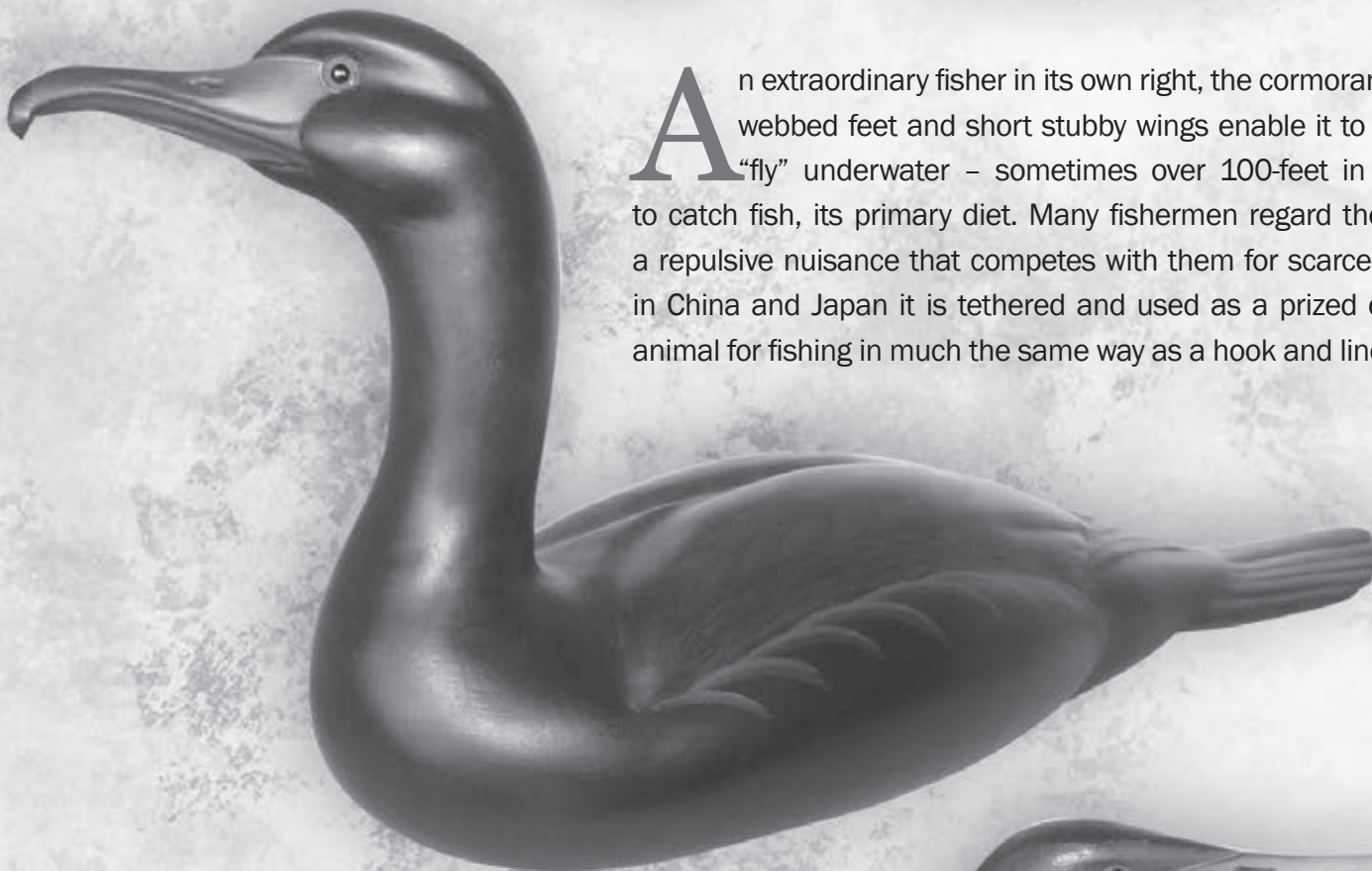
*Rick Fish
Snow Hill, MD
about 2005*



(actual size)



