

How to Make a Decoy

A WORKING WOODEN DECOY IS MADE OF TWO MAIN PARTS, A HEAD AND A BODY.

The head is typically carved with a knife. The carver sketches guidelines to help with symmetry and shape.



The body of the decoy can be hollow or solid. Some carvers use hatchet to carve the bodies from blocks of cedar, pine or other hard wood.



Soft woods, like tupelo, balsa or basswood, float well and are often used. Various tools are used to shape the body of the decoy, such as hand knives, a rasp, a drawknife, etc.



The carved head is attached to the body with a nail, dowel or glue. The entire creation is then painted. Special techniques, like scratch painting, texturing and combing, are used to get different effects.



The glass eyes are set into notches carved on the head. Some carvers paint on eyes.

A keel or lead weight can be attached to the bottom of a decoy so that it floats properly.

Some makers brand their decoys; others sign or carve their names. Sometimes poetry or a dedication is also inscribed.

