

The Canvasback

HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM

Vol. 32 No. 4

Fall 2022



BOB BIDDLE

**Cameron
McIntyre**





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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.

THE MUSEUM WAS INCORPORATED IN 1981 AS A 501(c)(3) TAX-EXEMPT ORGANIZATION TO COLLECT, DOCUMENT, PRESERVE, AND INTERPRET WATERFOWL DECOYS AS A UNIQUE FORM OF FOLK ART.

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ON THE COVER

The cover features Cameron McIntyre in his New Church, VA decoy shop. Cameron had just finished hand-chopping a canvasback decoy body to demonstrate the technique. The inset features Landenberg, PA decoy carver Bob Biddle holding one his sleek merganser decoys.

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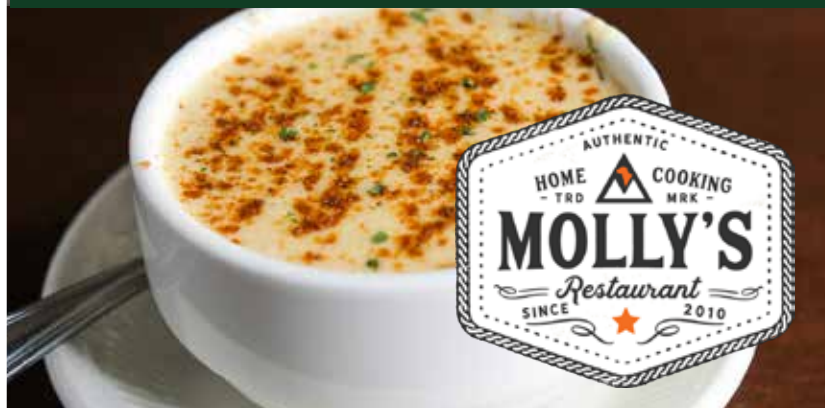
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The Canvasback

EDITOR

Mike Tarquini

CONTRIBUTORS

James W. Carroll, Jr.
Michael Daley
Dan Thanh Dang
Ralph Hockman
John Hughes
C. John Sullivan, Jr.
Chad Tragakis

GRAPHICS

Anne Fullem Design

PRINTING

Prestige Color, Lancaster, PA

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From the President...

George Strunk Exhibit Ends . . .

The exhibit of Glendora, NJ decoy carver George Strunk was recently taken down at the museum after being open for over five-months (April – September 2022). The Strunk exhibit allowed museum visitors to see first-hand examples of New Jersey's Delaware River style decoys. We were very fortunate to host many visitors from the New Jersey region as they came to view the exhibit. The museum extends a special thanks to George Strunk for agreeing to allow us to host the exhibit. Thanks are also due to Butch and Anne Wagoner for the extended loan of their Strunk decoys to fill out the exhibit.



Bob Biddle Exhibit . . .

The Decoy Museum is very fortunate to open a new exhibit in early October of waterfowl decoys from Landenberg, PA carver Bob Biddle. Bob made his first decoy, a drake canvasback, at the age of fourteen. Bob is best known for his sleek merganser decoys. Bob Biddle's work has been influenced by Chincoteague, VA carver Ira Hudson. Again, special thanks are due to Butch and Anne Wagoner who have allowed their Biddle decoys to fill the exhibit. The Bob Biddle exhibit will run approximately six-months (October - April 2023).

Cameron McIntyre Exhibit . . .

The Museum is also honored to open a Cameron McIntyre exhibit in early October. Cameron, from New Church, VA, boasts a Delmarva Pocomoke Sound style and has been influenced by Delmarva carvers Grayson Chesser, Pete Peterson, and Mark McNair. Special thanks to Larry Lambert (Virginia Beach, VA) for allowing the museum to exhibit his extensive Cameron McIntyre collection. Thanks are also in order for John Collier and Joe Engers for making the necessary introductions to make this exhibit possible. The Cameron McIntyre exhibit will run approximately six-months (October - April 2023).

Museum Visitation is Recovering . . .

Over the last five-months (April – August 2022), the Decoy Museum has continued to see an uptick in visitation. We have hosted nearly 4,600 visitors which is 121% from the same period in 2021 and 433% from the same period in 2020. We have already been contacted by some public school groups who intend to again conduct field trips during the 2022-2023 school year after taking a two-year hiatus due to the COVID pandemic. This is encouraging and promises to continue to bolster our visitation numbers.

Havre de Grace Candlelight Tour . . .

Once again, the Decoy Museum will participate in the Annual Holiday Candlelight Tour of Havre de Grace hosted by the Lock House Museum. This year's event will take place on Saturday, December 10, 2022 from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM. Please stop by the museum and see what we have in store for you to ring in the holiday season. Our newly renovated museum store will be well stocked in order to give our visitors some holiday gift options.

As this is the last 2022 edition of the Canvasback, I would like to thank each and every staff member, volunteer, member, donor and museum visitor for making this year a true recovery year for the museum from the last two tumultuous years that were overshadowed by the COVID pandemic.

2 New Exhibits

Coming to the Decoy Museum this Fall!

Exhibits open in early October 2022
and run through April 2023



Sleek Merganser

BOB BIDDLE & CAMERON MCINTYRE



Wigeon Pair

BOB BIDDLE

By Mike Tarquini

Landenberg, PA, surrounded by a nature preserve and small farms, is a lovely, small, quaint, and quiet area in Southeastern Pennsylvania. It is twenty-minutes Northwest of Wilmington, DE and close to the Maryland and Delaware state lines. Found among the nearly twelve-thousand residents in Landenberg, PA is decoy carver and artist Robert Getsmer Biddle III.

Bob Biddle was born on November 19, 1937 as the second of five children to Robert Getsmer Biddle, Jr., and Mary Coyle Biddle, in North East, MD. Bob's family relocated to Port Herman, a vacation community along the Elk River (Cecil County, MD), four years later, where he remained until the age of twenty-five. While in Port Herman, Bob met his wife of sixty-years, Jeanette Pencek, who was originally from Brooklyn, NY. When asked how he met Jeanette, Bob said "I literally married the girl next door."

Bob and Jeanette married in 1962, and relocated to Media, PA where they began a family. They raised four children, Jeanette (Jenny, 1963), Robert Kenneth (Kenny, 1964), John (1966), and Kelly (1967). Their children have provided Bob and Jeanette with eight grandchildren.

As a younger man, Bob worked for the US Army Corps of Engineers as a traffic checker aboard a tug boat near Town Point on the Elk River. It was his duty to check vessels' drafts before they entered into the C & D Canal. He later worked for the Planning Commission of Cecil County where he developed zoning maps for the county. Eventually Bob earned an Electrical Engineering degree from the University of Delaware. Following his degree, Bob worked for Philadelphia Electric where he had a variety of responsibilities including performing rate analyses, industrial sales, and commercial operations manager for Delaware County, PA. Bob retired from Philadelphia Electric as the commercial operations manager for Cecil County at the age of 53 in 1990. Bob saw this as an opportunity to pursue his passion of making decoys on a full time basis.

Outside of his career, Bob had many interests and pursued all of them with a great deal of passion. Both he and Jeanette enjoy painting watercolors and oils. Their house is adorned by samples of their work. Bob enjoyed playing the banjo.

Although he never joined a band, he would gather with friends and play. Bob built Windsor chairs as a hobby and they are tastefully placed throughout he and Jeanette's home. At one time, golf was a part of

Canvasback Pair



Bob's life but he says, "my belly and bifocals got in the way of my golf swing, so I gave my clubs away." Although he had many different hobbies, Bob has always loved wildlife and enjoyed the things that allowed him to spend more time in the wild. As a child, Bob fished gill nets, trapped muskrats, and hunted with his father. He enjoyed crabbing and clamming during his many family trips to Bethany Beach, DE. It was his hunting experiences that influenced his decision to make waterfowl decoys.

When Bob duck hunted with his father, they always used decoys that his dad had made. As his interest in waterfowl hunting grew, Bob realized that he would eventually have to learn to make his own decoys. At the age of fourteen, Bob Biddle made his first decoy, a drake canvasback, which he proudly displays in his home. Aside from a few decoys that he made for his use while hunting, Bob's initial offerings were more of a decorative style.