*Capt. Bill Collins
Centreville, MD • 2015-2016*



*Capt. Bill Collins
Centreville, MD • 2015-2016*

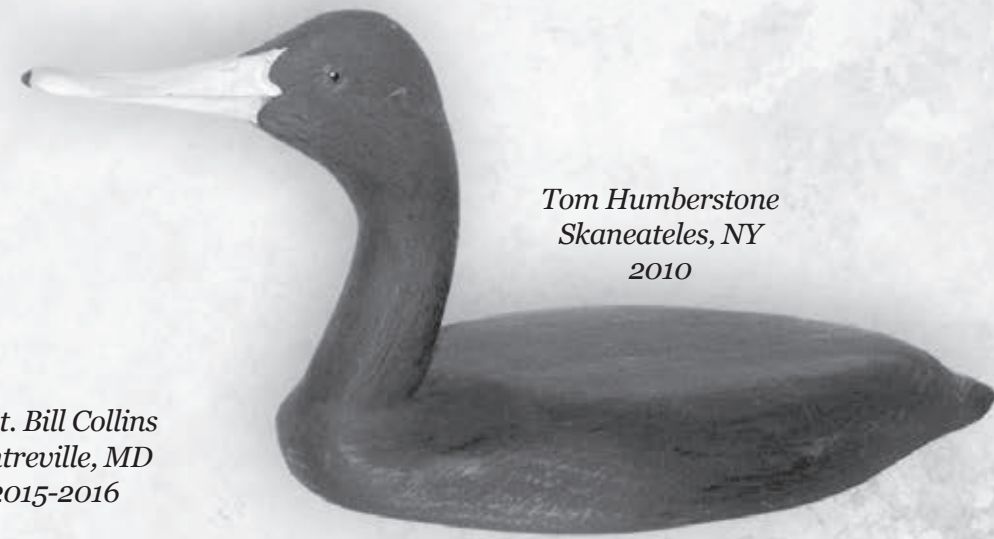
An extraordinary fisher in its own right, the cormorant's great webbed feet and short stubby wings enable it to dive and "fly" underwater – sometimes over 100-feet in depth – to catch fish, its primary diet. Many fishermen regard the bird as a repulsive nuisance that competes with them for scarce fish, but in China and Japan it is tethered and used as a prized domestic animal for fishing in much the same way as a hook and line.



*Reggie Birch
Chincoteague, VA
about 2004*



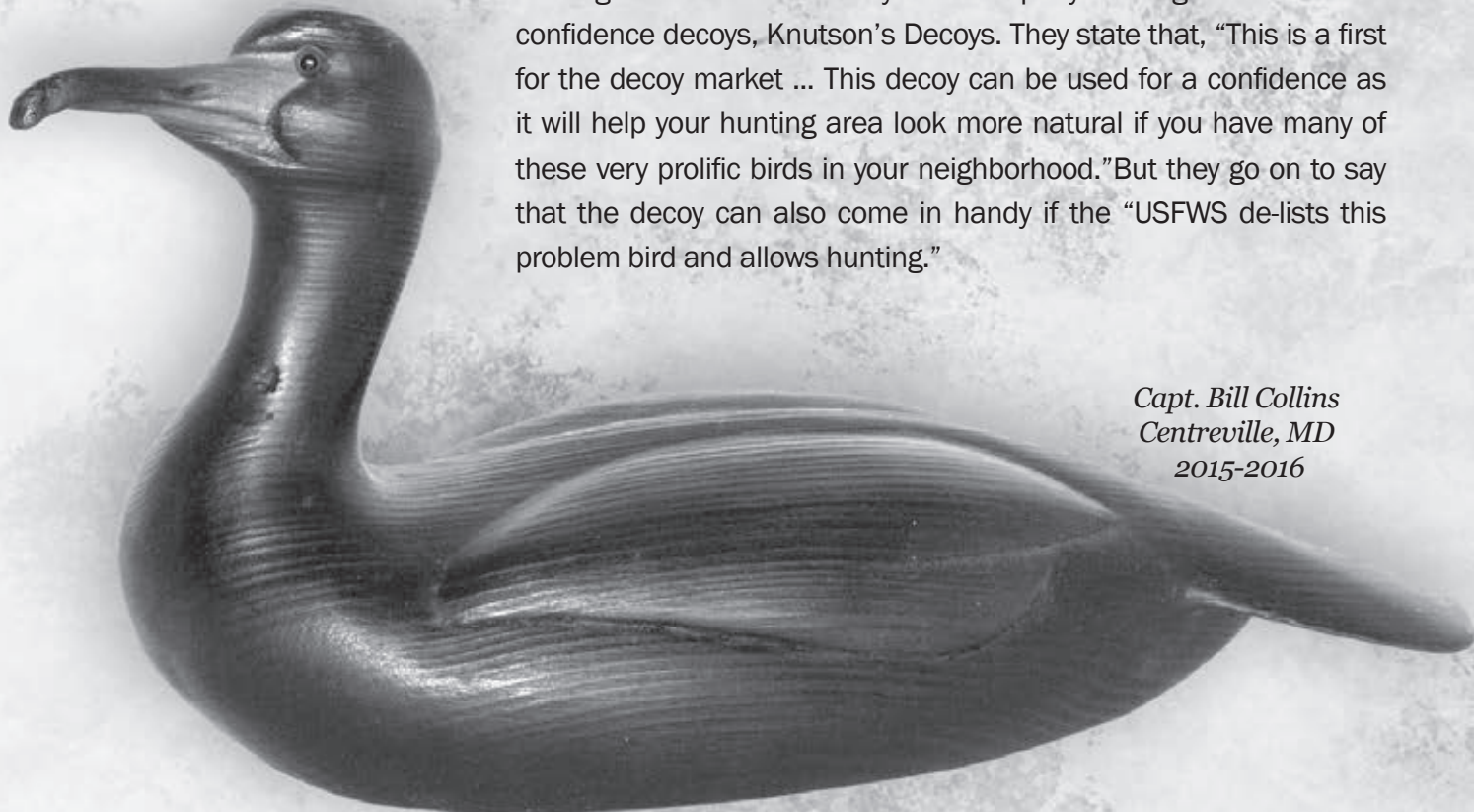
*Capt. Bill Collins
Centreville, MD
2015-2016*



