

The Canvasback

HAVRE DE GRACE DECOY MUSEUM

Vol. 33 No. 1

Winter 2023

The Legendary **John Simpers**

Hunting Dogs

African American Decoy Makers

Cedar Point Ducking Club





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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 Legendary John Simpers takes aim from a bushwack boat on the Western Shore of the Upper Chesapeake Bay near Havre de Grace where he spent countless days hunting waterfowl with his many close friends.

Photo by Scott Moody.

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From the President...

2022 Annual Appeal Update

In early November 2022, we reached out to each and every museum member (total of 751) and communicated that the museum faces an FY2023 budget deficit. To date, we have only heard from 11% of our members. I would like to thank each and every member that has responded to our appeal and encourage those that have not responded to consider making a donation to the museum.



Operating a facility of the quality of the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum is a costly undertaking with an annual budget that exceeds \$275K. In order to continue to build upon the solid foundation that the museum founders have provided requires dedication from each and every member regardless of membership type. Despite the museum having adequately presented the waterfowling and decoy making history of our region for over 35 years, there is a good deal of updating that is required to keep up with the ever-changing presentation technologies. The museum has to continually invest in expertise in order to position ourselves for the future. The only way to sustain our current quality level in an environment of ever-increasing costs is to grow our top line revenue. We will conduct a new membership drive in 2023, but we also need continued support from our current members. Again, thank you to those who have responded and my encouragement to those who have not to consider supporting us with a donation.

Charles Jobses Named 2023 Festival Honorary Chairman

On May 5, 6 and 7, the 41st Annual Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival will be held at the STAR Centre in Havre de Grace. We are proud to announce that Charles Jobses will be this year's honorary chairman. Charles is the middle son of Captain Harry Jobses and has been making waterfowl decoys since Harry put him to work in his shop at any early age.

Last year, we moved the festival to the STAR Centre, the former gymnasium of Havre de Grace High School. By all accounts, last year's 40th anniversary event was a great success. Show traffic was steady and vendor sales were strong. Vendor applications will be mailed in early January 2023 and will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. Many new vendors have shown an interest in the Havre de Grace show as a result of the favorable feedback from those who exhibited last year.

The weekend will start off with an afternoon vendor set up on Friday, May 5 from 1:00 PM – 4:00 PM followed by the traditional Carvers Reception at the Museum starting at 6:00 PM. The Buy, Sell & Swap Exhibition will take place on Saturday, May 6 from 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM and Sunday, May 7 from 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM. The show hours have been adjusted from last year's show based on vendor feedback. There will be limited space, so register early to ensure your participation in this year's Festival.



DALE HARRY HEITKAMP

October 22, 1934 - September 11, 2022

Dale Harry Heitkamp, age 87, of Minnetonka, MN, formerly of Bel Air, MD and Carver, MN, died unexpectedly on Sunday, September 11, 2022 at his residence.

Funeral Services were held on Monday, September 19, 2022 at Our Savior Lutheran Church in Excelsior, MN. His burial place is at Mount Hope Cemetery in Carver, MN.

Dale was born October 22, 1934 in Minneapolis, MN, to Harry and Margaret (Hubel) Heitkamp, one of four children. He was baptized on November 18, 1934 and confirmed on April 10, 1949 at Trinity Lutheran Church, Carver, MN. He graduated from Chaska High School and then attended Mankato State University before graduating from the University of Minnesota with a bachelor's degree in biology. He proudly served his country in the United States Army from 1960-1962. Dale was a resident of Bel Air, MD from 1962-2022, where he was employed at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Research and Development as a scientist, retiring in 1997. He recently moved back to Minnesota in July of 2022 and resided in Minnetonka, MN. He was a master wood carver, meticulous in his carving and painting of ducks and other waterfowl. He enjoyed the opportunity to enter his creations in many competitive carving shows. He also enjoyed spending time with his family and friends.

He was preceded in death by his parents, sisters, Eleanor Kopecky, Leila Koehnen, Lucille Kopecky, nephews, Richard Kopecky and Thomas Koehnen.

Survivors include his nephews and nieces, Dennis (Carol) Kopecky of Chaska, David Kopecky of Minneapolis, Susan Wherley of Green Isle, Diane Helmer of New Prague, Jeanne Kopecky of Minnetonka, Kathy Koehnen of Salem, MO; including, great nieces and nephews, great-great nieces and nephews, other relatives and friends.

Photo by Scott Moody

THE LEGENDARY JOHN SIMPERS

By Mike Tarquini



The confluence of the Susquehanna River, Northeast River, and the Upper Chesapeake Bay gave rise to an approximate 25 square mile area known as the Susquehanna Flats. The fertile silt that comprised this region enabled the growth of a variety of aquatic vegetation which lured an abundance of migratory waterfowl. The “Flats” became a hot bed of both market and sport gunning. In the words of Harry M. Walsh, author of *“The Outlaw Gunner”*, first published in 1971 by Tidewater Press (Centerville, MD), many heroes developed and their names are still reverently repeated. Names like Dye, Barnes, Mitchell, Holly, Gibson, Poplar, and Currier became local legends. Although these names have earned their place in Havre de Grace’s history, they are all gone, but accounts of their stories remain. The “golden age” of waterfowl hunting on the famed “Flats” is behind us now, but some locals still continue the practice adding to the lore of the region. John Simperts (1944-2018) embodied the spirit of those legends that came before him and left us with many stories that will be shared for generations.



John Edward Simperts senior picture from Havre de Grace High School. (Class of 1962).



John and Florence at Mackinaw Island, MI.

his family with unconditional love. Some of her most precious memories included going to the beach, swimming at the Elks pool, and visiting Disney World. Lisa recalls that her father seldom missed their games and was noticeable in the stands as he energetically cheered for them. John introduced his children to his favorite playground, the Susquehanna Flats, as he often ferried them to Battery and Sand islands for a day of fun in the sun, water skiing, and catching minnows. Lisa and John bonded over their love for animals. Barney, a cocker spaniel, was John's pride and joy.



John, daughter Lisa and the Big Bad Wolf at Disney.

John Edward Simperts, Sr. was born in Havre de Grace, MD on March 5, 1944 as the youngest son of Elmer Walton Simperts, a painter at nearby Perry Point Veterans Hospital and Ethel Marie Warner Simperts, a long-time employee at a local Havre de Grace restaurant. John was born exactly three-months before his father Elmer landed on the beach at Normandy, France during World War II. John has an older brother Jimmy Simperts (born in 1939).

John grew up in and around Havre de Grace. John graduated from Havre de Grace High School in 1962. He married Florence Woods on February 2, 1968 and was married for fifty years. John and Florence raised two children John Edward "John John" Simperts, Jr., and Lisa Michele Simperts. John John was tragically killed in a vehicular accident on May 1, 1988 at age 20. Lisa still resides in Havre de Grace.

Lisa Simperts describes John as a devoted father who showered



Left to right . . . Matt Lee, Jimmy Simperts, Willie Lee, and John Simperts.

John Simperts was very close to his brother Jimmy's daughter Kennon. Her children Matt (Lee) and Willie called John "Uncle Bubba". John taught Matt and Willie how to fish and crab. Matt Lee carries on this tradition today.

Brian Lloyd was like a second son to John Simperts. John and Brian spent many days and nights on the Chesapeake Bay together. John worked at Aberdeen Proving Ground as an artillery tester for nearly fifty years. He retired from the government and then worked for a government contractor before fully retiring.

John was an avid NASCAR fan. It should come as no surprise to those who knew John Simperts that Dale Earnhardt, Sr. "the intimidator" was his favorite driver. Earnhardt was notorious for being a very passionate driver with a streak of orneriness. Florence says that John was absolutely devastated when Earnhardt was killed while racing at Daytona International Speedway in February 2001.

Body Booting & the Wild Goose . . .

Waterfowl hunting ran deep in John Simperts' family history. "*The Outlaw Gunner*" identifies John's grandfather, of the same name (John Simperts), of Havre de Grace as being the owner of two of the nineteen known Punt Guns that were being used on the Susquehanna Flats in 1914. Those that knew the modern day John Simperts can attest that he was proud of that history and was determined to expand on the legend of the Simperts name.

John was affiliated with arguably the most famous of the body booting rigs in the nineteen seventies and eighties that operated out of Havre de Grace. In the early seventies, Glenn Higgins, Jake Wilson, and John Simperts purchased a thirty-eight foot custom Eastern Shore built (Jeff Purner) deadrise vessel from Mark Smith that was named "Wild Goose", which became the name of their body booting rig.

The Wild Goose was a very successful body booting rig whose daily kill was used as a comparative measure for judging the success of the other rigs that hunted on the Flats during the same time period. When defending their kill, a rig would say things like "we had a



John Simperts body booting on the Susquehanna Flats.

good day, killing 9 geese today. We did as well as the Wild Goose who only killed 3 more than we did.” They became the standard of measure for all who hunted the Susquehanna Flats. It was generally considered an honor to be invited to enjoy a day’s hunt with the crew of the Wild Goose. The experience was guaranteed to be memorable, even if the kill was low that day.

The “Wild Goose” body booters became an extremely close knit group that developed a comradery that went far beyond waterfowl hunting. According to rig members Budda Steelman, Glenn Higgins, Donny Forsythe, and Joe Rouse, “a very tight friendship developed.” The group recently recalled many stories that took place aboard that vessel with the author and enjoyed reliving every one of them.

The guys recalled the legendary egg and scrapple sandwiches that were prepared aboard “Wild Goose” to provide food during the morning hunt. There was also an ample supply peanut butter and jelly on board for times when the eggs and scrapple were depleted. Budda Steelman recalls a day when he prepared a sandwich for one of the guys that were in the boots hunting. Simperts, who was

also in the boots at the time, heard that a sandwich was being delivered to one of his colleagues, also ordered the same thing. John sent word to Budda that he wanted plenty of hot peppers on his sandwich. Budda, a bit puzzled by his request, complied with John’s wishes. Unbeknownst to John, the eggs and scrapple had run out earlier that day, and his hunting colleague was getting a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. According to Budda, John ate the entire peanut butter and jelly sandwich loaded with hot peppers and all that he said was that it was pretty good.

As waterfowl hunting takes place during the cold months from November through January, the crew spent many days in the cold and fierce winds that usher in winter. The Western Shore was a favorite spot during the Northwest winds that are customary during winter. Glenn Higgins recalls many good days that were enjoyed while hunting Brims Cove during those windy days. Brims Cove afforded the hunter a reprieve from the strong Northwest winds. The cove also was a favorite spot for waterfowl as they relocated from the nearby corn fields to the Bay. The Wild Goose experienced many successful days at Brim’s Cove.

As if John Simperts didn’t get enough of a challenge body booting in the frigid waters of the Susquehanna Flats, Joe Rouse recalls a time when John, outfitted in his Aquala diving suit waterskied through the Havre de Grace Yacht basin on New Year’s Day leaving his hunting buddies shaking their heads in disbelief.



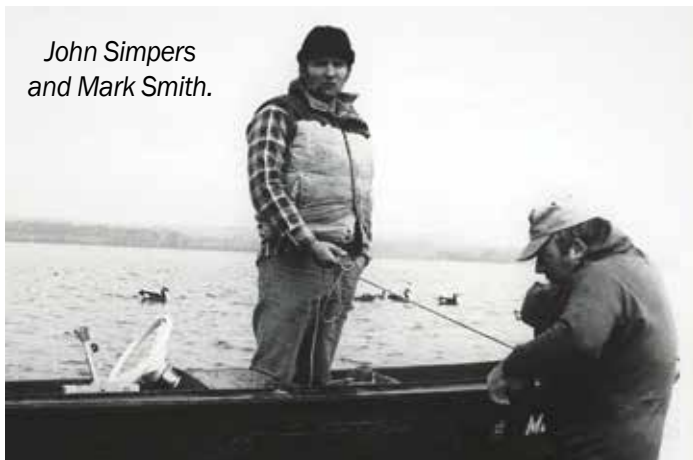
John Simperts outfitted for a day’s hunt in the Susquehanna Flats.