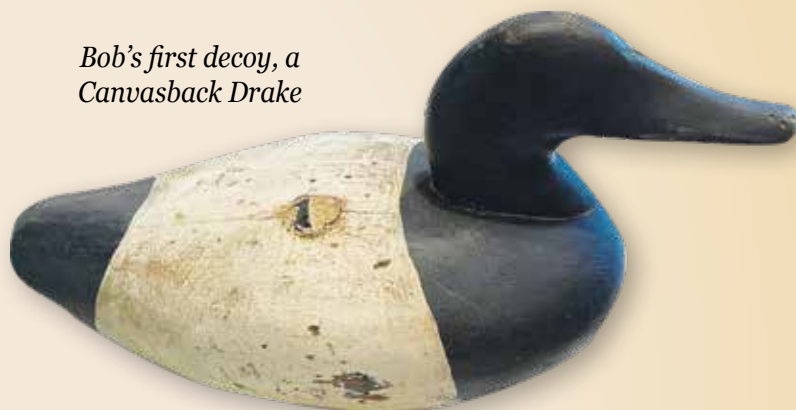
Jeanette remembers Bob coming home one day after meeting a real character in the decoy world named Harry Waite. Harry gave carving lessons, and his small flying birds attracted Bob's attention. After Bob took Harry's class, his interest in decorative birds was born. He won his first ribbon for a decorative carving in 1967. Two years later (1969), Bob's focus migrated to more of a working decoy style.

He made all species of waterfowl but favors mergansers. According to Bob, "mergansers are streamlined and built for speed." It was learned that during a hunting trip, young Bob shot a duck and needed the help of his father to retrieve it. Although Bob initially believed it to be a canvasback, the recovery effort proved otherwise, as an American merganser was found dead in the water. Perhaps this experience helps to explain Bob's partiality towards mergansers. Bob did share that even when he was targeting teal in a marsh, he would always put out a few merganser decoys in the hopes that he would lure them into his rig. If mergansers were to alight



Bob & Jeanette

Bob's first decoy, a Canvasback Drake



Cinnamon Teal Pair



Bob Biddle Watercolor



Feeder Goose





One of Bob's Windsor chairs



Bob Biddle hand chopping a decoy



Ruddy Duck Pair

Sleeper Goose



*Sleek
Marganser*

Black Duck



in his decoys, Bob would instruct his hunting partners not to shoot. Instead, they all watched as the mergansers dove, preened, and were allowed to do what mergansers do. Bob's signature carved decoy is a sleek long-necked merganser.

Bob Biddle never mass produced his decoys. He hand chopped his decoy bodies and did not use a duplicating lathe. He uses New Jersey cedar. With the exception of a band saw, all of the work was carried out with hand tools including a hatchet, wood gouges, draw knives, spokeshaves, and knives; the spokeshave being his favorite. No one was allowed to use Bob's hatchet. Bob said, "that hatchet fit my hands perfectly, and I could chop the bodies to within one-quarter of an inch of a finished product." Bob feels that each bird that he makes has a unique personality. According to George Duncan (New Jersey Waterfowlers Association), "it is Bob's belief that a decoy's personality or attitude is more important than coloration, eye placement is more important than eye size, and the silhouette on the water is more important than the size of the block." Duncan goes on to say, "Bob Biddle favors dark colors on his decoys and rarely uses pure white."

Like most decoy makers, Bob Biddle enjoyed exhibiting and selling his work at the various decoy shows throughout the region. Close friend and fellow decoy carver Gilmore "Butch" Wagoner recalls traveling up and down the East Coast with Bob as they roamed the decoy show circuit. According to Butch, "Bob and I spent nearly forty-five years attending shows together." Butch goes on to say, how much he misses that time he and Bob spent together.

When asked what other decoy maker influenced his style, Bob quickly says Ira Hudson of Chincoteague, VA. He feels that Hudson decoys possess all of the qualities that a decoy should have. In addition, Bob feels that Ira Hudson decoys have a personality that reflects the decoy maker. Bob collected Ira Hudson decoys. His goal was to find a different



Bob Biddle whittling a head



*Green-Winged
Teal Pair*



Loon



*Red Breasted
Merganser Pair*



*Biddle
Decorative
Carving*

Ira Hudson decoy every month to supplement his collection. At one point in time, Bob had sixty-three Ira Hudson decoys in his collection.

Bob always enjoyed having family and friends carve with him in his shop. This regularly took place on Thursdays. His first two decoy shops were located in Media, PA where he raised his family. His third and current decoy shop is located in Landenberg, PA where he lives. Bob enjoyed mentoring new carvers and taught carving classes at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. Perhaps Bob's most successful student was William "Bill" Veasey, his brother-in-law. Bill went on to become one of the region's most well-known decorative style carvers.

Bob Biddle will celebrate his eighty-fifth birthday in November of this year. Those who have had the fortune to know Bob would describe him as a very humble man who has never been a self-promoter. He has accomplished a variety of different things in his life and perfected each and everything that ever interested him. Bob hasn't made decoys for about a year and a half, but his decoy shop remains in ready mode.

An exhibition of Bob Biddle's work will be featured at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum starting in early October 2022 and will run for about six months. Special thanks to Gilmore "Butch" and Anne Wagoner for arranging the interview with Bob Biddle and for allowing us to use their decoys for the exhibit.



Greater Scaup Pair



Cameron McIntyre

As one makes their way South on Maryland's Eastern Shore and across the Maryland - Virginia State line, you enter Accomack County, VA. Accomack County is located in the Eastern edge of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Together, Accomack and Northampton counties make up the Eastern Shore of Virginia, which in turn is part of the Delmarva Peninsula, bordered by the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. The county is named for the Accawmack Indians, who resided in the area when the English first explored it in 1603.

Accomack County, VA is perhaps best known for its Chincoteague oysters and the Chincoteague ponies that roam the barrier island of Assateague Island. But, about fifteen miles Northwest of Chincoteague Island one finds New Church, VA. According to census data from 2010, New Church, VA only boasts 205 residents. Among them is artist and decoy maker Cameron Trenton McIntyre.

Cameron McIntyre was born in Beaufort, SC on November 16, 1968. Cameron was an outdoorsman at a very early age. He recalls going on hunting trips with family members where he would hunt ducks and dove. Cameron also took part in fishing and shrimping. He enjoyed playing baseball and football, but soon realized that the latter interfered with hunting season. He spent the first twenty-years of his life in South Carolina, eventually attending the University of South Carolina in Columbia where he studied art history and the studio arts.

Cameron realized at the early age of 12 that he needed to find a career associated with the outdoors. He developed a fondness for Virginia's Eastern Shore after visiting there as a youth while hunting. Cameron decided to leave South Carolina at the age of twenty and relocated five-hundred fifty miles North to New Church, VA where he practiced landscape painting and waterfowl decoy making and restoration.



Landscape by Cameron McIntyre

While attending a Cliff House auction in Maine, Cameron met Adele Miller, who at the time worked for prominent decoy auctioneer Guyette and Schmidt. Adele, from Skowhegan, ME, also had a love for the outdoors. Her father led wilderness canoe trips in Maine. According to Cameron, “Adele and I were a match made in heaven.” Cameron and Adele have been happily married for twenty-seven years and are proud of their two children Miles (age 20) and Caleb (age 16). Cameron and Adele live in a beautiful 1785 vintage mid-Georgian Colonial house that they have meticulously restored on a one-hundred eighty acre farm. They found that house some fifteen miles away from their property and moved it on steel beams over the road to its present location. Cameron recalls “we just got up early one morning and brought it here without escort or permits.” The house is beautifully adorned with landscape paintings, vintage decoys, and mosaic ceramic tile accents. Adele currently works for a mosaic tile operation in the region. Cameron has worked full time on landscape painting and decoy making and restoration since relocating to the Delmarva region. He recalls that the first five years were very lean, but he is proud to say that he and Adele have now paid off that house and farm.

After thirty-three years of making waterfowl decoys on the Delmarva Peninsula, Cameron McIntyre has incorporated the styles of various carvers into his own decoys. He collects and appreciates the old birds made on Chincoteague Island and the Virginia coast but living on the



Black Duck Pair





Shoveler Pair



Snow Goose



Gadwall

bayside area known as Bullbegger (near the Pocomoke Sound) he also feels a strong connection to the Wards, Sterlings, and Tylers who live just a short distance across the Sound. Bullbegger got its name from the bandits that once hid there. The area's marshland provided great cover those who did not want to be found.

When asked about his influences within the decoy making world, Cameron quickly identifies Grayson Chesser (Sanford, VA), Mark McNair (Craddockville, VA) and Pete "Hurricane" Peterson (Cape Charles, VA). All of his influencers craft their decoys from traditional hand work. Cameron adds that old decoys have always been his inspiration. Like most carvers, Cameron often attended decoy shows and exhibitions where he interacted with other carvers and became exposed to their styles. He remembers going to decoy shows when he was only ten years old.