*Tom Humberstone
Skaneateles, NY
2010*

The cormorant (from the Latin for “sea raven”) stands with its wings spread, and it is this “wing-drying” pose that in Early-Christian iconography represented the Christian cross and a figure of Christ, symbolizing nobility and sacrifice. But to others, this pose appears vampire-like and Satanic. John Milton in “Paradise Lost” said of Satan: “Then up he flew, and ... sat like a cormorant ... devising death to them who lived”.

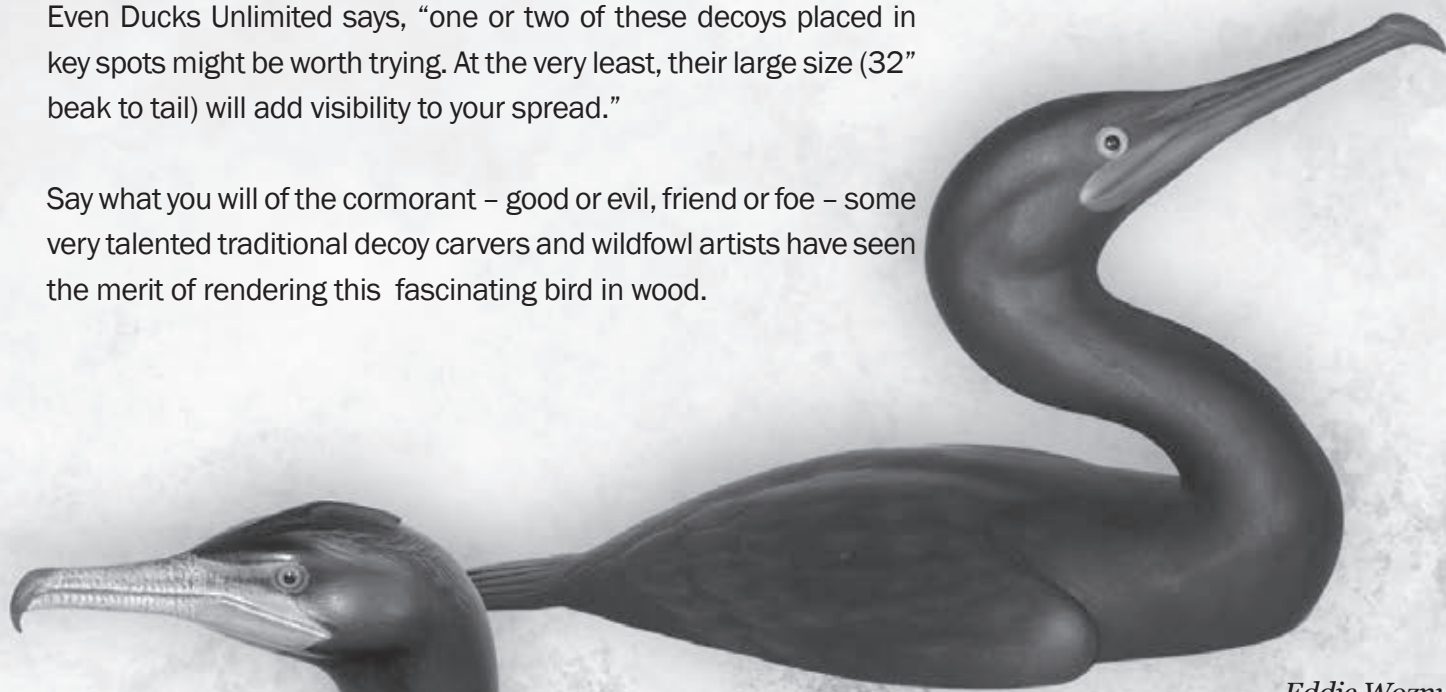
A Google search reveals only one company making cormorants as confidence decoys, Knutson’s Decoys. They state that, “This is a first for the decoy market ... This decoy can be used for a confidence as it will help your hunting area look more natural if you have many of these very prolific birds in your neighborhood.” But they go on to say that the decoy can also come in handy if the “USFWS de-lists this problem bird and allows hunting.”