The Wild Goose returning from a successful day of body booting.



Members of the Wild Goose rig included Jake Wilson, Mark Smith, William “Budda” Steelman, John Simperts, Glenn Higgins, Joe Rouse, John Steelman, John Clark, Harry Fuller, Billy Nori, Don Forsythe, Dickie Jackson, Barney Edwards, Ricky Walters, Sid Steelman, Alvin Steelman, Tom Walker, Ray Montville, Ricky Deweese, Terry Shipley, Sam Wadell, and Earl Ashenfelder.

The Junior Crew included Willie Nori, John John Simperts, David Starr, Randy Ashford, and Eddie Fuller.



*John Simpers
and Mark Smith.*



John Simpers and son John John with their decoy rig.

The Wild Goose was comprised of some very skillful hunters. As such, they did not take fondly to those who missed easy shots while in the boots. A steadfast rule aboard the rig was that the first gunner that missed a bird, washed dishes that day. It was reported that crew member Billy Nori spent a good deal of time in the sink keeping things clean throughout the hunting season. Members of the Wild Goose rig came from a variety of backgrounds. There were days when group may have benefited from a member who had a stronger mathematics background. Enough said about that.

Simpers was also fond of hunting ducks up in the Susquehanna River above the Flats. The challenge of hunting in this area was the limited ability to navigate a vessel through the rock-ridden shallow water above Port Deposit. Joey Jobes recalls a hunting trip up in the river with John where he became frustrated with the slow progress and torturous path required to get where the ducks were located. After bumping into a few large rocks, John, wearing chest waders, promptly jumped out of the boat into the river, took the bow line, and led the vessel on foot through the shallow water to where the duck shooting would be more promising. John was not known for his patience.



Fishing, Crabbing, Trapping, & Bear Hunting . . .

John Simpers was an outdoorsman, plain and simple. In the spring and fall, he enjoyed fishing on the Susquehanna River and Upper Chesapeake Bay. His favorite target was Rock Fish. In the summer months, John focused on crabbing. He would use a trot line to harvest Chesapeake Bay blue crabs. John crabbed throughout the Upper Bay but could be found most days on the Bush River. He crabbed there so often that he moored his crabbing boat at Lauderick Creek, a tributary of the Bush River.

One particular year in the late 1990s, crabbing in the Upper Bay outshined the traditional hot spots of the Chester, Choptank, and Patapsco Rivers below. Most all of the Upper Bay commercial crabbers were harvesting in the Gunpowder and Bush Rivers where daily catches were strong. Recreational crabbers also crowded in these areas and often interfered with the commercial harvest. In an effort to crowd out the recreational crabbers, Joey Jobes mentioned to a few Rock Hall and Tilghman Island commercials that if they came up to the Gunpowder River, they would enjoy a good catch, and because of their earlier start time, would force the more troublesome recreational crabbers to find alternate spots. Joey failed to account for one scenario in his plan.

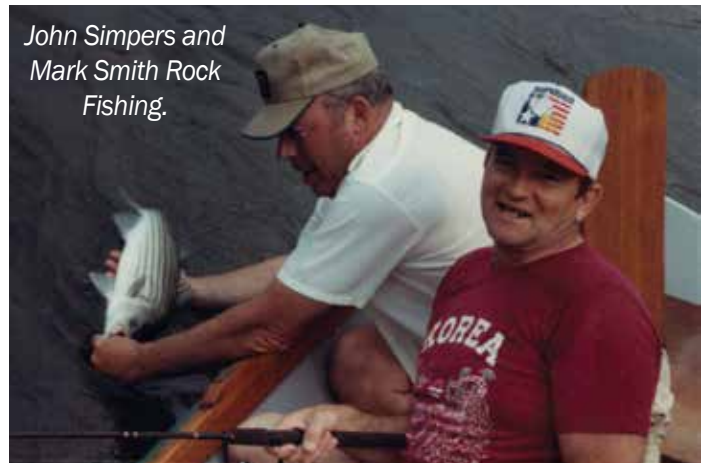


*John Simpers and son John John body booting together on the
Susquehanna Flats.*

It seems that Joey Jobs had shared with John Simpers that he had caught 11 bushels of crabs at Battery Point in the Gunpowder River. The following morning, John filled the VHF airwaves with the news of Joey's fortune to all those commercials that came from down below. When Joey heard the broadcast, he immediately headed for Simpers' boat, slamming into it as he chastised John for giving away his productive crabbing spot. According to Joey, John should have been a journalist, for he always had a need to break the story.

Simpers enjoyed trapping turtles in creeks at APG off of the Bush River. John made a habit of checking his turtle traps in the morning before reporting for work at Aberdeen Proving Ground. John found that trapping turtles and selling them to nearby seafood markets proved to be a lucrative business for him and provided him with play money to pursue his other outdoor interests. The APG creeks were eventually closed to trapping by conservation law enforcement, leaving John furious.

One game enforcement official at Aberdeen Proving Ground, recalls speaking to John about the creek closure. John argued that the closure would represent a significant loss of revenue for him. Eventually, John gave in, but pleaded with game law enforcement to let him continue his trapping in the creeks at APG. Of course, John's request was denied, but it underscored how relentless he could be in pursuit of his passions.



Left to right . . . Dickie Jackson, Mark Smith, Joe Rouse, and John Simpers showing off their catch of the day.



John Simpers showing Special Agent Ralph Plummer his prize snapping turtle catch.

John's older brother, Jimmy Simpers, recalls a time when John called him and asked him to give him a hand unloading a few snapping turtles at the at Hanford Owens' seafood market in nearby Perryville. When Jimmy asked where the turtles were, John quickly responded "they're in the trunk of my car." John opened the trunk lid where 35 snapping turtles were freely roaming about the space. Jimmy wondered how they were to get the turtles out of the trunk without getting bitten by the aggressive species. John said, "it's simple, just grab them by the tail and they can't bite you." Jimmy, seeing no safe way to unload John's turtle catch, told him that he was on his own, that he couldn't help him, and returned home. Given John's persistence, it's certain that he unloaded those 35 snapping turtles that day by himself and collected his bounty.

Although John's passion was spending time on the water, he enjoyed big game hunting as well. John's friends recall hunting trips at Elephant Lake Lodge in Ontario, Canada where bear was the target. On one such hunting trip, everyone in the group successfully killed a bear. It seems that John's bear was a good bit smaller than those of the rest of the group. After the hunt, the group hung all of the lifeless bears outside the hunting cabin in the cold climate of Canada to drain. Simpers caught grief for his small bear from the others in the group. While everyone was relaxing inside the cabin, Rick Deweese, a member of the hunting group quietly went outside



H & S Softball Team, Coach John Simperts is in the first row on the far right side.

and put a diaper (made from a white tablecloth) on John's bear. The group waited patiently for the next morning. Needless to say, John was furious when he saw his bear the next morning.

National Guard . . .

John Simperts served six years in the Maryland National Guard. John managed to extend his orneriness while serving his time in the Guard. There was a particular sergeant in John's company that at times, was difficult. John knew that this sergeant suffered from severe swollen hemorrhoidal tissue. During a summer camp exercise, John found himself manning the grill as pork chops were being prepared to serve the guys at camp. John set aside a chop that was destined for the testy sergeant. During the grilling process, John basted the sergeant's chop with a little bit of croton oil.

After consuming his pork chop, the sergeant developed stomach cramps and a need to visit the latrine quite often. In lieu of his hemorrhoidal issues, it's safe to say that the sarge was quite uncomfortable, in fact, he was miserable. Rumor has it that John used the croton oil on other meals as well, extending the sarge's misery.

It turns out, that croton oil has quite potent purgative attributes and is well known to work wonderfully in providing quick relief from constipation. It is also well known that frequent trips to the latrine is a nightmare for those suffering from swollen hemorrhoidal tissue. It wasn't reported how the story actually ended, but we can all be assured that the sergeant had a memorable summer camp that year.

When a guardsman chooses to leave the National Guard, the unit hosts a formal gathering where the entire company can give the departing serviceman a proper send off. Glenn Higgins recalls the

ceremony when John Simperts was leaving the unit in 1972. After it was announced that John was leaving, the traditional vocal sendoff took place from the unit. During the ceremony, the First Sergeant whispered something into John's ear. After the event was over, Higgins asked John about the private conversation and wanted to know what was said. John indicated that the First Sergeant had thanked John for not re-enlisting.

Softball . . .

It is well known that John Simperts was an avid softball player and coach. John coached the softball team sponsored by local beverage distributor, H & S Distributing. This team was very competitive and often hoisted trophies at most local softball tournaments. According to team member Chuck Usilton, "the team played hard, and partied harder." Chuck recalled that most everyone celebrated with cold beer after the games. There was one particular team member that never shared in the postgame ritual. As coach and ring leader, this did not sit well with John.

John constantly poked fun at his team mate and encouraged him to partake in the post-game festivities. It was at the Maryland State Softball Championship in Salisbury, MD (late 1970s) when John confronted the player and insisted that he join the team in celebration should they win the state title that weekend. Reluctantly, the holdout agreed to have a beer with the team if they were to win the championship. H & S Distributing did in fact win the state softball championship that year and John Simperts was looking to his team mate to make good on his promise.

John opened a cold beer and handed it to his reluctant team mate, who immediately pushed it away and took off running across the softball field to avoid John's wrath. John jumped into his pick-up

truck and chased his team mate all over the property, tearing up grass and kicking up dust, much like a boat throws water while under way. Usilton recalls that an unknown gentleman flagged down John's truck and told him to stop tearing up the field. The man identified himself as an off-duty law enforcement officer. John asked the man about the location of his patrol car. When the off-duty officer said it was in the adjacent parking lot, John immediately told him that he better go get in it. John promptly took off. According to Usilton, John later turned himself in to Salisbury Law Enforcement.

Umpiring . . .

John Simpers officiated many competitive sports that included basketball, football, hardball, and slow pitch softball. John umpired baseball and softball for forty-six years. According to John's wife Florence, umpiring was his real passion. As an umpire, John established a presence on the field that was quickly understood and respected by players and coaches alike or they would not be present to witness the end of the game. John umpired games with attitude and wasn't afraid to respond to players and coaches who challenged his authority once the game began.

Longtime friend Donny Forsythe remembers when John was umpiring home plate during a slow pitch softball game and interacted with a player who challenged his ability. Donny recalls



Home plate umpire John Simpers calls a third strike to the dismay of the batter.



Umpire John Simpers and crew reporting for duty

John holds his pride and joy, family Cocker Spaniel Barney.



that a batter laid off a pitch that he thought was high and out of the strike zone. John energetically shouted "strike!" The batter questioned the call and John shared with him that he liked to hit those types of pitches and he should have hit that pitch. The batter then said to John, "you ain't playing ump, I am." Without hesitation, John replied "if you don't shut up and get back in the batter's box, you won't be playing either."

John had a playful side as well. Chuck Usilton recalls that during an at bat at the Marylander Club with John umpiring the plate, he had a 3-ball, no strike count. The next pitch came in and hit home plate. John immediately called the pitch a strike. Chuck looked back at Simpers and said, "Simp, that pitch hit the plate." Simpers quickly responded, "there's no way Chuck that I am letting a man as big as you walk to first base, get in batter's box and hit the ball."

All stories aside, John Simpers was regarded as a very fair and talented umpire. To that end, he was a respected member of the North-Eastern Maryland Officials Association. John was selected, along with his colleagues Ken Carey, Greg (Tank) Thomas, Dale Davis, and Richard (Red) Lowman to umpire slow pitch softball at national level tournaments.