Cameron McIntyre says that after many years of decoy making, he really doesn't have a fixed recognizable style. He states that he never set out to create a style of his own. Having a vast exposure to many decoy makers does not lend itself to the development of a particular style. He shares that he has had influences from all over the United States and Canada. Cameron recalls taking an order for twelve drake widgeons, where it was mandatory that all of them be identical. He said that "it was the most torturous thing that I ever did. I needed the money, but I would never do it again."



Gadwell Pair



Cameron working with a draw knife

A tour of Cameron McIntyre's decoy shop reveals that the only power tool he has is a band saw. All of the other tools that he uses to make his decoys are hand tools. He demonstrated the technique of hand chopping a canvasback body from a block of Northern white cedar with a Plumb hatchet that he purchased at a farm auction for ten dollars. He explained that he uses black electric tape on the top of that hatchet handle to improve his grip and make the tool better fit his hand (Steve Ward and Lloyd Tyler did the same). He demonstrated his use of a draw knife and spokeshave to refine the canvasback body. Likewise, he used the same tools to craft the head. Cameron's draw knife (which once belonged to North Carolina carver James Best) and spokeshave (Sheffield, England) date back to the nineteenth century. Not observing a sanding machine in the shop, I asked about how he finishes the bodies and heads. Like the previous steps in the process, Cameron lightly sands by hand using a home-made sanding bow. Often he does not sand the decoys at all, but carefully refines them with edge tools. He shared that sanding machines make a terrible mess in the shop and hinders his ability to paint in the same area. Although Cameron describes himself as "not patient at all", he shared that he often spends hours with a spokeshave getting them ready to paint. Because he relies on the performance of a few hand tools to craft his decoys, Cameron treasures them and protects them from misuse.



Canvasback Pair



Wood Duck Pair

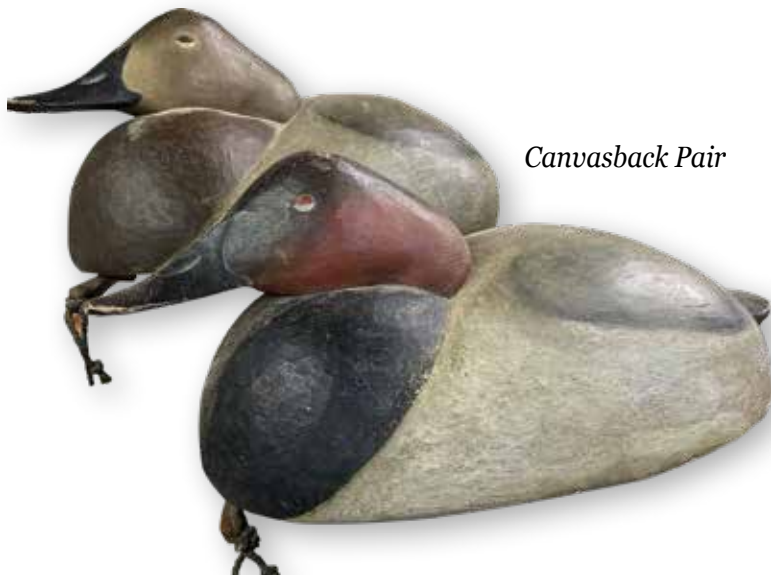


Canvasback Sleeper



In preparation for being away at a decoy show in Chicago, Cameron demonstrated to his wife Adele, the basics of operating their lawn tractor so she could cut grass during his absence. While in Chicago, he called Adele to check on things and noticed she was unusually quiet. After probing Adele for more information, he learned that she accidentally ran over the firewood pile while backing up the lawn tractor, imbedding the blade into a large piece of wood. Adele assured Cameron that all was good, for she liberated the blade after some effort and went on to finish the mowing. Cameron learned that Adele used the very hatchet that he uses to chop decoy bodies to free the mower blade. Cameron said that he spent five days restoring that hatchet blade to service upon his return.

Canvasback Pair



It took Cameron a while to hone his skills at decoy making but once he started using the correct tools and wood, he was on his way. During his apprenticeship as a decoy maker, he would go to shows where he met other makers and solicited pointers from them. Aside from making his own duck decoys for hunting at age fourteen, Cameron McIntyre has built sneak boats and skiffs for his own use.

Cameron's favorite ducks to make include Canada geese, canvasbacks, black ducks, and most puddle ducks such as mallards, teal, wood ducks, widgeons, gadwalls, and pintails. That is not surprising given they frequent marshy areas such as found on the Delmarva peninsula. Like many others, decoy makers generally like



to make species that they like to hunt. Buffleheads and shovelers comprise the list of Cameron's least favorite decoys to make. Cameron adds, "I have no interest in making things like flamingos, cormorants, or loons. I have no love for those birds."

Although Cameron has been making decoys for thirty-three years, he has never won a ribbon of any kind for his creations. Cameron says that he doesn't craft decoys to win awards or prizes. He shared that he once entered a floating contest some years ago with a swan. Just prior to the competition, he discovered that his entry had trouble righting itself when laid on its side. Being creative, and using all that he had available to him, Cameron attached a short length of chain to the keel of his swan. The added weight enabled the swan to self-right, but he was disqualified by the judges because he used that chain. That incident caused Cameron to shy away from future competitions.

When asked about affiliations with Decoy Collector Clubs Cameron is quick to point out that, "I am probably not fit to be in a group." Cameron has however given carving lessons and demonstrations at various shows and has raised tens of thousands of dollars for conservation efforts through donations of his paintings and decoys. He describes himself as, "a loner and an amateur naturalist." He thrives on peace and quiet. He has spent time identifying every tree and shrub on his one-hundred eighty acre farm. He has no social media presence and still owns a flip phone with little desire to change. The cell phone reception is poor on his farm and he loves it. He and Adele enjoy taking hikes and being out in the wilderness. He shared that they once hiked to the peak of Mt. Katahdin in Baxter State Park (Maine). He feels most at home hunting in the marsh.

When asked about his future endeavors outside of decoy making, Cameron said, "I am still trying to figure it out." He added, "If I am

fortunate enough to win the lottery, I would donate my winnings to some sort of waterfowl habitat preservation." Within decoy making, Cameron feels that he is still not making birds to the quality that they should be. He then says, "one day, I hope to make some good stuff." Although craftsmen are always most critical of their own work, it's safe to say that Cameron McIntyre has already made some good stuff.

The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is honored to be opening an exhibition of Cameron McIntyre decoy carvings in early October 2022, courtesy of Larry Lambert (Virginia Beach, VA) who is graciously providing most of the display pieces. Special thanks are also in order to long-time supporter of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum, Henry Stansbury who has provided one of Cameron's paintings for the exhibit. The Cameron McIntyre exhibit will run through April 2023.



Puddle Ducks

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STAFF PROFILES

Although the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum has fared very well over the last two and one-half tumultuous years, we have essentially had a complete turnover of our staff since the COVID pandemic presented itself in March of 2020. Piece by piece, we have reassembled a very strong team that behaves more like family than co-workers. Navigating the uncertainty of COVID has been very trying to say the least. The museum has emerged stronger than ever and is actively pursuing some very ambitious initiatives. Please take the time to acquaint yourselves with our new staff and engage with them during your next visit to the museum.



Mike Tarquini

Mike is a lifelong resident of Havre de Grace who joined the museum's Board in 2016 and has served as Board President since 2019. He has served as acting Executive Director of the Decoy Museum since July 2020. Although his principle responsibility is to direct the strategic direction of the museum, Mike takes on more of a tactical role when acting Executive Director. Aside from his leadership positions, Mike serves as editor for the museum's quarterly publication, the Canvasback. Mike and his wife Judy have raised four children and enjoy spoiling their seven grandchildren. Mike is an avid boater, mentors Eagle Scout candidates for Troop 238, and enjoys playing golf during his retirement from J.M. Huber Corporation after nearly thirty-eight years of service.



Dena Cardwell

Dena came to the Decoy Museum in May 2021 as our membership and special events coordinator. She has been a Havre de Grace resident for over twenty years. She and her husband of twenty-five years, Ron, have raised three sons. Prior to joining the museum staff, Dena worked in day care for twenty-five years, retiring as an assistant director. Dena sits on two City of Havre de Grace commissions and is very active with Havre de Grace High School. She is also the team mom for the local high school's football team. Dena loves working at the Decoy Museum and all the new things she has learned about the history of decoy making. She says that she has met some awesome people and thoroughly enjoys her co-workers that have become like family to her. Dena is not shy about tackling complicated projects and recently coordinated the renovation and operation of our museum store.



Nathaniel Heasley

Nathaniel (Nate) joined the Decoy Museum as a curatorial intern in the summer of 2021. Following his internship, Nate worked part-time while completing his undergraduate education at Towson University (2021-2022). Following the completion of his Bachelor of Science in history with a minor in museum studies in June 2022, Nate accepted a full-time position at the museum as a curatorial coordinator. He enjoys learning about the museum's collection and brainstorming with others about ways to improve the offerings to our visitors.