*Capt. Bill Collins
Centreville, MD
2015-2016*

Even Ducks Unlimited says, “one or two of these decoys placed in key spots might be worth trying. At the very least, their large size (32” beak to tail) will add visibility to your spread.”

Say what you will of the cormorant – good or evil, friend or foe – some very talented traditional decoy carvers and wildfowl artists have seen the merit of rendering this fascinating bird in wood.



*Eddie Wozny
Cambridge, MD
pre-2014*



*Bill Gibian
Onancock, VA • 2005*

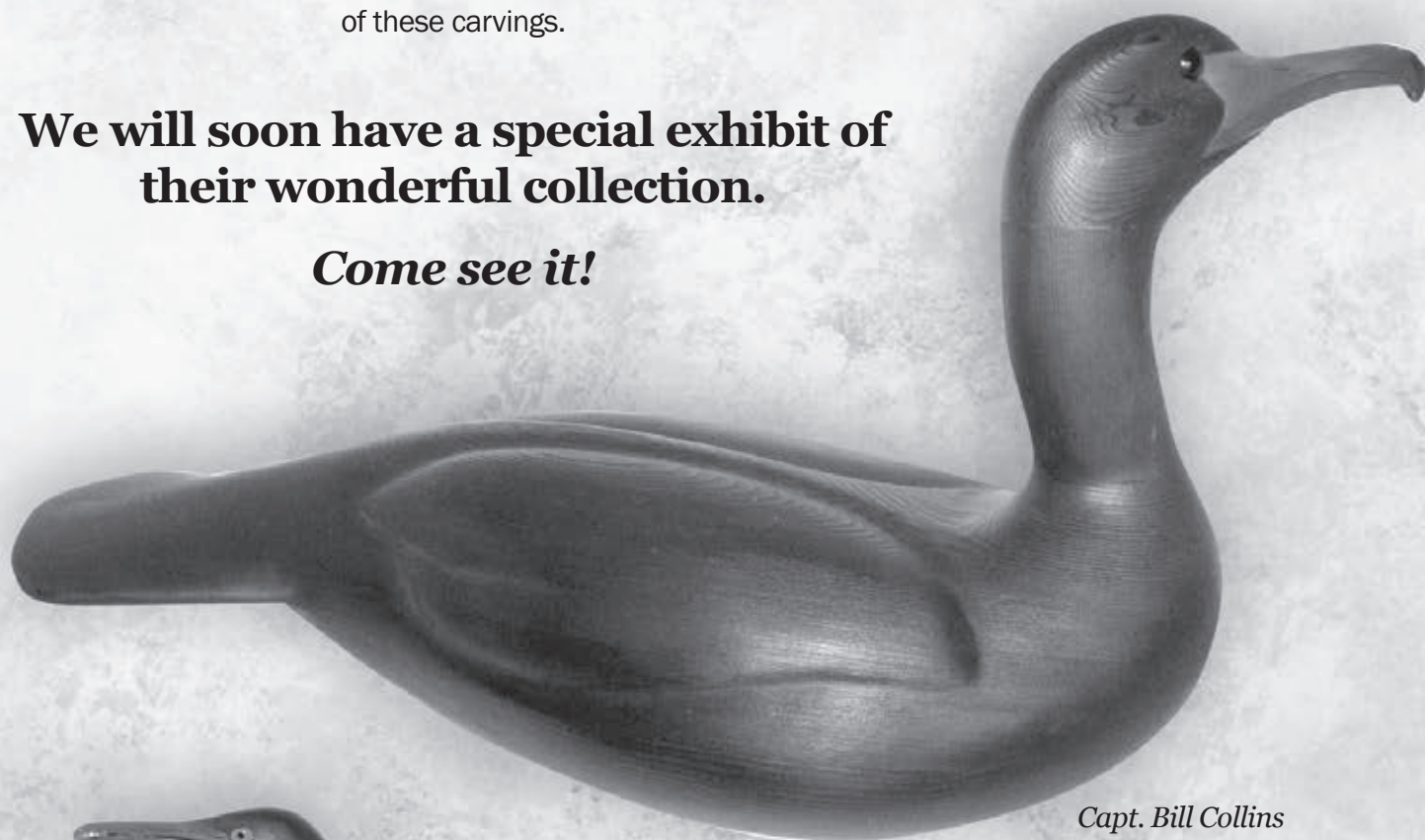


*George Strunk
Glendora, NJ
2008*

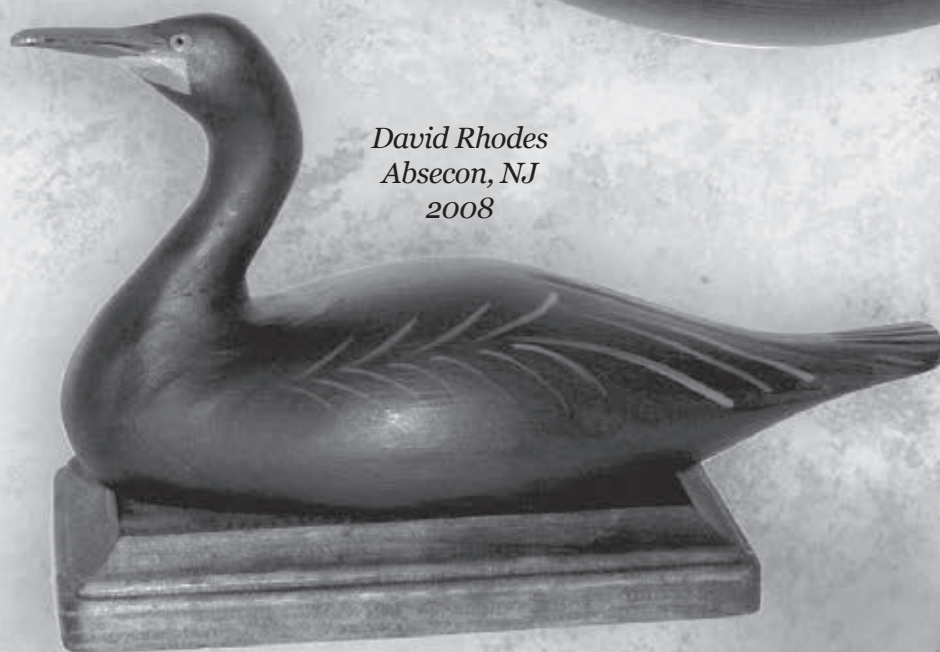
In these pages Gary and Terry Sargable have very kindly shared their substantial collection of cormorants with us. But these photos don't do justice to the artistry of these carvings.

**We will soon have a special exhibit of
their wonderful collection.**

Come see it!



*Capt. Bill Collins
Centreville, MD
2015-2016*



*David Rhodes
Absecon, NJ
2008*



*Charles Jobes
Havre de Grace, MD • 2015*

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Christmas shopping!*

Purchase tickets online or in person at the Havre de Grace Visitor Center,
the Decoy Museum, or the Lockhouse Museum



Museum News

IN MEMORY OF

Edward Earl Itter Sr.