Whether it be hunting, fishing, crabbing, coaching softball, umpiring, or serving in the National Guard, it's plain to see that John Edward Simpers, Sr. pursued all of his passions with an orneriness unlike most others. Joey Jobes describes John Simpers as an "avid sportsman that did everything at full bore." John's creativity, spontaneity, and fortitude always provided entertainment for those that accompanied him. John captured the essence of his orneriness in the naming of his final boat "The Josey Wales".

John Edward Simpers, Sr. passed away on January 21, 2018 at the age of 73 from complications after suffering a stroke. The stories, however, will live on for generations. It's safe to say that John Edward Simpers, Sr. has secured his place in the lore of Havre de Grace.

The author dedicates this article to Ethel Marie Warner Simpers Creswell, who played a significant role in his childhood memories. Anyone who knew Ethel should have no trouble understanding from where John's passion, unconditional love for his family, and orneriness came.



Susquehanna Flats Chapter of Delta Waterfowl



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The Influence of African American Decoy Makers

By Mike Tarquini

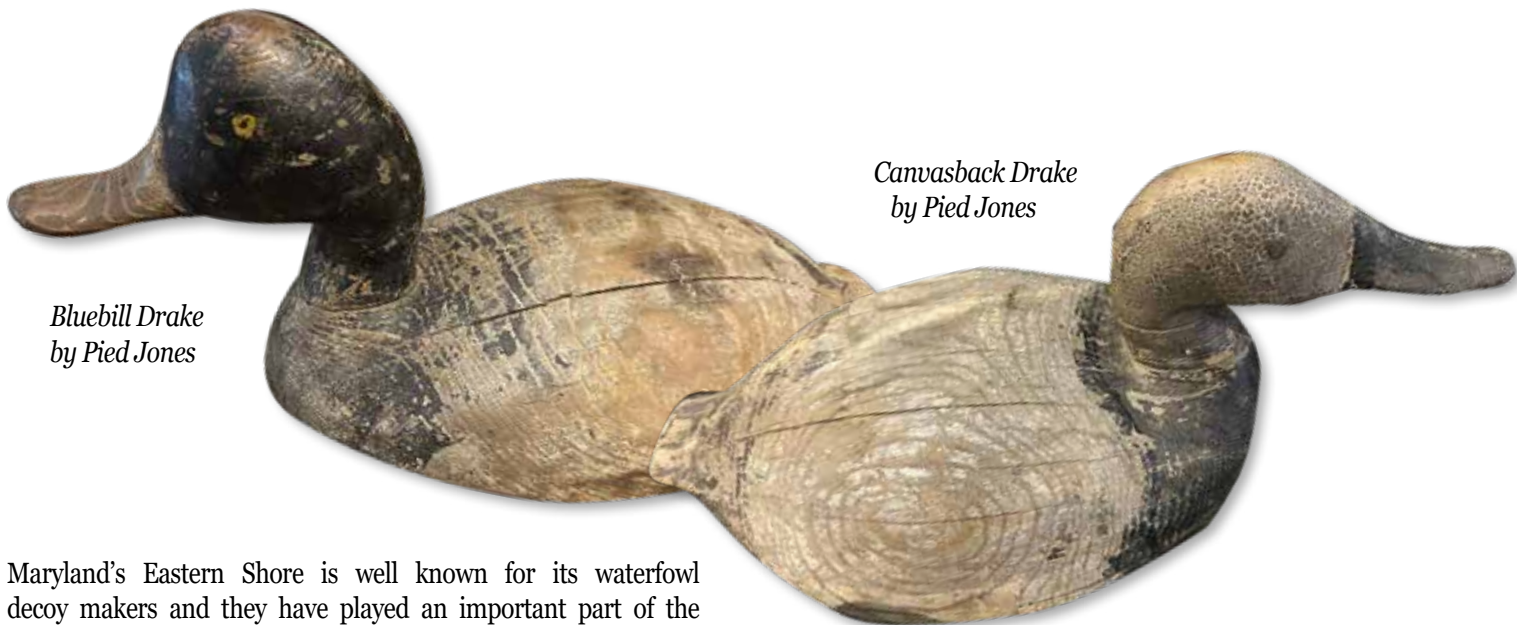
Carver Doug Gibson
(Milford, DE)



African Americans have been part of the documented history of the Chesapeake Bay region since colonial times. As reported in a *Canvasback* magazine article titled “Black Decoy Carvers of the Chesapeake Bay” by Charles A. Petrocci (Spring 2001), African Americans worked in the traditional industries throughout the Bay region as waterman and in seafood processing. They also made equipment that supported the maritime industries that were so vital to the many Chesapeake Bay communities. As we have all come to know, hunting became an important activity in the Bay region. African Americans were proficient hunters, guides, and some even made waterfowl decoys.



*Bluebill Drake
by Pied Jones*



*Bluebill Drake
by Pied Jones*

*Canvasback Drake
by Pied Jones*

Maryland's Eastern Shore is well known for its waterfowl decoy makers and they have played an important part of the socioeconomic history of the area. Given the large population of African Americans on the Eastern Shore, it's surprising that there has been so little documented history of their involvement in decoy making, given their association with traditional Chesapeake Bay activities such as hunting and fishing.

Pied and Sherman Jones of Chrisfield, MD represent two of the most documented African Americans that were known to make waterfowl decoys in our region. Despite that relatively little is known about their background and history, it is clear that they both had a variety of skills and they were woodworkers and avid hunters. It is also known that African American Doug Gibson of Milford, DE crafts waterfowl decoys as did his father Samuel Gibson (Trappe, MD).

William "Pied" Jones

Chrisfield, MD (1880-1953)

Pied Jones lived outside of Chrisfield, MD. Although the seafood business brought prosperity to many in the towns that grew up along the Bay, the economic gain did not necessarily trickle down to the workforce within that industry, causing that group to rely upon supplemental forms of income from hunting and fishing. Pied was skilled in woodworking and was considered a talented carpenter. He tackled home construction projects and actually built boats.

Perhaps the single most important fact about Pied was that he was one of earliest known African American decoy makers in the United States. A little known decoy carver, Pied Jones made birds that were distinct in having finely carved large heads on slender necks and round bodies. The birds were indicative of the Chrisfield style of having wide flat bottoms.

Pied's decoys were made for hunting and were used almost exclusively in the field. As such, his focus was on the species indigenous to the area. Pied fashioned black ducks, canvasbacks, gadwalls, pintails, and bluebills. It is not known for sure if some of Pied's decoy creations were provided to others, but it seems quite likely that they were.

Sherman Jones

Chrisfield, MD (1902-1964)

Sherman Jones was one of four children of Pied Jones. Much like his father, Sherman was multi-talented and was an accomplished carpenter and outdoorsman. History shows that Sherman had his own boat, from which he hunted and fished. Sherman lived in an African American enclave in an outlying area of Chrisfield, MD called "Freedomtown".

Sherman would hunt ducks and geese when in season. He turned to upland species in the fall and spring. He was a talented trapper, catching muskrats, fox, racoons, and rabbits to supplement his income. During Sherman's day, demand was strong for skins to support the fur trade.

*Two yellow shafted flickers (on
the post) and a rail bird,
all by Lloyd Tyler*





Sherman Jones



Lloyd Tyler

Sherman Jones was an accomplished waterfowl decoy carver, making birds mostly for his own use, but was thought to give some to family and friends. Unlike his father, he engaged his carving talents in a variety of folk motifs. He made waterfowl, shorebirds, and some upland species such as quail. Sherman's talent for producing "folk art" style decoys lead to his relationship with fellow Crisfield carver Lloyd Tyler.

Many of the pieces painted by Lloyd Tyler were actually carved by Sherman Jones in his front yard or workshop. Jones and Tyler worked together on untold numbers of carvings, and their similar styles and close working relationship rendered many birds unattributed to Jones. In some cases today, it is impossible to tell who actually carved a particular bird. Nevertheless, they seemed to have what seemed to be a productive friendship.

Lloyd Tyler often referred to himself as the "poor man's decoy maker" based on the fact that his creations were more affordable than those produced by his Crisfield, MD neighbors such as Steve and Lem Ward. Tyler had an extensive customer base that included many of the local gunning clubs in the region.

According to Henry Stanbury, author of the book *"Lloyd Tyler, Folk Artist"* (published by Decoy Magazine in 1995), Lloyd had a tolerance for African Americans that exceeded the segregated Crisfield community that surrounded him in the 1940s and 1950s. Lloyd Tyler and Sherman Jones worked together for years. It's agreed by decoy historians that Sherman Jones' fingerprints are all over many of the decoys sold under the Lloyd Tyler name. Sherman Jones carved an unknown number of decoys for Lloyd Tyler over the many years of their relationship, which they felt was mutually beneficial. Tyler held Jones in high respect and was known to have defended him and their working relationship, despite their challenges in the Jim Crow south.

*Pair of Golden Eyes
by Lloyd Tyler*



*Merganser
by Lloyd Tyler*



(L) Great Blue Heron and (R) Curlew by Lloyd Tyler

Sources: Lane, James S. (2010) "Folk Artists in Freedomtown." *Wildfowl Art* (Winter 2005)
Conversation with Sherman Jones' niece, Fran Sterling (2014)



Henry & Judy Stansbury proudly exhibit their collection of Pied Jones and Lloyd Tyler decoys at the Easton Waterfowl Festival.

Henry Stansbury Showcases Pied Jones Decoys and Lloyd Tyler's Work in Easton

The 51st Annual Waterfowl Festival was held November 11-13, 2022 in Easton, MD. Collector Henry Stansbury offered an exhibit containing three Pied Jones decoys and a variety of Lloyd Tyler's carvings, many of which are believed to be a joint effort between Tyler and Pied's son Sherman Jones. As discussed elsewhere in this article, Lloyd Tyler and Sherman Jones had a working relationship for many years in the Crisfield, MD area.

Although there is little recorded history of African American decoy makers, it is plausible that relationships existed between African Americans and other more prominent decoy carvers much like what is known about Lloyd Tyler and Sherman Jones.





Doug Gibson

Milford, DE (1923-present)

Doug Gibson was born on February 28, 1923 in Trappe, MD, the ninth of ten children. He spent his childhood on a farm near Oxford, MD and decided very early in life that he was going to find a way to get off that farm and own his own home. He attended school in Trappe until eighth grade and, upon graduating, he attended Easton High School. After graduation, he briefly attended Princess Anne Academy, now known as University of Maryland Eastern Shore.

After attending and graduating from Delaware State University (Dover, DE), Gibson attended the University of Delaware, one of four African Americans to attend the University. The four faced opposition from others who did not want them there, but Gibson persevered and earned his master's degree. Gibson taught at Benjamin Banneker Elementary School in Milford during segregation. When schools were desegregated, Gibson taught for two years at Milford Junior High School. In 1968, he was recruited to teach at the newly formed Delaware Technical and Community College (Georgetown, DE) where he taught Architectural Engineering until he retired in 1988.

Doug Gibson was introduced to the art of working decoy making by watching his father Samuel Gibson carve decoys for his hunting activities. While his father did not directly teach him the artform, the elder Gibson provided enough inspiration that helped lead his son to take it up later as an adult. Samuel Gibson carved duck decoys with a pocket knife and hatchet. In the 1970s, Doug decided to try his hand at carving. "He found he enjoyed it and it became a passion for him," his son, Darrauld Gibson, said in an interview with Milford Live in 2021, "Only his family is aware of the time he spent studying about ducks in books and with live specimens."

While teaching both day and night classes at Delaware Tech, Doug began carving ducks in the school's shop between classes instead of driving home in between those class periods. It was reported in a Delaware State University article in 2018 that Mr. Gibson estimates that he has produced more than 2,000 works.