Virginia "Ginny" Sanders

Ginny has served as the registrar of the Decoy Museum since 2009 and has coordinated all of our curatorial responsibilities. Ginny is a volunteer at the museum. She was raised on a dairy farm in Connecticut and has spent the last fifty years in the Harford and Cecil County area. Ginny and her husband Lloyd have become collectors of waterfowl art from the Susquehanna River / Upper Chesapeake Bay region. After earning a Bachelor of Music degree from Boston University and a Master of Science degree from the University of Illinois, she taught instrumental music for thirty-four years. Ginny has also performed with several musical ensembles. Ginny worked closely with Nate throughout his internship and part-time efforts and continues to be a mentor as he develops in his new curatorial coordinator role.



Susan Waring

Susan is a former New Jersey girl who moved to Havre de Grace in 2013 when her husband (Dave) began working at Aberdeen Proving Ground. She joined the museum as a part-time docent in 2017, and she now serves as our finance manager. Sharing the treasures of the Decoy Museum is a joy that dovetails with her twin passions of making art and preserving the natural beauty and diversity of our planet. Susan is a self-taught watercolor artist and a member of the Baltimore Watercolor Society. She also volunteers at the local community hospital. Susan and Dave have raised two energetic daughters who use their science backgrounds to champion our ecological world and health initiatives in developing countries. Susan's favorite activities are hiking local nature trails and delighting in each eagle, turtle, and frog that crosses her path.



Charlie Lawson

Charlie is a Havre de Grace resident and a retired career law enforcement officer serving the town of Aberdeen. He and wife Sharon owned and operated a Havre de Grace coffee shop (Java by the Bay) for fifteen and one-half years. Charlie is married with six children and eighteen grandchildren. He works part-time at the Decoy Museum in reception and staffing the museum store. Charlie thoroughly enjoys meeting new people and talking about where they are from and their interest in decoys. He is skilled in carpentry and often finds himself tackling museum projects.



Sandy Poughkeepsie

Sandy joined the museum in May 2021 as a part-time employee. Her duties include reception and staffing the museum store. Prior to joining the museum, Sandy had an extensive career in nursing at Upper Chesapeake Health System – Havre de Grace where she worked for over thirty years. Sandy was bestowed the honor of being Nurse of the Year in 1999 and 2008. Sandy has one son and two grandchildren.



Jade Vincenti

Jade is a lifelong resident of Havre de Grace. She is a full-time student at Towson University, majoring in speech-language pathology & audiology (SPPA). Jade has worked part-time at the museum for the past two summers (2021-2022) and fills in during her college breaks. She enjoys greeting guests as they arrive at the museum and meeting all kinds of new people who visit us.



Anne Popowski

Anne is a resident of Abingdon and is retired. She is married and has 3 children, and 6 grandchildren. She enjoys card games and reading. She likes the Wizard of Oz and Disney villains. Halloween is her favorite holiday. Anne enjoys volunteering at the Decoy Museum and meeting new people from all over.



Josiah Scott

Josiah is a lifelong resident of Havre de Grace. He currently attends Harford Community College as a business major. Josiah plans on transferring to a four-year institution upon graduation. In his spare time, Josiah is a recreation league basketball coach. He enjoys leading his young players and pushing them to be all they can be. Josiah enjoys working at the Decoy Museum because it is such a big part of his hometown. He enjoys the knowledge and friends he has gained since working at the museum.



Vivian Miller

Vivian is a senior at Havre de Grace High School. She was initially hired to work on weekends but has worked regularly during the week throughout this past summer. As such, Vivian has quickly picked up all aspects of working reception and staffing the museum store. Vivian's hobbies include equestrian competitions and collecting snakes. She currently has five pythons and a boa constrictor. Vivian is making plans for college after high school but hasn't settled on a major area of study as of yet. Vivian loves learning new things. Waterfowl hunting and decoy making were relatively unknown to her before working at the Decoy Museum. She is soaking up the knowledge each and every day.

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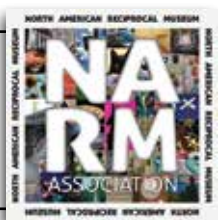
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The Magnificent Barnard Wing Ducks

Elegant in Style, Bold in Form, Rich in History

By Chad Tragakis



*Photograph by A. Aubrey Bodine
Copyright © Jennifer B. Bodine
Courtesy of AAubreyBodine.com*

This article was previously published in the March/April 2011 edition of Decoy Magazine and reprinted with permission of Chad Tragakis (Author) and Joe Engers (Editor, Decoy Magazine).

Upper Chesapeake Bay waterfowling of the late 19th and early 20th centuries is epitomized by the sinkbox, a floating device in which a hunter – or in the case of a double sinkbox, two hunters – would lie in wait for birds to alight into the rig of 300 or so decoys that surrounded him. Some early waterfowling chroniclers aptly described it as a “floating coffin,” as the interior of the box was similarly shaped. But it was the incoming canvasbacks, not the hunter, that met their fate, and sinkboxes proved to be an incredibly effective device for gunners who used them on the Susquehanna Flats.



*Ben Dye Bluebill Wing Duck
Collection of Jim Lockard*



*Barnard Canvasback
Wing Duck
Collection of Chad &
Christy Tragakis*

History and posterity have left behind numerous accounts of this fascinating, deadly, and long-illegal method of duck hunting, which was outlawed in 1934. Period photographs and 19th century etchings illustrate its use. The trappings of this pursuit – a handful of single and double sinkboxes, the fowling pieces and accoutrements of famed wing-shots, and remnants of notable gunning decoy rigs – have been long preserved.

Among the scarcest of these relics are the sinkbox decoys or “wing ducks” – flat-bottomed decoys carved out of wood or cast in iron or lead – used to submerge the box and conceal the hunter. The heavy cast iron decoys were placed on the wooden rim of the box or “coffin,” weighing it down so that it floated flush with the water, precisely the level desired by the hunter. The lighter wooden “wing ducks” were placed on the canvas-covered “wings” that surrounded

the box. For many decoy collectors, wing ducks capture the essence of waterfowling on the Upper Chesapeake Bay even more than their floating, full-bodied counterparts.

Aesthetically, wing ducks are a unique form of decoy sculpture, with bodies typically one-third the thickness of a standard decoy. Some were made simply, by sawing the bottom two-thirds or so off a regular decoy; others were fashioned initially from thinner boards or planks, lending them the correct body dimensions. (Cast iron and lead sinkbox decoys were made from molds fashioned after these patterns.) In most cases, even in this abbreviated format, each maker’s carving and painting style – his signature – comes shining through. This is especially true when examining the wing ducks of the Susquehanna Flats’ commercial decoy makers, as opposed to the output of the indigent hunter or the anonymous whittler.