December 16, 1929 - August 29, 2016



Ed Itter's death on August 29th at the age of 86 was an enormous loss to everyone in the world of decoys. He and Carol had been among our most devoted and passionate supporters, and Ed was a great presence here at the Decoy Museum. Ed was an exhibitor at our inaugural Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival in 1982, and he joined us for most of the intervening years between then and our 35th Annual Festival this past May. He also graciously served as a judge for the Festival's carving competition for many of those years. Ed served our country in the Korean War and continued with a lifetime of service to the decoy world. He had been carving for over 50 years and had won many prestigious awards. Loyal customers included actors Harrison Ford, Robert Redford, Tom Selleck and Fran Drescher. A natural mentor, Ed knew that the knowledge and skills of older carvers needed to be shared with and inspired in young people or this folk art form would not survive for long. He was known for the workshops he conducted for children. While Ed is now gone, he has left an enduring legacy with what he has bequeathed to a new generation. Ed's absence will be conspicuous as the years go on, and we will miss him terribly.



From the Desk of...

As I approached the Conowingo Dam on my commute to the Museum this morning, I saw an unfamiliar sight in the distance. At first glance, it looked very similar to how I imagine a sea monster might look. However, I quickly realized what it truly was (and if you've read this issue, you will too)....it was none other than a cormorant perched on a floating log. Coincidental timing!

By the time you receive this issue, I will have just celebrated my first anniversary with the Decoy Museum. I cannot believe how quickly the year has passed! I am so blessed to be serving this extraordinary organization and meeting so many of you.



Summer was busy here at your Museum. We had guests visiting from near and far (as far away as Australia). We completed some much needed housekeeping to "freshen" things up a bit. Several wedding receptions were held at the Museum, and we hosted several different meetings for City, County and State representatives. We expanded our social media usage to include Instagram and Twitter (please check us out!). And we held a successful new Festival – the Fish, Fowl & Folk Festival – in coordination with the Concord Point Lighthouse and the Maritime Museum. This Festival, meant to celebrate the rich maritime and folk traditions of Havre de Grace, brought together four live bands, 13 different food vendors, 25 craft vendors, 8 non-profits, and various other specialty performers for a fun-filled (albeit very warm!), family event. Plans are already under way to bring this event back in 2017!

Hoping to see many of you this Fall,

Kerri S. Kneisley
Executive Director

Current Exhibits @ the Museum

- **John Collier's collection of Bill Gibian's carvings.** ➤
- Two new displays near the front door of Susquehanna Flats wing ducks and miniature carvings by Captain Jimmy Wright of Massey Md. courtesy of C. John Sullivan, Jr.
- Potomac Decoy Collector's Association Bufflehead Exhibit. ➤
- The new displays of both full-size and miniature Canada geese from the collection of C. John Sullivan, Jr.
- The extraordinary pair of "Daddy" Holly canvasbacks, a gift from the Michael family.
- A traditional tule decoy in the centuries-old "Lovelock style" by Paiute decoy maker Joe Allen. ➤
- The "Gunning the Flats" exhibit
- The "What is a Decoy?" exhibit
- An exhibit of factory decoys, a gift from Dr. Mort Kramer
- "Pop" Sampson's homemade duplicating lathe for making miniature decoy bodies ➤
- Coudon Teal carved in the 1930s, a gift from Pat Doherty.
- A beautiful decorative Eastern Blue Bird carved by master carver Barb Wachter
- A beautiful decorative canvasback family made by master carver J. Noble Mentzer
- A lifelike rockfish (striped bass) carved by master carver Lee Tate, Sr.
- The Home Run Baker rig and bushwhack boat. ➤



Coming Soon!

A COLLECTION OF CORMORANT CARVINGS

Gary and Terry Sargable have very kindly offered to display their collection by some of the decoy world's most talented and well-known carvers.



A Fresh New Look

You have probably noticed that the Decoy Museum has a refreshing new look to its logo and to the *The Canvasback*. Anne Fullen and her graphic design boutique, MindsEye Design, came in earlier this year to help us refine and standardize our corporate image and branding. She has now joined the team to produce *The Canvasback* for us. The summer issue was her first, and... WOW.

Anne has been a freelance designer and the owner/publisher of Harford Style Magazine, which provides editorial and advertising opportunities for local businesses. Anne created a network of professional Harford County women to support and promote each other's personal, professional and community goals. Anne also produced Havre de Grace Magazine, a quarterly tourist publication for publisher Ellie Mencer.