Doug Gibson is 99 years old as of this writing. He will celebrate his 100 birthday on February 28, 2023.



Assortment of Doug Gibson waterfowl decoys on display at Delaware State University in Dover, DE.



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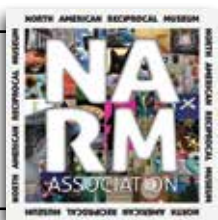
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CEDAR POINT DUCKING CLUB

Amos Waterfield and his lab

Recollections of C. A. Porter Hopkins on Cedar Point Ducking Club

For those of us who live to see and hear the seasonal migrations of flocking fowl, East Neck Island in the mouth of the Chester River on Maryland's Eastern Shore has to be the Promised Land. Home of several gunning clubs, Cedar Point, on the southern end, thrived under Amos Waterfield's leadership from the 1920's until taken over by the Federal Government in 1965 as a wildlife preserve.

By C. John Sullivan, Jr.

Long before the internet was developed, historic research was accomplished by reading books, actual newspapers, and for my purposes early sporting journals. One of my favorite sporting journals was *Forest and Stream* magazine. The magazine was first published in 1873 and continued until 1930, when it merged with *Field and Stream*. *Forest and Stream* was a weekly magazine covering all of the sporting news of the day. In addition to outdoor activities, it was an early promoter of conservation methods and practices. The famous naturalist George Bird Grinnell was the editor for 35 years. The magazine aided me in my search for early references on Chesapeake Bay Retrievers and gunning clubs.

It was a constant source of wonderful historic insights into early waterfowling history. It was in the issue of March 9, 1895, that I first came to have a glimpse of the Cedar Point Ducking Club on Maryland's Chesapeake Bay. In 1895, the Club was in its 15th year at Cedar Point. The writer's description of time spent at Cedar Point is so vivid that the reader can feel the chill of the day and the excitement of the sport there.

Some wonderful descriptive language is introduced; the writer describes the Club as being famous "for its fine shooting of ducks, geese and swan and equally famous in being composed of gentlemen of the county true knights of the trigger." Mr. William S. Waller, Esq., the Nimrod of the Club, was described as: "a gentleman of the old school." "It's well known that a Marylander is 'born in the saddle' and from the way they handle them I strongly suspect that they are given miniature shot-guns for rattles in their cradles." The writer describes his first trip to the blind

where he shot over sod. The use of actual pieces of dirt dug from the shoreline was an effective decoying method for blackduck shooting. A cost-free decoy that was handy, close by, and free for the taking. The writer tells us that his 10-gauge gun was firing a load containing 1 ¼ oz. of shot. Their host was shooting an 8-gauge muzzle loader.

Arriving at the Club, unloading their buggy, and then transferring their traps and possessions to the house, the guests of the Club meet another Club member, Walter Strong, Esq., "a splendid specimen of the bone and sinew of Old Maryland." Strong was known for his "inimitable duck and swan calls." It is obvious to today's reader that he was a voice caller, a rare talent.

After their first successful blackduck shoot (7 blackducks, 2 sprigtails, and 1 baldpate), they gathered the dead birds up and placed them and some sods on the ice as decoys. "Toller," the Cedar Point retriever who was to accompany them that day, made numerous retrieves for the visitors to the Club in 1895.

Reading the description of this early hunt in Kent County, Maryland, I focused on Walter Strong's voice calling skills used to call in a flock of swan: "Out from Walter's throat comes the low, soft, sweet call to them, and back come their answering notes. Call and answer, call and answer, until a blind man might have thought a swan was beside him; so perfectly did he imitate them. Apropos of swan calling, while we were alone in the blind that afternoon, a bunch of nine swans came down the river within two hundred yards of me. Rendered desperate by seeing them not inclined



Richard Hutson calling in the ducks at Beaver Dam Cove on Cedar Point



C. A. Porter Hopkins visited the Susquehanna Flats, giving Cedar Point a rest



D. Luke Hopkins in the blind at East Neck Island, 1950

to decoy; and knowing my stiff, pasteboard throat never could get out their note, I gave them the 'loon call' used in sea fowl shooting 'down East.' The effect was ludicrous; for the hind swan was so badly scared he instantly took the lead of the flock, and they had a 'go-as-you-please' in getting off." Reading this story in a magazine from 127 years ago, I instantly recalled being in a blind on the late State Senator Frederick Malkus' farm adjacent to the Blackwater Wildlife Refuge during the waterfowl season of 1976. It was there that former Maryland State Delegate William H. Cox let loose the worst sound I had ever heard. His voice call of a Canada goose was so bad that the Senator quickly warned the Delegate that one more attempt at calling would send him back to the Senator's Club building and would result in no further hunting invitations.

It was to be many years since I read that story of hunting at Cedar Point that I was to hear it mentioned once again. It was just outside of Cambridge, Maryland, that C. A. Porter Hopkins shared with me stories of his days at Cedar Point. Porter had been introduced to the Club by his father, Luke Hopkins. They were both members until the Federal Government acquired the property for the creation of the Eastern Neck Island Wildlife Refuge.

In February of 2016, I was appointed a member of the Maryland Migratory Game Bird Advisory Committee. It was a dream role for me. As a member of the Committee, I am involved in reviewing statistics of waterfowl populations throughout the Atlantic Flyway. Data concerning breeding populations, migratory patterns, and fowl harvests are crucial in recommending seasons and bag limits. From a historical perspective, I can view firsthand the importance of proper conservation practices in maintaining a viable population for generations yet unborn. Maryland's Department of Natural Resources is key to the Committee's function. I have excellent rapport with committee members and DNR staff. During this past February, DNR's Waterfowl Project Leader, Josh Homyack, contacted me in regard to a duck banding project that was being conducted on the Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge in Kent County, Maryland. Josh is familiar with my interest in historic waterfowling clubs of the Chesapeake Bay. Josh provided me with the name of the Fish and Wildlife Service's biologist at Eastern Neck.

On February 10, 2022, I arrived on the Neck and was greeted by Matt Weegman. Matt was a gracious host and gave me a tour of the Wildlife Service's headquarters. My view of the headquarters was an instant nostalgic trip back in time. The building is the Lodge (*The Lodge Gunning Club formed by J. Edward Johnston in 1933*), and this former Ducking Club building presents itself just as it should, a circa 1930 wood shingled structure that has stood the test of time. The interior, although converted into offices and exhibition areas, retains its rustic lodge features. Perhaps the most refined feature is the built-in wooden gun lockers now used to store books and materials for use by the Fish and Wildlife Service. After a tour of the Lodge and the surrounding property, a trip down the earthen road to the site of the Cedar Point Club allowed me to envision what transportation to Cedar Point must have been like decades ago. Other than the remains of a substantial corn crib, the only portions left of the Cedar Point Club are chunks of concrete, bricks, and mortar from the clubhouse and decoy building.

As I stood on that sandy shore line with the Chester River lapping at my feet, I could only imagine what life on this point must have been like. This 2,285-acre property was taken by the Federal Government starting in 1962. On Wednesday, June 27, 1962, the Kent County News reported that the Department of the Interior on the recommendation of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission had approved the acquisition of 2,071 acres on Eastern Neck Island in Kent County as a federal wildlife refuge. This was some 185 acres more or less than the total area of the Island. Apparently, the taking was not quickly resolved. On July 6 of 1966, the same newspaper reported that a “complaint in condemnation” with the Clerk of the United States District Court for the District of Maryland involving Cedar Point Farm, Inc., and five other landowners has been filed. The Government’s move to preserve this wonderful piece of Kent County waterfront was their response to a proposal to build in excess of 290 houses. Having witnessed the development of numerous farm properties in my home county, the development of residential home sites is just the beginning. Soon to follow is the need for conveniences for the homeowners: infrastructure, shopping centers, schools, and fire and police protection. Who is to say what the highest and best use of this magnificent property should be— housing, commercial development, or industry? As I look about the shore line and consider the ongoing duck banding project, the preservation of nesting areas, and the protection of this land for now and the future, I realize that a National Wildlife Refuge is the best use.

I have been extremely fortunate to have met many gentlemen who have shared with me their recollections of what good sport waterfowling offered to them, and a few have opened up their archives to me. Porter Hopkins is one of those gentlemen. He has provided me with his multitudes of recorded notes from many of the earliest gunning clubs on the Chesapeake. His records of the Cedar Point Club are vast and have given me insight into what a wonderful place for sport it once was. Among his records, I found the following:

In 1923, William A. Dixon wrote the following description of his first visit to Cedar Point:

The “Development” at Cedar Point at that time consisted of a square one-room shack with a huge chimney; small rusty kitchen range and bunks built around the side walls. Without doubt it was to me the worst looking shelter I had ever seen for white men to live in and I had hunted in the Rockies.

The other shelters consisted of a low one-story building, supposed to be for the caretaker. This was the old house we used for storage many years, and finally let it fall down. There was also a stable with accommodations for several horses.

The only means of reaching the Club – the road down to Cedar Point – was across the field and when the marsh was reached it was touch and go.

There were literally no accommodations whatever BUT, when after leaving the wagon at the “Club House” we walked down to the shell pile, we were confronted with a sight, the like of which I have never seen portrayed or pictured.

... It was getting late in the season. From the shell pile to Hell Point and as far up the creek as one could see, was literally a mass of waterfowl, so thick, that it almost seemed



The Cedar Point Clubhouse



The Cedar Point Clubhouse and guide's house



Goose Field, November 28, 1960



Amos Waterfield, the best guide ever, at East Neck Island, 1950

one could walk upon them. I am not exaggerating in the least when I tell you – no history of the earliest records of the flight and congregation of waterfowl could have exceeded what we saw that day. There must have been hundreds of thousands – the very best of all our known varieties – Canvas – Red and Black Heads; intermingled also great quantities of geese and swan.

Our appearance on the shore seemed to have little effect. We watched them for at least an hour. Then we went to what was reported as the GREAT blind – at the very end of Cedar Point. There we found a shelter built in a triangle with narrow boards for seats – interchangeable to take advantage of the prevailing wind. This blind was built to accommodate six men. The only other blind was at House Point.

As to the kill, old Mrs. Wood told me “they used to go by with several Dearborn wagon loads and seldom gave me one.” On this first trip to Cedar Point, R. Nelson Stevens was accompanied by Dr. D. Z. Dunott both members of the Parsons Island Club. After seeing the property, watching the great flocks of fowl and hearing of the shooting there the visitors realized that they were visiting the greatest shore shooting grounds. The grounds being centered at Cedar Point on East Neck Island.

Dunott was thrilled following the visit and tour and on the way back to Baltimore that night, told me he would never rest until he had secured that property. It was, in his opinion, the greatest Shore in the entire Chesapeake area.

Later on, in the same year, we asked John Wood, the owner of the Cedar Point parcel to come to Baltimore. Dunott conferred with J. Kemp Bartlett, R. Nelson Stevens and W. A. Dixon. Together we authorized Dunott to make proposition to Wood, wherein we proposed to lease the property for five years, with a privilege of five years more. An agreement was reached and the property was leased for the sum of \$1500 per year. The prior club had paid only between \$150 - \$300 per year. Following the execution of the lease Dr. Daniel Z. Dunott hired Captain Harry Moore of Havre de Grace to be the Club's supervisor and the club guide. Moore was an old school sinkbox gunner and had virtually no experience with either shore blinds or baiting with corn. That same year the East Neck Rod and Gun Club was incorporated by Dr. Daniel Z. Dunott, Wm. A. Dixon, R. Nelson Stevens and J. Kemp Bartlett, Sr. The purpose as set forth in the Club's charter was “to shoot wild waterfowl and upland game. Charter members of the Club were: Dr. Wm. S. Baer; J. Kemp Bartlett, Sr., L. B. Keene Claggett, Wm. A. Dixon, Dr. Daniel Z. Dunott, R. N. Stevens, Dr. Hugh H. Young, Dr. Donald Guthrie and Dr. D. C. Wharton Smith. To this group the following were added: Wm. F. Cochran, Dr. J. M. T. Finney, Sr., Thomas Hildt, Ernest Levering, George Warren, Dr. R. C. Willse, Dr. Wm. A. Fisher, E. H. Boles of New York, E. L. Hurd and Dr. Daniel F. Jones of Boston and George E. Schmidt of York, thus making a club of twenty members.

