

THE WARD FOUNDATION, INC. PRESENTS

# WARD WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

WILDFOWL CARVING COMPETITION & ART FESTIVAL

2026

COMPETITION GUIDE

NEW DIVISIONS  
& MORE



PHOTO BY ALAN WYCHECK





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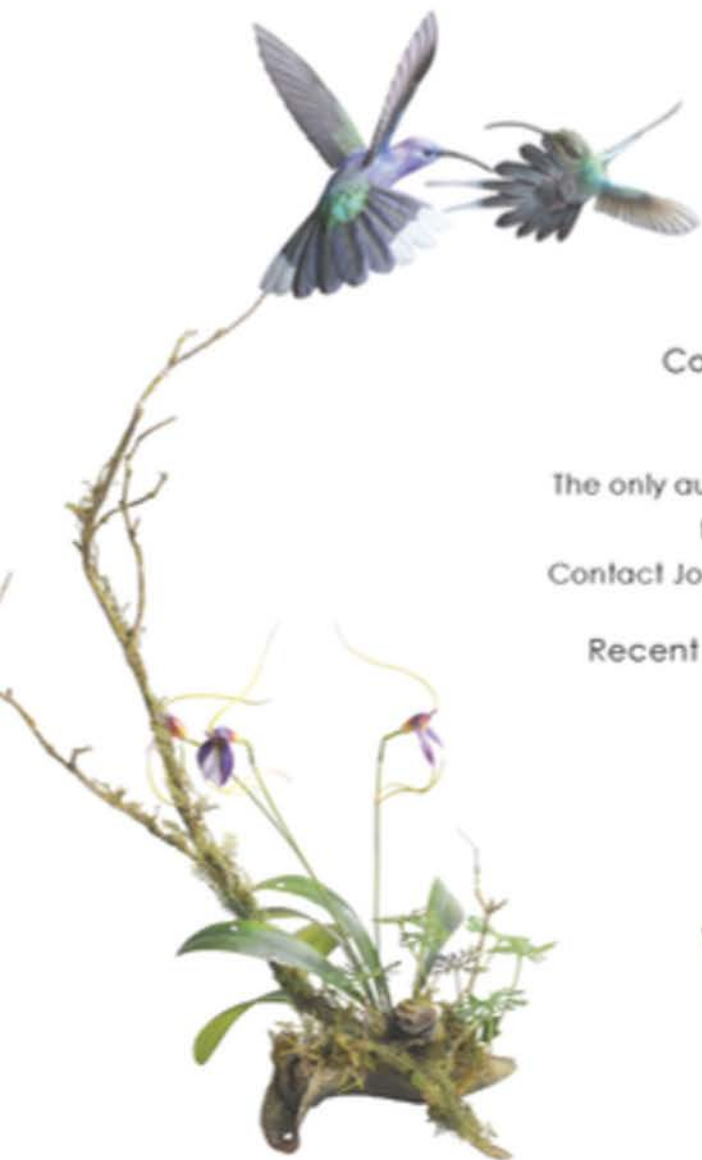
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## 55 YEARS OF SOARING TO NEW HEIGHTS

What an exciting year for the Ward World Championship! Now celebrating 55 years, Worlds continues to evolve, honoring tradition while embracing what's next. This year brings all-new layouts, expanded divisions and categories, new awards, enhanced People's Choice opportunities, and brand-new software, all designed to elevate the experience for competitors, collectors, judges, and visitors alike.

Change can feel a little daunting, but at Worlds, it's also part of the fun. With fresh floor plans and thoughtfully reimagined spaces, this year's show offers improved flow, better visibility, and more ways than ever for attendees to engage with the art on display.

We're thrilled to welcome back the Feathers and Fronds Divisions, as well as the return of the Fish Division, bringing aquatic artistry back to the show floor. New this year, Flat Art takes flight at Worlds. Photography, painting, sketching, digital art, and relief art now join the competition, expanding the creative conversation beyond the carving bench. These additions reflect the many ways artists study, celebrate, and interpret wildfowl, and they give visitors even more to admire and enjoy.

Audience engagement also soars in 2026 with expanded People's Choice voting, allowing attendees more opportunities to cast their votes across multiple divisions. These fan-favorite awards give the public a meaningful voice and celebrate the pieces that truly capture hearts on the show floor.