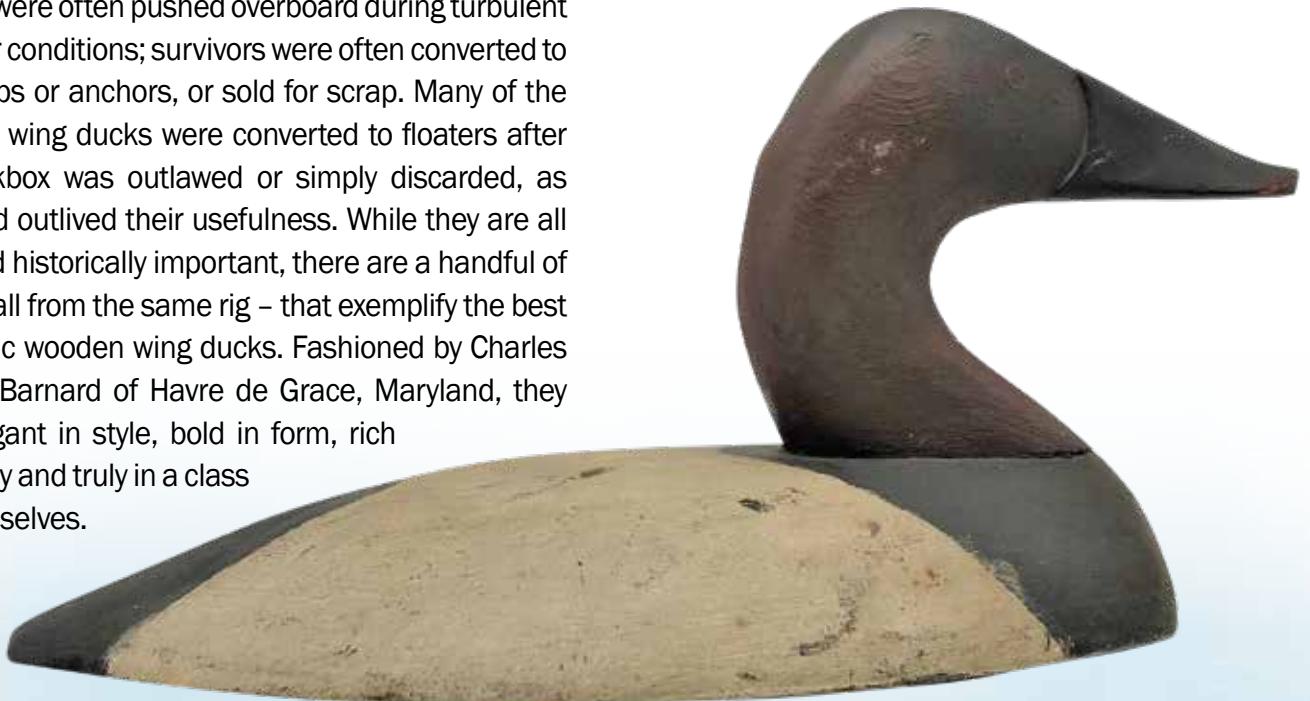


Charles Nelson Barnard

Best known for his stately high head canvasback decoys, Barnard (1876-1958) was born into a family with a strong tradition of working the water. He began toiling on the family's boat at a tender age, harvesting the bounty of the Susquehanna River and Upper Chesapeake Bay. Seeking to prove himself, in his early 20s he left home to work for the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad. He served as a signalman for the B&O for 35 years.

Although Barnard spent years “working the rails,” he supplemented his income, like many men on both sides of the Susquehanna Flats, by making and selling decoys. His output was never huge, nowhere near the numbers produced by many of his contemporaries. Instead, it was steady over much of his life, and many of his customers were old friends and longtime acquaintances.

In terms of value on the collectors' market, wing ducks command a premium, as they are among the scarcest of all Upper Bay decoys. Few were made and fewer still have survived, in any condition. The cast iron decoys were often pushed overboard during turbulent weather conditions; survivors were often converted to doorstops or anchors, or sold for scrap. Many of the wooden wing ducks were converted to floaters after the sinkbox was outlawed or simply discarded, as they had outlived their usefulness. While they are all rare and historically important, there are a handful of birds – all from the same rig – that exemplify the best in classic wooden wing ducks. Fashioned by Charles Nelson Barnard of Havre de Grace, Maryland, they are elegant in style, bold in form, rich in history and truly in a class by themselves.





Charles Nelson Barnard is shown in the center of this photo of signalmen taken on the B&O Railroad near Aiken, MD, in 1910. Standing is a Mr. Smallwood, and Charles Botts is seated next to Barnard on the speeder. Photo courtesy of C. John Sullivan (private collection).

Along with the added income, Barnard seemingly enjoyed the challenges and pleasant distractions that decoy making afforded him, evidenced by the different models, various species and miniature carvings that he made. Among them were an exceptional group of wooden wing ducks, arguably some of the most sculptural and coveted of all Upper Chesapeake Bay decoys.

At least six magnificent examples from this rig are known to exist. There are also a few original Barnard bodies that sport heads (original or replaced) by other makers. One has a Barnard style body with a head that



appears much closer to the work of his older brother, Thomas P. Barnard (1874-1927). Given the working relationship between the two brothers, and the fact that makers would often use heads by others when time or situations dictated, the Tom Barnard head may well be original to the bird.

For many years early collectors attributed these decoys to Ben Dye, and several examples are inscribed as such on the bottom. Dye (1832-1895), from Perryville in Cecil County, one of the Upper Chesapeake's most notable early makers, is known to have made a number of wooden sinkbox decoys, many of which found their way into some of the great early collections. Those early collectors didn't have the benefit of the research and scholarship of later waterfowling historians. At a time when knowledge of

specific makers' styles and characteristics was still being documented, collectors relied largely on the recollections of family members and former hunting companions, intuition and instinct. Confusion and misattribution were common. In light of this, it is perhaps understandable that mistakes were made.

In addition, Barnard's decoys feature certain characteristics that are more associated with the Cecil County style than with those made in Havre de Grace. Although he was born and raised in Havre de Grace, Barnard spent part of his early adulthood near Elkton, Maryland in Cecil County, so he may have been influenced by the decoy makers he met there, or at least by the decoys he saw in use. However, upon close examination of the decoys in question, many of the characteristics of Barnard's classic birds are



*Classic full-bodied Barnard
Canvasback drake. Collection of
Chad & Christy Tragakis*

*Photograph by A. Aubrey Bodine
Copyright © Jennifer B. Bodine
Courtesy of AAubreyBodine.com*



clearly visible, specifically the heads, the slope and sharp chine of the bodies and the paint patterns. In 1989, historian and author C. John Sullivan wrote an article on Barnard for Decoy Magazine, the first published research on the man and his work; little about Barnard was widely known prior to this. Since then, collectors have properly attributed the rig of wing ducks to his hand. The Barnard wing ducks are largely identical to one another, save for some slight variations in head height (low, medium and high) and body styling. Interestingly, unlike his full-bodied decoys, the wing ducks do not feature neck shelf carving.

Based on the detailed inscriptions found on the bottoms of some from the rig, recollections and anecdotal evidence provided by early collectors, and subsequent research, it is possible to piece together the story of these remarkable wing ducks. At least two are attributed to Ben Dye. On the bottom of one, in very old India ink, it's written: "Made by Capt. Ben Dye, Havre de Grace, MD 1890. Bought by Graff Sinclair 1917 - Used by him on sink box." This is partially correct as collectors and scholars now believe Barnard made these wing ducks around 1917, the time that they are stated to have been used on the Susquehanna Flats.

Frank "Graff" Sinclair (1893-1966) was a market hunter from the Chester/Kennett Square area of Pennsylvania. It's likely that Sinclair was the rig's original owner, and that he purchased them directly from Barnard. Barnard made decoys in several slightly different styles over his active carving career, and Sullivan, an authority on Barnard and his work, agrees that they are similar stylistically to that period, which supports the notion that Sinclair purchased the rig directly from Barnard in 1917.

Several and possibly all of the sinkbox decoys from the rig were next used by another market hunter, Jack Griel (1897-1976) of Kennett Square/Hammerton, Pennsylvania, who also gunned a sinkbox on the Susquehanna Flats. It's not known whether he purchased the rig or whether it was a gift from Sinclair, as the two were friends, according to Jay Richardson, an early collector who knew Griel and purchased one of the wing ducks from him in the early 1970s. At least one and possibly a few birds from the rig were last used by Captain Harvey Brice (1862-1950), a

waterman from Worton, Maryland, who operated a sinkbox in the waters off Kent County. He was a neighbor and acquaintance of legendary decoy maker Charlie Joiner. At least one of the Barnard wing ducks bears his "H. BRICE" brand.

Well constructed and well painted, this group of sinkbox decoys has survived in remarkably good condition, suggesting they saw little use and were handled with great care. It's likely that at least a few of them may have been taken out of service several years before the prohibition of sinkbox shooting in 1934 and put into storage. Griel was an early collector as well as a market hunter, so perhaps recognizing their rarity, outstanding form and connection to a way of life that was quickly fading even then, he may have set them aside for posterity early in their wooden lives. Most of the birds remain intact, but at least one example has surfaced that has been re-headed. Barnard may well have made other wooden wing ducks, but based on form, paint, condition and rigging, all of the ones known in collections today appear to have come from the same original rig.



*Barnard Wing Duck with early collector notes on bottom.
Collection of Steve Dudley*





Beginning in the 1950s and 1960s, these magnificent decoys made their way into the hands of several pioneer collectors. This is testament to their aesthetic and sculptural appeal as well as their documented historical importance. Over the years they have been displayed at major decoy shows and in museum exhibits and have been pictured in several important books.

The roster of notable collectors who have owned these decoys over the past 60 years is almost as fascinating as the story of the market gunners who first used them. Adele Earnest owned one and pictured it in her landmark book, “The Art of the Decoy.” Somers G. Hedley owned one; it is pictured in “The Great Book of Wildfowl Decoys,” edited by Joe Engers. Bill Mackey owned one, selling it to Joe French in 1959. It is pictured on the table next to Joe in a 1950s *Mechanix Illustrated* article on the “World’s Largest Decoy Collection” and in the opening shot of his famous

“Collecting Memories” slide show. Early collectors Mort Hansen, Jay Richardson, Norris Pratt, King Hemming and Mort Kramer all owned a bird from the rig at one time. More recently they have adorned the esteemed collections – or passed through the hands – of Mac Taliaferro, Mike Keating, Vance Strausburg, John Proctor, Griff Evans and Steve Dudley.