The dedication to waterfowling by the members led to the formation of another corporation the Cedar Point Farm, Inc., in 1928. The purpose of the new corporation was to begin negotiations to purchase the farm. Being successful in that purchase, they moved to purchase land on the other side of the Cedar Point neck. In 1929, Hail (Hell) Point became a part of the corporation's holdings. The total investment in the corporation's land was \$94,000.

In 1934, the Cedar Point Club was officially formed, with many of the original stockholders of the Cedar Point Farm becoming members. Numerous improvements were made to the property: a new clubhouse with a living room, dining room, six-bed dormitory, kitchen, guide's room, and hallway with storage lockers for members' gear. Eventually,



Cedar Point boats

housing for the Club's superintendent, Amos Waterfield, was constructed along with a corn crib and kennels for the retrievers. Club members lobbied Maryland State Senator S. Scott Beck of Chestertown (friend and member of the Club) for improvements to existing hunting laws with great success. When the first chief guide, Captain Moore of Havre de Grace, was replaced by Amos Waterfield, many new blind sites were added, greatly improving the chances for good daily waterfowl harvests. Waterfield's success at Cedar Point was recognized by all of the club members, and his tenure as chief superintendent lasted 42 years.

A list of members from 1935 along with former members is as follows:

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Ernest Levering

D. C. Wharton Smith

R. N. Stevens

George Warren

R. G. Willse

Hugh H. Young

E. L. Hurd

Daniel F. Jones



Sunrise at Cedar Point, ready to go out

Throughout the many seasons of waterfowling at Cedar Point, strict conservation regulations were established. Each year, guidelines were set and strictly enforced. In their last full year of operation, the following rules were presented to Club members:

SHOOTING RULES AND GUEST PRIVILEGES FOR 1965-1966 SEASON

1. During the open season for migratory waterfowl, upland game may be shot only on shooting days for waterfowl, except for that area of our property North of a line drawn from gate side of barn to Shipyard Creek, and East of the main road. On other days of open season, upland game may be shot over entire property. [Both pheasants and quail were raised and released on the club's acreage.]

2. Members must notify Phil Wilmer or his secretary of their intention to shoot on any given day. Call P. G. Wilmer (person-to-person) at Chestertown 778-1558 or Chestertown 778-2662. If no answer, call after 9:00 a.m. (person-to-person) Mrs. Mabel Hall, Church Hill, Maryland - Church Hill 556-3071. By letter, address P. G. Wilmer, Chestertown, Md. [Philip G. Wilmer was the mayor of Chestertown, Cedar Point Club member, and manager.]

3. The blinds to be shot will be designated by Amos [Waterfield] and not more than two people should occupy any blind at the same time - regular rotation to follow. As soon as a limit has been reached members must immediately vacate the blind with their guide and go to the Clubhouse, sending their guide to notify the next blind in regular rotation. Shooting days will be from sunrise to sunset.

4. As soon as all occupants of a blind have shot their limits, they must immediately vacate so that less fortunate members may rotate as hereinafter provided. Those who have not shot their limits of game in the morning must rotate after lunch in a clockwise direction to the blind designated by Amos [Waterfield] that is nearest the blind that they occupied in the morning. Blinds in their clockwise positions are as follows:

- | | | |
|------------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|
| (1) House Blind | (2) Cedar Point | (3) Narrows |
| (4) Belly | (5) Panhandle | (6) Shipyard |
| (7) Pond | (8) Shipyard Mouth | (9) Upper River Shore |
| (10) Lower River Shore | (11) Beaver Dam Cove | (12) Beaver Dam |
| (13) Beaver Dam Point | (14) Oak Tree | (15) Creek |
| (16) Middle | | |

5. Not more than 10 members and guests can be accommodated at the Club. This also means that not more than ten people can shoot on any day. If a member calls Mr. Wilmer and the list is complete, Wilmer will notify him that he cannot come on that day. If a member has shot on two consecutive calendar days of any week, his reservations for additional days of the same week shall be subject to requests received from others. No member may register more than one week in advance.

6. Days reserved by members shall be charged in full unless canceled forty-eight (48) hours in advance. Members must notify Mr. Wilmer forty-eight (48) hours in advance if they do not intend to shoot on an appointed day.

7. If, forty-eight (48) hours or less in advance, there are one or more vacancies for the next day's shooting, any member may bring up to two (2) guests, provided that an arbitrary limit (for this purpose) of eight (8) people at the Club is not exceeded thereby. In addition, each member shall have the special privilege of two guest days during the season. These guest days are to be drawn at the Fall meeting and each member will have the privilege of swapping with any other member.

8. Tipping at the Club is restricted to guests.

9. The goose season begins at sunrise on November 1st and closes at sunset on January 8th. The duck season begins at sunrise on November 20th and closes at sunset on January 8th. No more than eight (8) people will be allowed at the Club during goose season. Geese will be shot Monday and Tuesday, Friday and Saturday, the same as duck. No member may have

more than one (1) guest at the Club for goose shooting. Reservations must be made with Mr. Wilmer for this shooting. The guides only will be allowed to shoot on Christmas, Saturday, December 25th.

With the rules and regulations offering equal opportunity, excellent sport took place at Cedar Point. The birds killed show the healthy population that frequented this part of the Chesapeake. In the 1923-1924 season, 325 ducks were taken. With the increase in the number of blinds under the supervision of chief guide Amos Waterfield, in the season of 1932-1933, 2,419 ducks and 65 geese were harvested. During the last full season, 1965-1966, 604 ducks and 72 geese were killed.

On January 6 of 1967, a notice was mailed to the following members: H. Norman Baetjer, Jr., Thomas M. Bancroft, Edwin N. Broyles, J. Crossan Cooper, Jr., John C. Cooper, III, Alexander E. Duncan, Edward K. Dunn, Foster T. Fenton, Charles F. Goodwin, W. Arthur Grotz, C. A. Porter Hopkins, D. Luke Hopkins, Charles L. Marburg, F. Grainger Marburg, Clifton M. Miller, Sifford Pearre, J. Creighton Riepe, Truman T. Semans, C. T. Williams, David Williamson, and Philip G. Wilmer. This was to mark the end of the great waterfowling paradise of Cedar Point and to conclude the final business of the last membership.

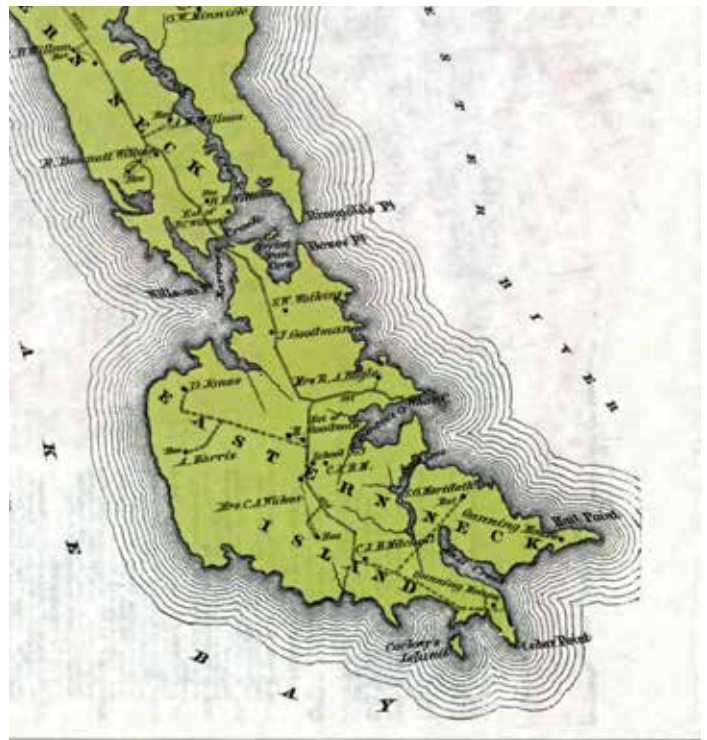
NOTICE OF MEETING, January 6, 1967

A special meeting of the Board of Directors of Cedar Point Farm, Inc., and of the members of The Cedar Point Club will be held at the Maryland Club, Baltimore, Maryland, at 6:00 P.M. on Tuesday, January 17, 1967, for the purpose of considering and taking action on the dissolution of both the Cedar Point Farm, Inc., and The Cedar Point Club, the approval of Articles of Dissolution, the calling of meetings of the Stockholders and Members respectively for the purpose of approving the same, and to consider such other matters as may properly come before said meeting.

Very truly yours,

J. Crossan Cooper, Jr.
Vice President

Many readers will be interested in the history of the Club's decoys. Sources relate that Amos Waterfield purchased many hundreds of decoys for Club use. Decoys from distant carver Elmer Crowell of East Harwich, Massachusetts, and local carvers Jesse Urie, August Heinefield, and Madison Mitchell as well as some factory decoys from the Herter company joined the rig. By the end of the days of the Club, many decoys were sold at public auction. The price established at auction was then set for Club members to purchase the remainder. Ducks and geese were \$2.50 each, with goose silhouettes for \$1.25. History revealed that the Elmer Crowell decoys quickly disappeared. Very few examples of any decoys of the rig are known. They wear the brand of ENIC for Eastern Neck Island Club. C. A. Porter Hopkins, who with his father was a club member, recalled in a recent interview that Amos Waterfield's wife, Ruby, was the daughter of the famous John Williams of Cedar Island, Virginia. Williams is best known for his iconic folk art swan decoys. Porter reflected on a great swan decoy carved by Williams residing in the coal shed alongside the clubhouse at Cedar Point. The whereabouts of that once magnificent floating sculpture will remain a mystery for collectors to consider.

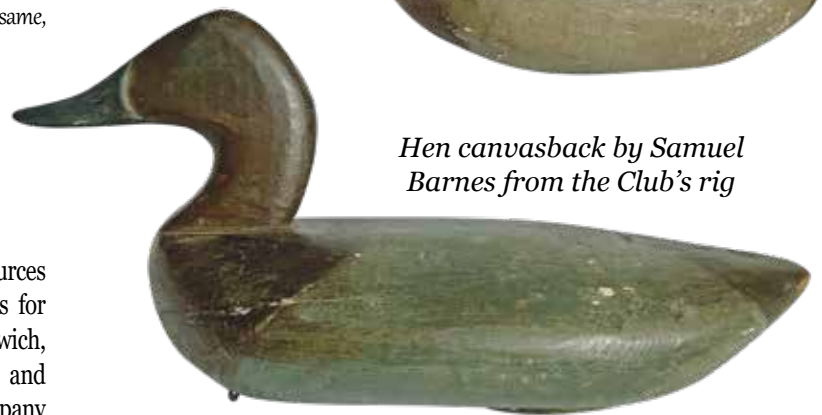


Eastern Neck Island, 1877

Eastern Neck Island Club brand



Hen canvasback by Samuel Barnes from the Club's rig



The days of shooting at Cedar Point ended at the conclusion of 1966. The U.S. government had taken the property for the creation of the Eastern Neck National Wildlife Refuge, a different end than other waterfowling regions had experienced. Maxwell Point, Carrolls Island, Benjies, and Graces Quarter became part of the Army's proving grounds. Millers Island was taken not by a government agency but my Mother Nature herself. The Bishops Head Club is now a part of the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge Center. Marshy Point on Seneca and Salt Peter Creek in Baltimore County have a permanent easement with the County government to prevent development, while a portion of the waterfront is County property housing the Marshy Point Nature Center. Each of these former clubs is protected from development, and together they serve as welcoming shores for millions of migratory fowl each year.