She has developed marketing packages for a wide variety of clients, including government, non-profit, and small business. She says, "I think my strongest skill is being able to communicate with my clients to give them professional designs that satisfy all their needs." We can attest to that.

Anne is a native Harford Countian and lives in Havre de Grace with her pharmacist husband Dom Gasdia. We are thrilled to have Anne on the Decoy Magazine team.





Museum Members

Thank you and welcome to the following members and businesses that recently renewed their membership or newly joined us. Your continued support and contributions are essential to the overall success of the Decoy Museum:

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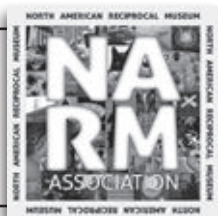
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More Creations by “The Unknown Carver”

*by James W. Carroll, Jr.
(as told by C. John Sullivan, Jr.)*



Our long-time colleague, decoy historian, and author C. John Sullivan, Jr. brings us a mystery. David and Suzanne King from Palm Harbor, Florida recently met with John at the Decoy Museum for an identification of a wooden box containing a pair of high-neck canvasbacks that they had purchased about 30 years earlier. When they purchased the box, they were told that the decoys had always been inside.



One's first reaction upon looking at the name painted on the box is: "Really? Are we talking about Major General George Brinton McClellan (December 3, 1826– October 29, 1885), railroad executive, commander of the Army of the Potomac, thorn in the side of Abraham Lincoln, and Governor of New Jersey?"

The well-made mercantile box with strong finger-joint corners had clearly lived another life prior to becoming the "keeper of the fowl". On either end of the box the number "3" appears painted in red paint. On one end are traces of a paper label. On the top, carved into the wood, are the words "silver polishing utensils". A ghost of what appears to be a wax seal is evident on the front of the box above McClellan's name. Holes on the top edges of the side members and the lid indicate that the lid once had been held tightly with screws.



John says that, "I have studied enough painted surfaces to be totally satisfied that McClellan's name has been on that box for well over 100 years." Much can be said about the life of General McClellan. One could speculate all sorts of stories concerning the box, and it is every bit as interesting and thought provoking as the pair of decoys.

Some might call the oversize canvasbacks "up-the-river" decoys, but John admits that their provenance "proved to challenge my skills".

That alone is a compelling testament to their obscurity. John led the Kings on a tour of the Museum with the many fine examples of canvasback decoys in our collection. Side-by-side comparisons of the "McClellan decoys" – for lack of a better description – with the numerous examples in the Gunning the Flats exhibit were inconclusive. John says, "We were able to hold the decoys in position to line up their profiles with decoys in the exhibit. Although some characteristics were similar, no precise match was possible."



The pair of canvasbacks offer much evidence of Susquehanna Flats origin, but the two are unique in the fact that each head is held in place with a single long wooden dowel rather than the traditional pair of galvanized nails. The dowel extends through the head and into the body on each decoy. This is a technique common in Long Island decoys. Dried up glue facilitated an examination of the dowel, which confirmed that the heads were original to the bodies. Both decoys wear old repaint that is typical of canvasbacks from the Flats. The decoys have an elongated flat area on each of their sides, and the original elongated lead ballast weights are tightly secured by their original nails.



**This box and its decoys
are a case of the whole
being greater than
the sum of its parts.
It is a riddle, wrapped
in a mystery, inside an
enigma.**

*We invite you to share
your speculation with us.*

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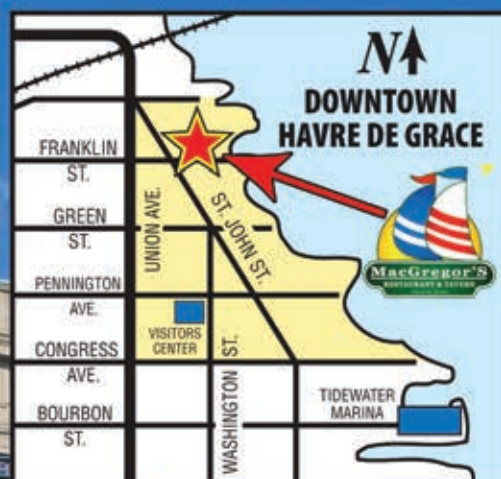
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