If it is possible for a decoy to be proud – of their majestic look, of their rich history, of their effectiveness on the water – these wing ducks have certainly earned that distinction. They are undoubtedly some of the finest Upper Chesapeake Bay decoys ever to grace a Susquehanna Flats sinkbox rig or a collector’s shelf. Like all wing ducks, the Barnard birds capture a small slice of Chesapeake Bay waterfowling history, a long-ago era when these rare and unique decoys rode on the wings of sinkboxes . . . and now on the wings of history.



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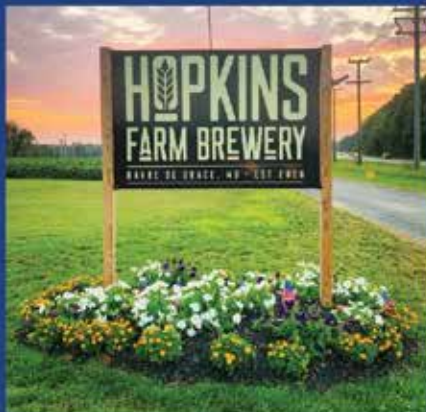
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- Joseph Campbell (author)

Photos by Scott Moody

CANVASBACK NATURALIST

Each edition will feature a natural history topic relating to the mission of the museum. The author, **John Hughes** is a retired science teacher from the John Carroll School (1972-2015). His subject areas included Chesapeake Bay Studies, Ecology (freshwater and marine) and Environmental Science. As a naturalist, John helped to develop natural history programs for a myriad of environmental organizations and schools. As a field educator and canoe guide, he led trips throughout the Eastern United States (especially the Southeast), Central America and the Caribbean. He presently serves as a member of the Museum's Board.



I cannot remember if it was early or mid-November. We had launched my 15 foot standard, dead grass- green, Grumman canoe at Bob Strong's boat rental next to the bridge which enters Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge in Maryland's Kent County on the Delmarva Peninsula. It was still relatively early on a beautiful blue sky day occasionally interrupted by drifting white cotton cumulus clouds. The morning temperature was cool, probably in the low 40s with a midday prediction up to the mid to upper 50s. A slight breeze of 5 to 10 miles blew from the north and the sun was bright but not really warm. My paddling partners were David "Barney" McCullom and my wife Ann. David was a John Carroll graduate in his junior year at Saint Mary's College. He was an extremely good young birder and naturalist and a great bow paddler. Ann was an adjunct professor at Loyola College and very much interested in relaxing in the middle of the boat and taking in as much local natural history as possible, especially the brackish flora. She enjoyed the energy and expertise David and I would provide. Lunch and plenty of hot tea were in the portage bag for later.

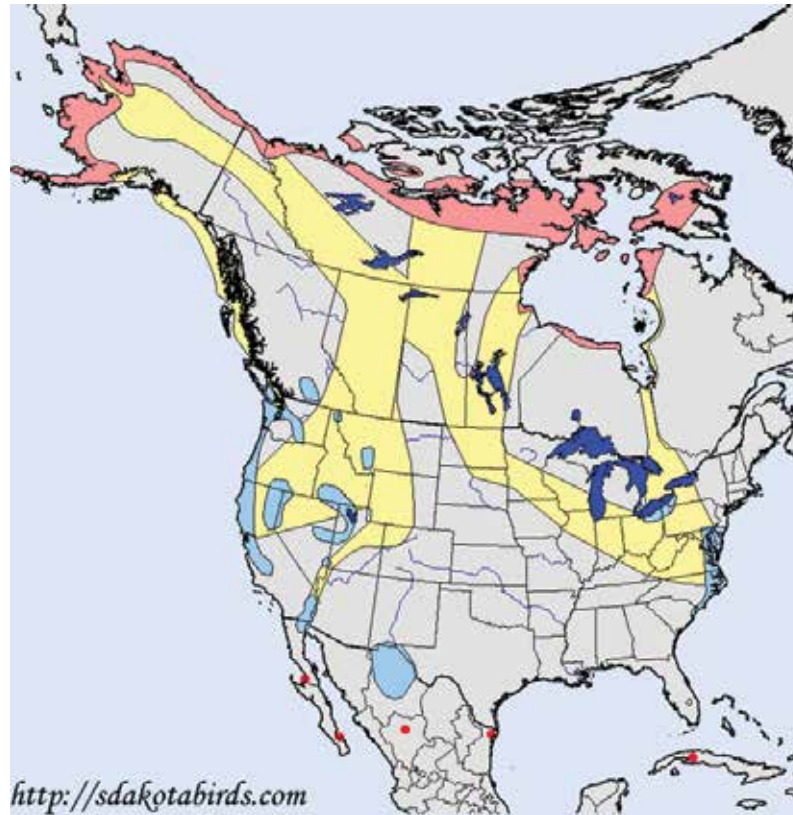
After launching from the beach, we turned to the left gliding under the bridge and into Frying Pan Cove. As we crossed the clear, shallow bay we saw the bottom was covered with SAVs (Submerged Aquatic Vegetation), wild celery, horned pondweed, and bushy coontail that lined the benthic substrate. These are ideal foods for resident and migratory waterfowl as well as protective habitat for many of the Chesapeake's diverse residents, especially blue crabs and fish. As we vectored across the cove, eventually meeting the Chester river, we witnessed much wildlife. Great blue herons waded in the shallows and bald eagles soared overhead, occasionally plunging in for a fish. A pair of river otters swam by on their way up river. Canada geese and some puddle ducks, mostly blacks and mallards,

floated throughout the basin along with a couple of small rafts of scaups and widgeons. As we rested and snacked, we witnessed the southwest flow of the Chester River loop Eastern Neck Island and flow to the northwest as it entered the main bay. The river was filled with boaters moving in all directions and some coming down the Corsica River as it entered the Chester. Loblolly pines dominated the uplands and the brackish marsh was dominated by 3 squares and spartinas. Late blooming hibiscus flared beautiful pink and white flowers. Although still green, the marsh was transitioning to the browns of autumn and a shutdown in productivity. As we relaxed, the natural land, sky, and waterscape created quite an awe- inspiring impression. All of our academic work and stress seemed to vanish away, at least for a while. I spoke of having a "peaceful easy feeling" and wanting to curl up and take a nap. That, however, was not our plan.

Escaping my reverie and back on task, we headed back across the cove and turned into Church Creek. Before entering the creek, we paddled into a tidal pond surrounded by marsh and loblollies. The narrow-entranced inlet led to a spectacular setting and a small group of vaulting blacks added to our excitement. Leaving the tidal pond, we turned north up the creek toward Rock Hall. Church Creek drained an area between two narrow peninsulas. On our left was agricultural land mostly in soybean production and on our right was wild undeveloped land. With the slight breeze in our faces, we paddled until we were almost out of water. The narrow creek, never more than 50 yards wide, brought us more opportunities at naturalizing. We observed plenty of geese and ducks, swimming muskrats, and even a few whitetails. We found a dry pullout area, stretched our legs, and dined on roast beef sandwiches, gorp, and sweets. Hot tea with honey was our drink and we again sat back and relaxed. It was now time

to head down the creek to our final takeout. As the boat again entered the water, both David and I thought we heard some whistling (tundra) swans nearby, but we were unable to visually find them. The breeze, now at our back, made the return paddle very comfortable. It seemed like in minutes we were back at the cove and leaving Church Creek.

As we passed through the mouth of the creek where it enters into the cove, across the water near the far shore was a huge group of tundra swans which had not been present when we earlier paddled the cove. I guesstimated about 200-300 birds both adults and cygnets. Whatever the actual number, there were a whole lot of swans, swimming in the shallows about 300 yards off our bow. They were swimming near the shore's edges, ripping vegetation off the bottom and gorging themselves on the grasses. The wind at our back had increased slightly and was pushing our boat right at the swans as we drifted. As the gap between us and the birds narrowed, the swans became alerted to our presence and



Tundra Swan
Cygnus columbianus

- Permanent Resident**
- Breeding Resident**
- Nonbreeding Resident**
- Passage Migrant**
- Introduced**
- Uncertain Status**
- Vagrant**

Map created by Terry Sohl,
Data from NatureServe



a general fractiousness set in amongst them. We must have passed the birds' safe point and they began to vocalize and the birds closest to us began to run on the water achieving lift by pushing their huge black feet on the surface as they seemed to run right at us. The massive spread of their muscular 6- foot wingspan, pumped up and down as they gained altitude a few meters above the water and our canoe. They appeared to be gigantic 747s rolling down the runway and taking off. As we witnessed the power of their wings, we also heard the air pushing through their feathers. To paraphrase famous ecologist, Aldo Leopold, from his masterpiece *A Sand County Almanac*, we were experiencing "Swan Music" (Goose Music.) As all the birds launched, the cacophony of swan noise was overwhelming. The swans were so low over our boat, it seemed I could reach them with my paddle. They flew up to the west to the more open waters of the Chesapeake Bay proper and away from us.