Fall 2022

Raffle Winners



1st Prize:

\$500 Cash

The Popowski Family



2nd Prize:

**1986 Full Size Captain Harry
Jobes Sleeper Swan
John O. Mitchell**



3rd Prize:
"Startled"

**print by Jean Ebersole
Allen Fair**

4th Prize:

**1972 Mallard Drake (R. Madison Mitchell / Clarence Bauer)
Bill Denny**



For tickets call **410.939.3739** or email: information@DecoyMuseum.com
(Additional tickets will be available at the Museum.)

Spring 2023

Raffle

A chance to win ONE of four valuable prizes.
Four tickets will be drawn.

**Tickets are \$5.00 each
6 for \$25.00 • 10 for \$40.00**



1st Prize:

\$500 Cash



2nd Prize:

**Mallard Pair by J. Evans
McKinney, 1985**

4th Prize:

**Redhead Drake
by Charlie Bryan, 2001**



3rd Prize:

R. Madison Mitchell print

Drawing on May 7 @ 1:00 PM at the 41st Annual Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival

For tickets call **410.939.3739** or email: information@DecoyMuseum.com
(Additional tickets will be available at the Museum.)

The Polar Express Makes a Stop at the Decoy Museum

By Mike Tarquini

The Havre de Grace Decoy Museum, best known for its vast collection of waterfowl decoys, artifacts, and local hunting heritage recently transformed itself into a movie theater for an evening of fun for youngsters from the local area. The Museum hosted approximately fifty pajama clad children, with their blankets and parents in tow for a viewing of the classic Christmas movie "The Polar Express".

Special Events Coordinator Dena Cardwell organized museum staff and volunteers to provide a fun filled evening for our guests. As the youngsters arrived, they were provided with a train ticket by volunteer Virginia Sanders that granted them admission to the train station.

As families made their way toward the station entrance, they had the opportunity to stop for photos in the Gunning the Flats Gallery in front of the Polar Express backdrop. Staff member Vivian Miller ensured that all guests and their families took as many photos as



Conductor Nathaniel Heasley entertains a group of passengers

they wished, offering to actually snap the photo so all family members were included in the shot.

Curation Coordinator, Nathaniel Heasley, dressed as the unnamed conductor, greeted each young guest with the assistance of volunteer Sarah Butters at the entrance to the train station and punched their ticket, admitting them to the Carvers Gallery at the top of the stairs which served as the theater for the movie.

As the young guests entered the Carvers Gallery, staff member Shane Cardwell furnished them with a snack box containing popcorn, a cookie, and a cup of hot chocolate. Once they had their treat, they were free to choose a spot for their blanket in front of the ten foot wide movie screen.

A small scale model of the Polar Express Train encircled the tracks atop two banquet tables and was available for all of the children to operate with the assistance of staff member Jade Vincenti.

As show time drew near, our young guests were filled with anticipation for the main event. If the observed silence in a room of fifty children for an entire hour and one-half was any indication of approval, it can be concluded that the event was a smashing success.

When the feature was over, each child departed with a gift. Staff member Josiah Scott and volunteer Matt Grahe provided each visitor with a candy cane, reindeer food, and a replica of the Polar Express Sleigh Bell featured in the movie. It's safe to say that each child renewed their belief in Santa Claus on that magical December evening at the Decoy Museum.

Volunteers John and Anne Popowski staffed the Museum Store throughout the event and gave our guests an opportunity to leave with a souvenir of their visit to the museum.

It's hard to tell who had the most fun that evening, the children, or the museum staff who did a fantastic job executing every detail of the evening's plan. Congratulations to all for a job well done.



Getting a photo before the movie.



Jade Vincenti watches kids operate the train.



A packed house.



Josiah Scott and Matt Grahe distribute parting gifts.



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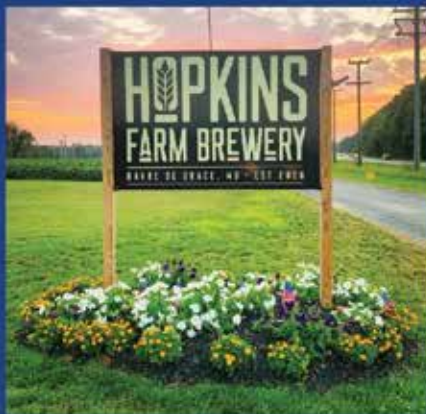
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Mute Swans

Biotic Pollution ???

Native Species - An indigenous species in a given region or ecosystem whose presence is a result of only local natural evolution. *Indigenous/Autochthonous*

Invasive Species - Foreign species that spread rapidly in a new area where they are free of predators, parasites, or resource limitations that controlled their populations in their native habitat and which can cause economic and environmental harm in the new system. *Exotic/Introduced*

Biotic Pollution - The introduction of a foreign species into an ecosystem in which it did not evolve often upsetting the balance among organisms living in that area and upsetting and interfering with the ecosystem's normal functioning.

Photos by Ralph Hockman

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.

It wasn't until the 20th century that people really began to express alarm about some of the conditions of declining quality in the environments in which they lived. Many scenarios of local degradation in immediate or more regionalized environments were generally addressed but few led to a planetary condition potentially threatening catastrophe for life in general or human life in particular. A river might be poisoned, some species could be lost, and economic livelihood could be challenged but these were local concerns that should be addressed on that level. Only the locals need to worry and if it wasn't in my backyard impacting my health or economic well being, well, I just don't care. The thought was that locals should proceed with a cleanup and remediation of their own mess. A contemporary example of this mindset is the early rejection by many Pennsylvanians as to their impacts on the overall health and quality of Chesapeake Bay waters.

In the early 1960s a new ethic of environmental stewardship began to evolve and be accepted by many individuals to issues concerning environmental degradation and quality. This new attitude was expressed in ecological notions that "Nothing exists in isolation," "Everything is connected," "There is no away," and "There are limits to growth." It was difficult shifting to these new considerations but in time much of society became educated to the fact that "We all live downstream" (even the Pennsylvanian folks.) Local, regional, national, and world citizens began to realize that we were all in this together and that in many cases "We had met the enemy and he is us." A hole and declining thickness of ozone presented a real and existential threat to life on planet Earth and had to be addressed and resolved. Fortunately it was. Today planetary warming and climate change are issues of the same magnitude to the future of Earth's health. Hopefully a new paradigm toward self preservation of our species and the rest of the planet's ark can give appropriate responses to these new dilemmas. It is my hope that maturity to a new level has gone beyond self-interest to something far greater.

An issue of pollution and environmental quality that until fairly recently has gotten little attention is biotic pollution. In ecosystems, there is an overall balance of organisms to one another and their physical environment. This is known as homeostasis. A network of checks and balances enables a system to maintain, perpetuate, and sustain itself. Whether micro or macro, living systems tend to be self-organizing. In this scheme of life, populations are kept in check, organisms on the species level are perpetuated and evolve, and physical resources are rarely used up. The system is considered to be static. However, change in nature is a constant. Change takes place in one of two

forms: from within a system (autogenic) or from outside the system (allogenic.) An example of autogenic change is the formation of soil through primary succession; an example of allogenic change is lighting- induced forest fire. Regardless of the catalyst to change, the living system responds by recovering and regulating itself back to homeostasis in an orderly manner. If the factor of change is too devastating, recovery may not be possible. Time is also a critical variable in the potential for recovery to its original state. Another mindset of ecological interpretation today is chaotic theory which suggests there is no orderliness at all in systematic change but things just happen randomly without pattern. In this view, nature and change are so dynamic that it is folly to consider organization and perpetuity of systems. Whatever the explanation, systems do maintain homeostasis at least in the short run, respond to various varieties of change, and attempt to recover from perturbations and sustain themselves. The introduction of a species into a new habitat from outside their normal niche (role an organism plays within a system) and habitat can lead to major disruptions within the new system. This immigrant- induced (allogenic change) challenge to a system is a form of biotic pollution. It is a serious threat to ecological health and sustainability of the natural system. It is also a serious challenge to human usage of that system, especially to health and economic concerns.

For most of human history, man has been a migrant, whether on the local or regional scale as hunter/gatherer or on a larger scale as a continental hopper. In the 2 million years of our evolutionary time on Earth and especially in the last 10,000 years of our existence, hardly a spot on the planet has escaped the "human footprint." Possibly humans are the most invasive of all species and in our travels many other organisms moved with us. Many human- induced introductions of new species were accidental not even realized, others were purposeful and based on human decision making. In the Chesapeake Bay area, examples of accidental introductions would be the snakehead fish and the emerald ash borer. Examples of purposeful introduction would be the nutria and phragmites grass which were brought to Chesapeake wetlands.

Before considering the mute swan (*Cygnus olor*) as a form of biotic pollution to the Chesapeake Bay and other North American regions, it is important to consider the general characteristics of invasive species that lead to their success. It is significant to note that most invasives do not survive in their new environment, some just manage to hang on, while others not only survive but thrive in their new opportunity. Successful invasive species share a common set of characteristics. Almost all would be considered generalists rather than



specialists in relation to their lifestyle. Generalists exhibit a high degree of adaptability to broaden niche and habitat opportunities. Their tolerance of a wider range of environmental conditions offers them a higher chance to survivability success (ecological competence.) They are able to live off a wider variety of physical conditions and consume a wider spectrum of food choices. Invasive species can also respond quickly to changing environmental circumstances because they possess greater “plasticity” within each organism (phenotype.) They can be characterized as “pioneer” species because their successful invasions into new or recovering ecosystems is made possible by their rapid growth to maturity. Reproduction is also rapid, exhibiting an r-type strategy which is distinguished by huge numbers of offspring generated, little parental involvement, and high mortality of offspring. These characteristics are what enables success for the invaders. Examples are everywhere in the world, from the Norway rat, cockroach, and kudzu to more Chesapeake bioregional examples such as the zebra mussel, sea lamprey, and blue catfish. One species of particular interest to those living in the Chesapeake Bay region is the mute swan.

The mute swan (*Cygnus olor*) is a truly beautiful species of waterfowl now residing in the bay. Mute swans are a native bird of EuroAsia. They were brought to North America and introduced in the mid-1800s and early 19th century. These swans were first imported as decorative waterfowl for parks and large estates, zoos, and waterfowl collectors (The Birds of North America, No.273.) These introductions originally occurred in the northeastern United States. In time, whether through further introductions or escapes, mutes expanded throughout our country and today are found in significant densities in three particular regions: the Atlantic Coast from Maine to the Carolinas, the Great Lakes region (especially Michigan), and the Pacific Northwest. In the Chesapeake, mute swans were brought to large estates on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, only to see several swans escape during a hurricane in 1962. Their numbers have increased in all three major regions and have only been semi-controlled through reduction programs. In the Chesapeake their numbers had reached 4,000 by the turn of the 21st century. Today in Maryland, as a result of reduction programs, mute swan populations are maintained at about 50 birds.

The mute swan is intermediate in size to the larger trumpeter swan and the smaller tundra swan. The mute is a heavy bird weighing between 20 to 25+ pounds. Its wingspan is approximately 5+/- feet and its length is nearly 60 inches. Male (cobs) are larger than females (pens.) They have large slate-gray to black webbed feet with the exception being an uncommon color phase known as the “Polish” swan which has lighter legs and feet and brighter white plumage (Johnsgard, Swans.) Their bills average 4 inches and are a bright red-orange with a black nail and a large fleshy basal knob. As an adult, their plumage is entirely white. Immatures are a brownish-gray and it takes up to a year to reach mature feathering. The mute swan has a thick neck usually held in an S-curved position. Tails are long and pointed and wings are held high overarching their backs, suggesting aggressiveness (Crossley, I.D. Guide:Waterfowl.) Mutes are known for their grunting and hissing, but they will also trumpet, snort, and whistle. In flight, wings produce a humming sound but they rarely call in flight (Johnsgard.)