The blue sky had framed the birds perfectly and the sunlight had glistened off and through their plumage, especially their large primary feathers. Their long necks had been erect into the wind and they called to one another. We had not realized that we had all laid back in our positions in the canoe as the birds had flown over us. As we sat up, no one spoke for we were dumb founded and in "AWE" of this event - a swan rise! Barney was the first to speak and turned to face us pronouncing "WOW, Far Out" which today would have been "surreal". This literally said it all. I had no better words to describe what had just happened during those moments in Frying Pan Cove. This incredible observation and interaction with these birds on that day is an event that I have never forgotten and which changed my life. Every time I see or hear a tundra today, I think back to that experience. I am very fortunate and grateful to have had the experience early on in my naturalist career. It inspired me to want to work with others and give them the same opportunity. This was and is the type of event which can give students and other participants the desire to feel and learn more about the beautiful and natural world that can coexist with the one in which most of us live our daily lives. Those swans on that day in that cove created in me a deep passion for waterfowl especially swans and a need to teach others about them. Your reading of this article by the Canvasback Naturalist bears witness to this.

In the Chesapeake Bay today, there are 3 species of swans that can be potentially observed. They are the trumpeter swan (*Cygnus buccinator*), mute swan (*Cygnus olor*), and the tundra swan (*Cygnus columbianus*). Trumpeters are rare, mutes are exotic, and tundras are our most common during their winter migration to the bay. The Chesapeake provides these birds with good habitat and feeding opportunities. In a previous Canvasback Naturalist article, I discussed the trumpeter swan. In this issue, I will focus on the tundra swan. In a future edition I will consider mute swans and the overall problem of exotic species.

Tundra swans are one of the most beautiful members of the waterfowl family." Because of their immaculate white plumage and their strong pair and family bonds, swans have long served as icons of beauty, devotion, and longevity in the myths and folklore of many cultures" (Johnsgard, *Swans*, p.13). Whether in story form such as Christian Anderson's "The Ugly Duckling", or ballet such as Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake", swans gain human admiration because they exhibit such admired and positive human traits. Pair bonding for life, extended parental care by both sexes, and prolonged family cohesion are examples of desired human characteristics which swans biologically and ethologically practice. The folklore of a "Swan Song" offered by swans at death is only inspirational,





but it is nonetheless very romantic (Ibid. p.13). Characteristics and behaviors of swans have clearly permeated human culture.

The Tundra swan is one of the largest of waterfowl species only bested by the trumpeter and mute swans. They are large, long-necked, full-bodied birds that can weigh to 20 lbs. or more. They grow as long as 57 inches and can have a wingspan well over 4 foot plus. Males are slightly larger than females. Adult plumage is completely white although occasionally their necks will appear rusty as a result of feeding in tundra stained waters. Cygnets usually exhibit a brownish-gray feathering. They have huge black feet and a large black bill averaging 3 1/2 to 4 inches long. Most tundras, but not all, exhibit a distinct well pronounced yellow pattern on their lores between the end of the bill and their eye. On the water, tundras hold their heads and bills parallel to the water only allowing their necks to exhibit curves while at rest. Sex determination requires physical internal examination. The calling of the tundra is a “wooh, wooh, wooh” high pitched sound (Banko, 1960).

Tundra swans are birds of the temperate and arctic zones. They breed in the arctic tundra in northern hemisphere springs and summers, and winter over in the mid-temperate zone. Breeding occurs across the northern plain regions of Canada, Alaska, and the far eastern portions of Siberia in Russia, all north of the tree line and Arctic circle. Wintering waters for the birds are predominantly in the Atlantic flyway, especially the Chesapeake Bay and Currituck Sound. In the Pacific flyway they principally winter in the Central Valley of California. Utah's great Salt Lake Valley is also a major western wintering region. Density distribution is greatly impacted by severity of wintering conditions and the availability of food. On a personal note while working for the Chesapeake Bay Foundation, I was able to help collect field data in the form of neck collar observations throughout the Delmarva. This information was directed into Dr. William Sladen's Swan Research Project which attempted to define and refine tundra swan distribution and density patterns as well as migratory behavior. The project was one of the first to study swan movements through color and coded letters and numbers which not only individualized each bird but did not require recapture or bird mortality. Well over 6,000 birds were collared to provide data. Dr. Sladen was able to compile definitive information on the movements of the birds.

Breeding habitat for the tundra swan is found in heath tundra rarely more than 100 yards from water. Shorelines of lakes or ponds, small islands, and especially elevated hummocks are favored nesting sites. Nests are up to 2 feet high and are composed of moss, grasses, and sedges. They resemble muskrat huts and it is thought that the birds gain better vision of potential predators from the top of the hut. Vegetation for the mound is plucked from around the nest creating a circle of open water resembling a moat up to 15 feet in diameter (Bellrose, p.100). Nesting density is about 1 - 2 nests per square mile.

Wintering habitat in the Chesapeake Bay is extensive open areas of brackish water with adjacent wetlands and marshes. Water depth is rarely greater than 5 feet. Early migrants may visit freshwater areas. Wintering locations are also found near agricultural areas of harvested corn, soybean, and freshly- planted winter wheat.

Tundra swans are primarily vegetable eaters although at times they will feed on mollusks like *Macoma* clams. The swans feed on the leaves, stems, tubers, and seeds of SAVs and marsh plants. Submerged grasses include wild celery, widgeon grass, sago pondweed, coontail, etc. Wetland





plants include arrowhead, bullrush, 3 squares, smart weeds, and many other grasses. Agricultural grazing is dominated by soybean, corn, winter wheat and sometimes potatoes. Changing availability of food sources and supply has led to a corresponding shift in behavior from feeding on water to grazing on land. In the Chesapeake during the decades of the 60s and 70s, this change was witnessed by not only tundra swans but many other waterfowl as well. It is important to note that historically, tundra swans were associated with brackish SAVs and marshes.

Pair bonding in tundra swans may take up to 4 years but formation begins with 2- year-old males associating to and defending a particular female which becomes his “permanent” lifetime mate. The birds share what waterfowl biologist Paul Johnsgard considers a mutual triumph ceremony. Copulation is preceded by dipping and weaving movements which are terminated by both birds extending their necks upward and uttering loud notes while waving their wings (Johnsgard).

Egg laying begins early on arrival at the breeding grounds. An average clutch size is 4 eggs but can be as high as 7. Incubation which is done by the female takes between 30 - 32 days. Young birds mature rapidly and fledging is over before 85 days. Recruitment levels are positive averaging 2.5 plus. Survival rates for adults as well as young seem high and longevity in the wild can reach over 20 years.

Tundra swans have very strong family bonds which may last for several years and end when the young begin to form their own families. Monogamous pairs may remain together for their lifetimes. Migration movement begins first with family units, then to grouped families, and finally to staging areas with hundreds, maybe even thousands of birds moving together. Historic migratory routes are over areas which can provide sanctuary and nourishment opportunities.

The migrations are long and may be 2000 miles in length. The swans fly at high altitudes as they migrate. Partial funding for Dr. Sladen’s Swan Research Project resulted from a swan - aircraft collision at 20,000 feet leading to human fatalities.

Present population status for tundras is good with over 300,000 birds. Their numbers are impacted by habitat loss and degradation,

hunting pressure in some areas, and especially global warming and climate change. Future arctic changes resulting from warming temperatures will in all probability have drastic impacts on nesting. One factor which I have personally witnessed is death resulting from lead pellet ingestion. I have participated in several swan necropsies which revealed a few lead pellets as the cause of death. They were ingested from feeding on overshot in the shallow waters. Watching such beautiful birds suffering from this poisoning is difficult to observe since nothing can be done to save the bird. Fortunately, today, much has been done to address the issue but the historic legacy remains.

A tour of Havre de Grace Decoy Museum reveals many local carvers who have produced wonderful representations of tundra swans. Whether miniature, half-size, or full size, Northern bay carvers have captured the essence of this bird in beautiful renderings. Each carver gives his bird a special personal flair. I am lucky to have a full size pair of Danny Carson’s tundras - a sleeper and a swimmer. I have them sitting by my fireplace in the living room. I know I’ve written and said it before, but I’ll do it again by saying Danny has captured the true vitality and spirit of the bird. Many times I will sit in my armchair, admiring the birds and think back to that special moment in Kent County many years ago. The birds seem to gaze at each other in an eternal bond of “compassionate” commitment.