Mute swans are birds of the temperate and nearctic zones. Habitat preference is for brackish or marine waters with abundant shoreline and shallow waters. Submerged aquatic vegetation (SAVs) must be present. Specific habitats are defined as ponds, lakes, estuaries, embayments, bogs, slow-moving waters, rivers, creeks, and streams that flow into larger bodies of water. On



occasion they can also be found in freshwater environments. Wintering and breeding habitats are virtually the same, although ice and food are causes for movement. For this reason, they are considered sedentary with only short limited movements. They are not long distance migrators.

Mute swans feed predominantly on vegetation, especially SAV grasses. Some waterfowl biologists consider them to be “total herbivores.” Some animal matter can be found as part of their diet such as frogs, tadpoles, toads, mollusks, insects and their larvae, and fish (The Birds.) Underwater grasses consumed are widgeon grass, eelgrass, sago and horned pondweed, sea lettuce, other pondweeds, etc. They consume almost all parts of the plants and feed by dabbling, dipping, and/or upending. Although mute swans can walk on land, they are somewhat awkward and therefore are limited grain grazers. They will on occasion feed on grain crops left on the farmers’ fields. In parks, zoos, etc., when habituated to humans, they will feed on handouts such as bread, cakes, and corn.

Pair bonding occurs in the winter season from January through March. Usual swan courtship activities begin with second and third-year birds, with pairing believed to be permanent. Divorce rate is low at about three percent (Johnsgard.) They nest in wet areas at the edge of land or on small islands. Nesting territory averages 4 - 5+ acres, but can be larger. The nest is composed of woven sticks, twigs, reeds, cattails, grasses, sedges, and rushes. The nest itself is 4 - 5 feet in diameter with a hollow center filled with down and other soft materials. The male chooses the site of the nest and both birds work together to build it. The nest site and nest may be used over and over through the years. The male actively defends the nest from intruders and will provide the female a rest or recess during incubation.

Clutch size averages 6 eggs. The eggs are large, 3 - 4 inches, and generally white in color. Incubation is 34 - 38 days and all hatch within 24 - 36 hours of each other. Cygnets will leave the nest within a day of hatching and are closely supervised by the parents. Occasionally they will ride on their parent’s back. Predation on eggs can occur usually by raccoons, foxes, or dogs. Cygnets are lost to snapping turtles, fish, hawks and owls. Brood parasitism does not happen. Adults can be challenged by dogs, feral dog packs, and coyotes but rarely successfully. Survival rates are high, all factors considered. Fledging occurs between 120 - 150 days. Young stay associated with parents until their parents begin to breed the following season. Maximum longevity in captivity is 20+ years, much less in the wild.



Population status for native (Euroasian) as well as invasive (North American) mute swans is very positive. After years of decline and in some cases actual endangerment, the Old World birds have seen great recovery, New World invasive populations have thrived and in many areas management reduction programs have been instituted. The present North American population is between 22,000 and 25,000 birds (Crossley.) Mute swan numbers are impacted by lead pellet ingestion and poisoning, degradation and development of habitat, flight collisions with human structures, and disease. Lead poisoning is an especially insidious problem.

Over the years, I have had many personal interactions with mute swans. As a young boy, my first encounter occurred when my grandmother took me to a park somewhere in the Baltimore area. I remember feeding the swans and how huge they seemed to be. I was certainly shocked as they came near shore and grabbed the handout very close to where I was standing. I had been pinched by a goose when I was about eight and had no desire to receive a black and blue trophy from this behemoth. I backed off! Years later, George Fenwick, a Swan Research Project coordinator and lecturer, while gathering data for his dissertation on swan behavior in relation to changing food resources in the Chesapeake Bay, had his arm broken by the swinging wing of an angry cob mute. George earned his doctorate from Hopkins, but by that time the cast on his arm was gone. His swan misfortune was a cautionary tale to me about the need to be careful around this bird.

In more recent times, my interactions with this bird have been with my friend Tom Trafton on our many adventures in and around the Delmarva or while canoeing or leading canoe trips. On a solo canoe trip, while scouting for a later group trip on Dundee Creek in eastern Baltimore County, I had quite the experience. I had been paddling up a fairly narrow marsh gut when I looked behind by boat and saw an aggressive, hissing mute swan on my tail. I do not know how he had gotten so close without me detecting him, but there he was. He was not happy with my presence and was letting me know. Fortunately, I was using my double blade paddle at the time and in a worst case scenario I might be able to hold him off. Instead, I paddled quickly and was able to find another gut in the brackish wetland and was out of sight to him. He did not follow. Later on retreating out of the marsh, I was able to see the reason for his fury. On the left hand side of grasses, a female mute sat about 10 feet deep from shore incubating her eggs. I had missed her on the way up the creek but her mate had not missed me. About a month later, on the student trip, as we paddled near the same area, the adult pair of swans swam toward us followed

by three very young cygnets. The students were ecstatic and we were able to keep a safe distance from the birds.

One final story to note occurred while I was leading a group of teachers and administrators on a summer trip on the Chester River, we came upon a group of mute swans drifting down the river not far from our boats. One of the participants, a principal from somewhere in western Maryland, told me and the group that he could easily catch one of those swans. I told him it would be much more problematic than he suggested and besides, we had to get up into the marsh and study its characteristic features and do water chemistry tests. After completing our assignments, we back paddled down the inlet toward the Chester. There sitting in the salt/brackish marsh were four mute swans. Before I could act or say anything, the principal was out of his boat running through the mud and reeds chasing one of the swans. At first he seemed to gain distance on the bird, but when he was about 30 feet from the swan it scampered across the grass on its big feet and was soon airborne. Our exhausted principal collapsed into the mud of the creek and we all had a good laugh. In a short time he was out in the big river swimming and cleaning up and telling us he had no idea that they were that fast. My friend Greg Kachur, who was a participant on that trip and often goes birding with me, always relates back to that day whenever we spot a mute swan and wonders out loud what kind of administrators they must have out there in western Maryland. I respond that I'm glad the principal did not catch the swan; not for the swan's sake but for his! So how is it that this noble bird, often seen in and around the bay can be considered biotic pollution? Is this beautiful invasive species just a weed species threatening the health and balance of the Chesapeake Bay and other areas where it has been introduced? If so, what should be done to minimize its impact?

So what are the characteristics that a mute swan possesses which make it such a successful immigrant pest population? The mutes have almost no active non-human predators to keep their population in check. The bird is so large and aggressive that any potential predation would seem incidental or "lucky" and only to be associated with a weakened individual. Potentially a pack of feral dogs or coyotes in our area might make an attempt.

Although mute swan populations are impacted by disease so too are other waterfowl populations. Avian botulism and duck plague certainly occur as well as various forms of parasite interaction. Lead ingestion and poisoning is another morbidity factor relating to mute swans and to all swans in general because of their feeding behaviors such as dabbling and dipping. Exposure to other chemical contamination such as pesticides, herbicides, and/or metals seems a potential problem for swan numbers. So far no studies are available to make the case. It is thought that mutes may even possess higher tolerance levels to this type of contamination. Habitat degradation and climate change could be other population stressors but these types of challenges could be mitigated by movement to new areas by the swans. Collisions with stationary towers and wires seem incidental to the overall population, but not unlucky individuals. In short and to conclude, few checks exist in their new world of North America to control their numbers.

The mute swan is also a very good breeder. Unlike your typical invasive with a r-select reproduction strategy, mutes are k-select species. These species produce lower numbers of offspring (mute clutch size is 6 and recruitment is 2+), provide substantial parental care, and have low mortality of the young. The population is able to grow fairly rapidly. As example, considering mute growth in the Chesapeake waters of Maryland: in 1962, five birds escaped

from an estate in Talbot County on the Delmarva Peninsula, throughout the 60s and early 70s their numbers were low, 1968 revealed 264 birds, and by 1999 the population had soared to over 4,000 (Crossley.) Such rapid growth trends hold true throughout their North American range. Remember, successful invasive populations tend to “thrive” in their new home.

Mutes also have generalized dietary demands. They can eat from a wide variety of plant opportunities. They are wasteful consumers pulling up more vegetation than they can eat and downing about 8.4 pounds of plant material a day (The Birds...) Mutes also possess high adaptability in general and as their range has expanded, they prove to have great dispersal potential.

The problems that their presence in Maryland’s waters has created are significant. This is also true throughout their continental range. Because of their sedentary nature, mutes tend to stay “local.” Their prolific dietary demands lead to the destruction of SAV beds, a concept known as an “eat-out.” As they consume and pull out the entire plant, the bottom is laid bare. This is critical habitat to the Chesapeake. SAVs provide the bay with shelter and food for its fish and blue crabs and the plants help to filter the water and act as silt and nutrient traps. In some cases these beds cannot recover. Then when our native, migratory waterfowl come to winter-over, food supplies are diminished or not present at all where they used to be. In addition the aggressive behavior of the mute, results in our native birds and wildlife being out competed for their resources and space. The presence of the “new kid in town” diminishes biodiversity and lowers the presence of native waterfowl and wildlife. One further problem is that the buildup of fecal material from these birds can cause health risks to humans as the water quality diminishes. These are not problems to be taken lightly and their effects ripple to a negative outcome in bay areas where mutes are present and their numbers are of high density.

In response to this biotic invasion, many areas and states have instituted Swan Reduction programs. In Maryland mute numbers have been controlled by egg-addling (egg shaking “abortions”), adult capture and removal (600 Maryland birds sent to China, The Birds ...), relocations, euthenizations, and hunting. Many culling efforts have been met with great disapproval by the general public. Nonetheless, Maryland attempts to keep mute numbers at about 50. It seems this number is rarely achieved. Other areas, such as Virginia, allow hunting pressure to lower the population with a one bird per season limit. This is a battle which presents little potential for victory - only a lingering stalemate.

Mute swans present a classic study of the modification of ecosystem homeostasis by the introduction of an invasive. Whether accidental or purposeful (in the case of Maryland, both) the arrival of a new species in an established environment is ripe for problems. As the world has and will become more homogenized, it is reaching the point of total loss of the concept of native habitat and populations. Uniqueness has become the victim of these changes. Planet Earth has become “Homo Earth.” Today, as the average citizen explores their environment, they are unaware of the countless invaders that are now a part of their former unique world. In many cases, creatures they accept as a part of their local environment and that they consider to be native are actually invasive. When I see a mute swan in the bay, I bear witness to a marvelous and beautiful bird. When I see a mute swan in the bay, I also bear witness to biotic pollution. Darwin once commented “It is not the strongest of the species to survive, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.”

“A thing is right
when it tends to preserve
the integrity, stability, and
beauty of the biotic community.
It is wrong when it tends
otherwise.”

✦ Aldo Leopold
from A Sand County Almanac



Workshop Window

By Cindy Currier

Workshop Window is a new feature where we will look into the workshops of various carvers and take a peek at their creative spaces.

Our first workshop belongs to carver, Bruce Eppard and is located behind his home in Royal Oak, Maryland. His shop is a 12 x 20 customized shed built and delivered by Amish craftsmen. It sits on a picturesque property with a lovely water view out the counter windows.

A unique piece in Bruce's shop is a handmade custom bench (pictured) made by him and outfitted with a swivel mount which allows access in any direction for the precise position needed at the time.

Please enjoy this visual tour!