In writing this article, I have had many reflections on places, birds, and persons in my past. Over the years, I have learned about this bird from in-field experiences, classroom lectures, and interaction with scientists and friends. Although my interest in tundra swans began before that day canoeing in Frying Pan Cove, that event more than any other reinforced my “sense of wonder” and “awe” for the natural world we are all a part of. It does not have to be a swan or a bird or a place- just head outside and allow nature to bring the possibility of joy to your spirits or go to the museum and look at representations of swans, ducks, and geese done by local artists as they reflected on their experiences through waterfowling. Whether in the out-of-doors or in the museum, you too may have an experience which can lead to an epiphany to awe !

“We are one knot in a great web of being, building out of the vast past and (with luck) continuing billions of years into the future, until the sun dies, the last of its energy reaches Earth, and our local light goes out. The most appropriate response to the world is to realize, with awe, the ferocious mystery of being alive in it. And act accordingly”.

✦ Carl Safina (*The View from Lazy Point: A Natural Year in an Unnatural World*)

Tundra Swans



Photo by Debbie Blair

SHOTS From the Wild

Are you a photography enthusiast who loves snapping pictures of the local wildlife?

If so, submit your shots from the wild to wildlifephotography@decoymuseum.com.

Only high resolution photos will be accepted. (i.e. at least 2,500 pixels wide and 300dpi)

Photo by Steve Keller



Photo by Ralph Hockman

Photo by Earl Blansfield

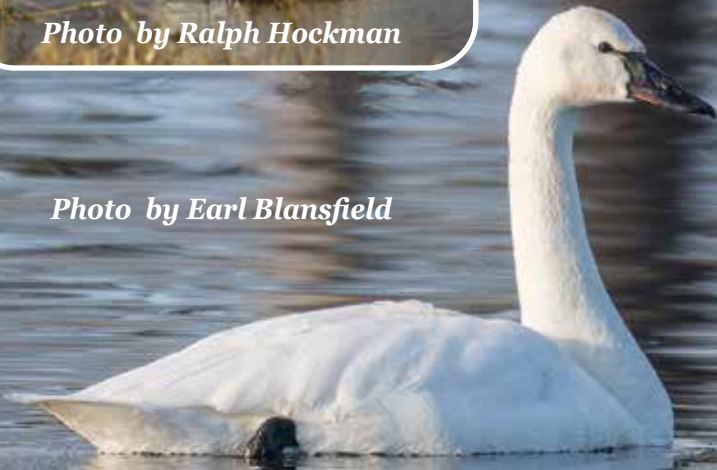


Photo by Steve Keller

Photo by Glenn Woodell



Photo by Earl Blansfield



Photo by Steve Keller



Photo by Ralph Hockman



Photo by Glenn Woodell



Photo by Ralph Hockman



Photo by Earl Blansfield



Photo by Ralph Hockman



4th Annual Charlie Joiner Memorial Decoy Show Continues to Support the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

by: Mike Tarquini



Butch Wagoner



David Sproates



Bryon Bodt



Decoy Magazine - Joe Engers

After three previous successful events, the 4th Annual Charlie Joiner Memorial Decoy Show took place on Saturday, September 10 at Galena Volunteer Fire Company in Galena, MD. By all measures, the show was a success.

Nearly three-hundred attendees enjoyed navigating the fifty vendor tables that lined the interior of the engine bay of the fire station. A total of thirty-six vendors in all showcased their creations and/or collectibles in the hopes of making a sale to the many in attendance looking to bolster their collections. The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum and other non-profit organizations exhibited and

used the opportunity to get their messages out to all of the decoy enthusiasts in attendance. The show featured three full tables of Charlie Joiner memorabilia for all to enjoy.

Some vendors reported sluggish sales, but others experienced strong performances. Everybody agreed that just getting out to a show provides the experience of seeing others in the decoy making and collecting community. After the experiences of the last two years, just having the opportunity to gather in a public space and share experiences is rewarding enough.



Susan Schauber & Judy Tarquini



Joiner Canvasback Auctions



John Meredith



Joiner Display



Museum Table - Nate

Mid-way through the show, auctioneer JR Russum conducted a live auction of a limited number of items to raise additional funds for the cause. Items purchased included a 1948 Charlie Joiner bluebill and a pair of 2008 Joiner canvasbacks.

According to show organizer Allan Schauber, "the event raised approximately \$4,700 for the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. In the four years that Schauber has been putting on the show, it has raised approximately \$14,800 for the Museum.

The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum wishes to thank Allen and Susan Schauber for their efforts organizing, promoting, and working the show. The Museum realizes how important each and every fundraising event is to its operation.

The Charlie Joiner Memorial Decoy Show benefits the Charlie Bryan and Charlie Joiner Trust which has been established at the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum.



Havre de Grace Decoy Museum Events 2022

Photo by Debbie Blair

LECTURES

Wildlife Photography

Sunday, October 16 • 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

This evening's program will be a discussion between wildlife photographers Scott Moody, Joe Subolefsky, and the museum's own Ralph Hockman about waterfowl photography in particular and wildlife photography in general. They will talk about their cameras, techniques, challenges, and ethics when it comes to "shooting" ducks, geese, swans, and other wildlife. These photographers will tell how their interests began and evolved to their present level of excellence as well as give a visual sampling of their work. Questions from the audience will be entertained. **Fee: \$10.00**

"The Outlaw Gunner"

Sunday, October 30 • 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Author Joe Walsh will discuss his recent book, "The Outlaw Gunner II". The book is an expansion on his father's book "The Outlaw Gunner". Joe will speak about waterfowl hunting and market gunning; both legal and illegal. The various individuals and their techniques of hunting will be discussed as well as his father's stories about the hunters. His discussion of the historic gunning efforts of so many former waterfowlers will hopefully bring a new vitality to many of the museum's exhibits. The author will be open to questions from the audience and will be prepared to autograph your copy of his book. Copies of the book will be available for purchase. **Fee: \$10.00**

Waterfowling on the Susquehanna Flats

Monday, November 14 • 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

Author Michael Daley will discuss his recent book "Waterfowling on the Susquehanna Flats". Mr. Daley's well researched book and presentation considers from a historical perspective the decoys, their makers, and the hunting and hunters of the Upper Chesapeake Bay in particular Harford and Cecil Counties over the past 200 years. A moderated discussion will begin the program followed by audience questions. Bring your books for autographing by the author. Books will be available at the presentation. **Fee: \$10.00**

FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

Carve & Candy

Saturday, October 29 • 11:00 AM – 3:00 PM

Bring your creative side and enjoy carving or painting your Halloween pumpkin with a decoy carver. Trick or Treat throughout the museum. Spots limited! Reserve through our website decoymuseum.com or by calling 410-939-3739. Check out our Facebook page for more information. **Fee: \$10.00 per child. Accompanying adults free.**

An Evening with Photographer Jay Fleming

Sunday, December 4 • 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Jay spent three years documenting all aspects of the Bay's rapidly changing seafood industry for his first book, "Working the Water", released in the fall of 2016. In the fall of 2017, amidst other photography and video projects, Jay committed to his second book, Island Life. Jay, after 10 years of making trips to Smith and Tangier Islands - the two only inhabited offshore islands in the Chesapeake Bay - Jay developed an affinity for the environment and the island communities. Whether it's a dramatic sunrise over the water or a fisherman hauling gear, the passion for his craft and for visual storytelling is obvious in every photograph. Jay's talent is undeniable, his photography is not only beautiful but purposeful. **Fee: \$10.00**

Gunning Clubs of the Northern Bay – Spesutie Island

Sunday, December 11 • 7:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Local author, historian, and collector C. John Sullivan Jr. will discuss two hunting clubs which were located on Spesutie Island near Aberdeen, Harford County, Maryland. He will tell of their history, traditions, and the men associated with them. A question and answer period will follow. **Fee: \$10.00**

The Polar Express

Saturday, December 3 • Doors open at 6:30 PM. Movie begins at 7:00 PM

Join us for a magical adventure as the Museum presents The Polar Express Movie. This 2004 computer animated film is based on the 1985 children's book of the same name by Chris Van Allsburg. It tells the story of a young boy who, on Christmas Eve, sees a mysterious train bound for the North Pole stop outside his window and is invited aboard by its conductor. **Fee: \$10.00 per child. Accompanying adults free.**

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Many Thanks

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