2nd Annual

Jim Pierce Sportsman & Decoy Show

Antique & Contemporary Decoys

Hunting & Fishing Items • Oyster Cans & Shell Boxes
Sporting Arts & Books • Rods, Reels & Powder Tins
Guns, Ammunition & Knives

Saturday, February 18, 2023
8 am - 3 pm

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Early Bird 8 - 9 am: \$10

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*Chesapeake Bay Retriever
by Steve Keller*



SHOTS

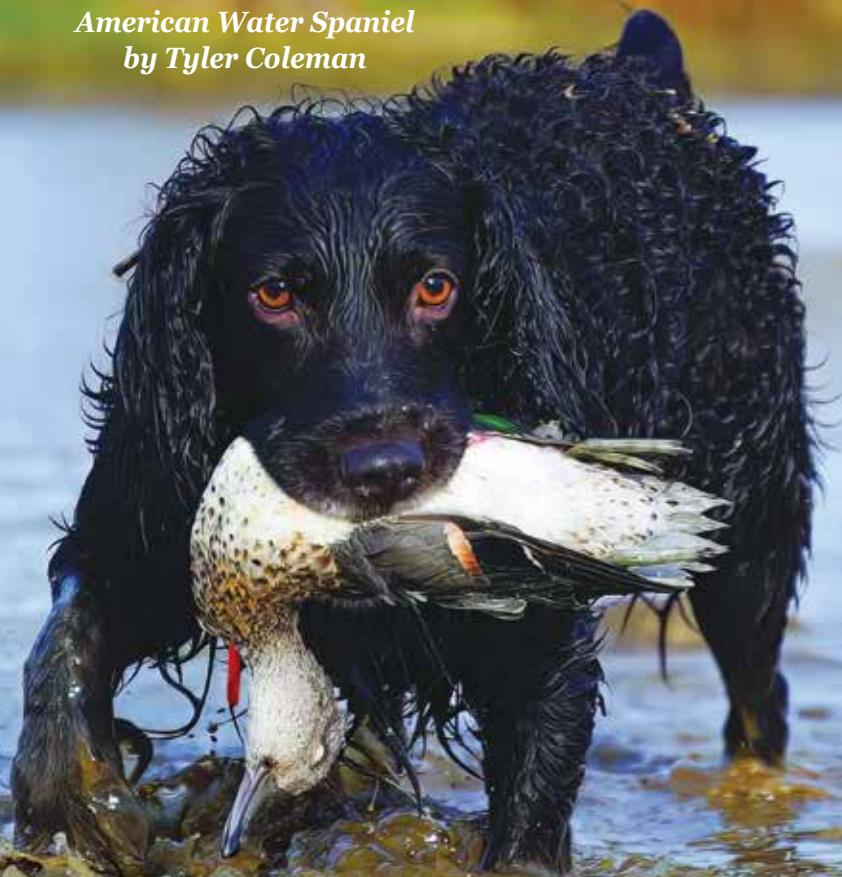
From the Wild

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

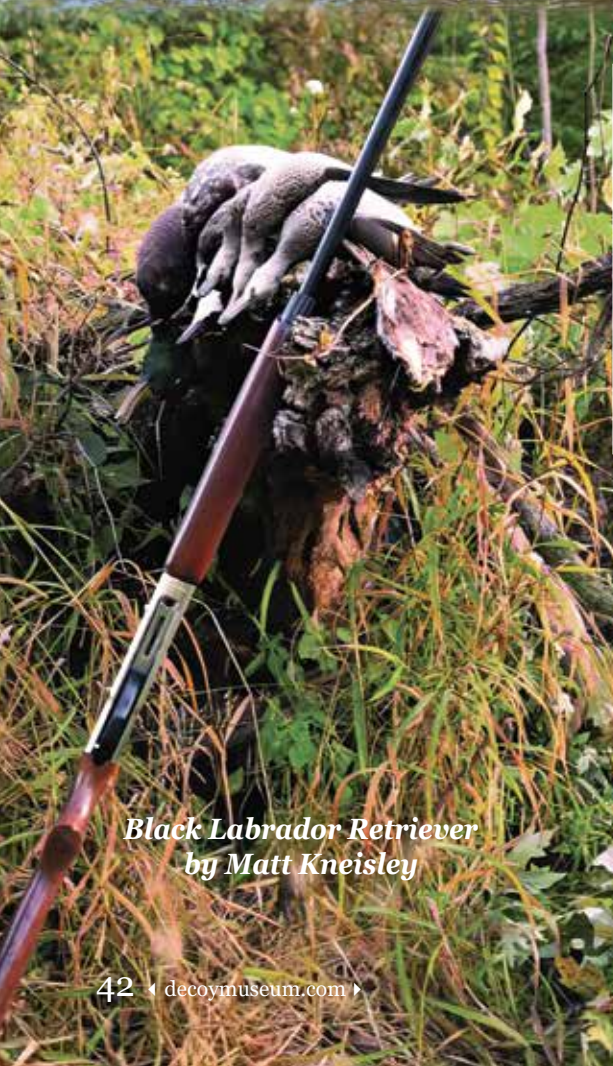
If so, submit your shots from the wild to wildlifephotography@decoymuseum.com.

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

*American Water Spaniel
by Tyler Coleman*



*Chocolate Labrador Retriever
by Robert Bruch*



*Black Labrador Retriever
by Matt Kneisley*



Springer Spaniel by Robert Bruch





***Chocolate Labrador Retriever
by Steve Keller***



***Chesapeake Bay Retriever
by Steve Keller***

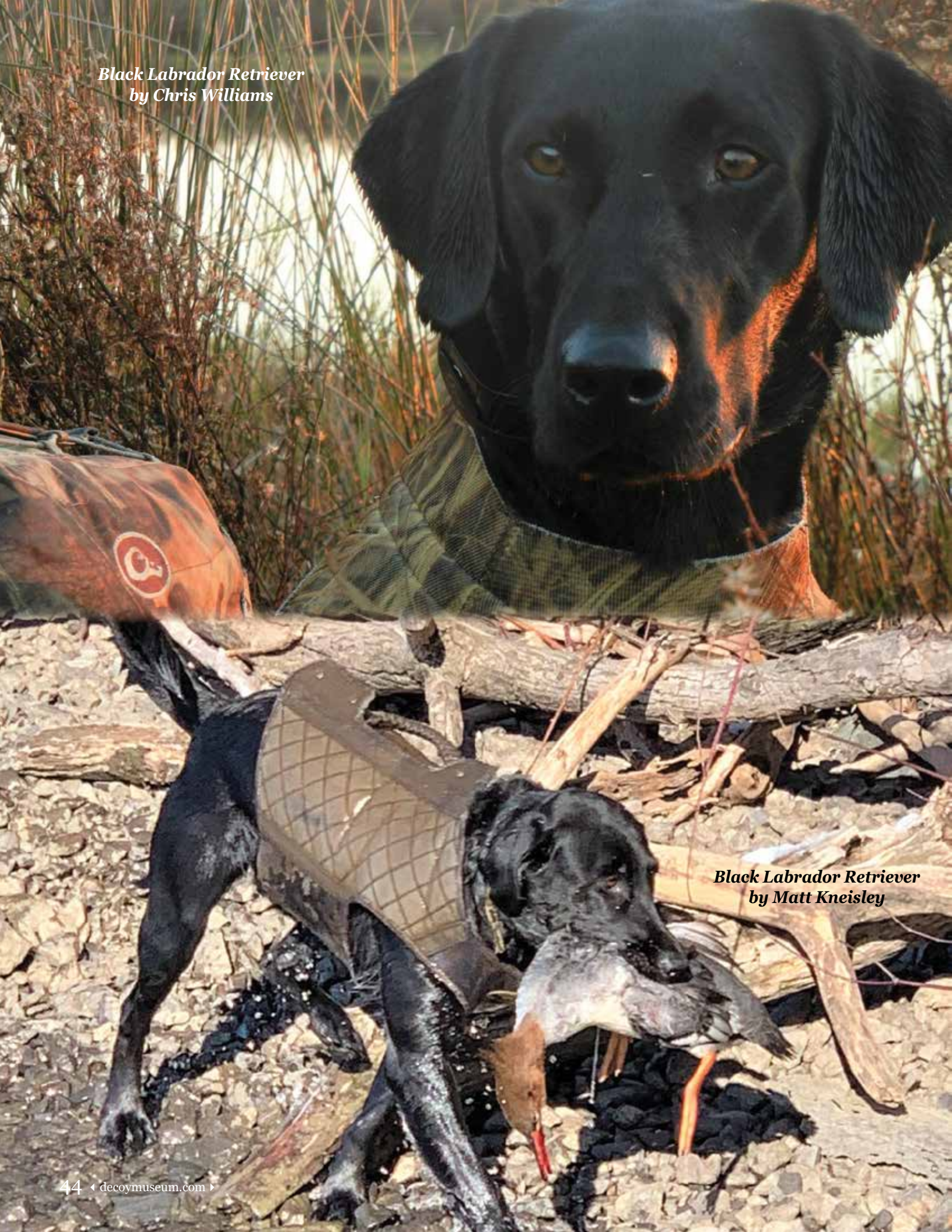


***American Water Spaniel
by Tyler Coleman***



***Black Labrador Retriever
by AJ Norton***

*Black Labrador Retriever
by Chris Williams*



*Black Labrador Retriever
by Matt Kneisley*

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

Events 2023

EVENTS & LECTURES

Wetlands and Waterfowl

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

Monday, January 30 • 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Local educator and naturalist, John Hughes, will give a presentation on Chesapeake Bay wetlands and their association and value to North American waterfowl. The first part of the discussion will address the definition of wetlands, their distribution, and types, and their overall significance to the Chesapeake Bay as an ecosystem with special consideration to their association to ducks, geese, and swans. The second portion of the program will examine individual case studies of specific waterfowl to specific wetlands and their plant species. Throughout the program visuals will be used and interaction with the audience will be encouraged. **Fee: \$10.00**

Wildlife Photography

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

Sunday, March 12 • 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Wildlife photographers Ralph Hockman and Tom Trafton will provide a presentation and discussion of their efforts at photographing waterfowl in particular and wildlife in general. Ralph is presently a museum board member and its treasurer. Tom is a retired teacher and naturalist from Harford County education. Ralph will emphasize his favorite areas for pursuing wildlife and Tom will discuss wildlife he tries to capture in pictures. Both will discuss how their interest in nature photography began and evolved and why it is such an enriching experience and hobby activity for them. They will provide a visual sampling of their efforts and be open to questions from the audience. **Fee: \$10.00**

An Evening with Charles Jobes, 2023 Decoy Festival Honorary Chairman

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

Sunday, April 16 • 6:00 PM - 7:30 PM

Charles will share experiences working with his father Captain Harry Jobes and his brothers Bobby and Joey Jobes. Charles will entertain questions from the gallery.

No Fee.

2023 Carvers Reception

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

Friday, May 5 • 6:00 PM - 8:00 PM

This event serves as the official opening for the 41st Annual Decoy & Wildlife Festival. Please join us at the Decoy Museum for fellowship with other carvers, collectors, and friends.

41st Annual Decoy & Wildlife Art Festival

STAR Centre, 710 Congress Avenue, Havre de Grace, MD

Saturday, May 6 • 9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Sunday, May 7 • 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

FOR THE LITTLE DUCKLINGS

Decoy Summer Camp

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

June 19-23, 2023 • 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM • Grades 2 through 5

June 26-30 • 8:00 AM - 4:00 PM • Grades 6 through 8

Local Carvers, Woodshop Safety, Bird Watching, Waterfowl Photography, Safety Presentations by local Fire, EMS, and Law Enforcement, plus additional fun activities. Limited to 25 campers/ week. Snacks & Lunch included. **Fee: \$150/ camper**

Story & Craft Days

Havre de Grace Decoy Museum

Every Tuesday in August • 10:30 AM - 11:30 AM

Come enjoy a story and related craft. All ages welcome.

No Fee.



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