In addition, we're excited to introduce new Judges' Choice awards, recognizing exceptional craftsmanship, creativity, and artistry across select categories. These honors allow judges to spotlight work that stands out beyond traditional placements, adding another layer of recognition for outstanding talent.

Collectors will feel right at home in the Collectors' Corner, a dedicated space to connect, share stories, and celebrate the history behind the birds and the art. And of course, a competition for the collectors, the Sam Dyke Memorial "Old Bird" Antique Decoy Contest, honoring heritage pieces that have stood the test of time and continue to tell the story of wildfowl art.

With new layouts, returning favorites, expanded artistic divisions, and more ways to participate and be recognized, the 55th Ward World Championship is shaping up to be one of the most dynamic yet. Rooted in tradition, driven by creativity, and always guided by community, Worlds continues to soar to new heights.





# ACCOMMODATING FRIENDS

## PLEASE SUPPORT THE HOTELS AND MOTELS THAT SUPPORT US!

IDENTIFY YOURSELF AS AN ATTENDEE OF THE 2025 WARD WILDFOWL CARVING COMPETITION TO ENSURE ANY SPECIAL RATES THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE. EARLY RESERVATIONS ARE SUGGESTED. ALL RATES ARE BASED ON AVAILABILITY AND MAY NOT INCLUDE APPLICABLE TAXES. ADDITIONAL VISITOR INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE FROM THE OCEAN CITY CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU UNDER THE TOWN OF OCEAN CITY DEPT. OF TOURISM: [1-800-OC-OCEAN](tel:1-800-OC-OCEAN), [WWW.OCOCEAN.COM](http://WWW.OCOCEAN.COM).

Please call one of the following hotels and motels for rates

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4501 Coastal Highway  
Ocean City, MD 21842  
443-373-0800

Coastal Palms Beach Hotel  
120th St. Ocean Block  
Ocean City, MD 21842  
410-289-6846  
800-552-7263

Hilton Suites  
3200 N. Baltimore Avenue  
Ocean City, MD 21842  
410-289-6444  
866-729-3200

Princess Royale Resort  
and Conference Center  
9100 Coastal Hwy  
Ocean City, MD 21842  
410-524-7777  
800-4-ROYALE

Barefoot Mailman Motel  
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Ocean City, MD 21842  
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800-395-3668

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Ocean City, MD 21842  
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800-228-5150

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Ocean City, MD 21842  
410-524-1600  
800-638-2106

Quality Inn Oceanfront  
54th St. & the Ocean  
Ocean City, MD 21842  
410-524-7200  
800-837-3586

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Ocean City, MD 21842  
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866-664-4004

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410-250-1900  
800-552-7263

La Quinta Inn & Suites  
106 32nd St  
Ocean City, MD 21842  
410-289-5762

Residence Inn by Marriott  
Ocean City  
61st St & Bay  
Ocean City, MD 21842  
410-732-2222 ext. 5009

Best Western Plus Ocean City  
6007 Coastal Highway  
Ocean City, MD 21843  
410-524-6100  
800-780-7234

Days Inn Oceanfront  
23rd St. & Boardwalk  
Ocean City, MD 21842  
410-289-9103  
800-926-1122

Paradise Plaza Inn  
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Ocean City, MD 21842  
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888-678-4111

Sea Bay Hotel  
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Ocean City, MD 21842  
410-524-6100  
800-888-2229

Cambria Hotel Ocean City -  
Bayfront  
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Ocean City, MD 21842  
410-289-1645

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Ocean City, MD 21842  
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800-228-2800

Park Place Hotel  
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Ocean City, MD 21842  
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888-212-7275

Talbot Inn  
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Ocean City, MD 21842  
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800-552-7263

Grand Hotel & Spa  
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800-447-6779

Princess Bayside Beach Hotel  
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Ocean City, MD 21842  
410-723-2900  
800-854-9785

Tidelands Caribbean  
Hotel & Suites  
409 Atlantic Ave  
Ocean City, MD 21842  
410-289-9455





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### SHOW HOURS

<b>Friday, April 25</b>	10 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Living Legends Awards	5:30 p.m. - 7p.m.
Badge or VIP pass required	
<b>Saturday, April 26</b>	9 a.m. - 5 p.m.
Breakfast & A Talk (Cost TBA)	7:30 a.m. - 9 a.m.
World Division Awards	5:00 p.m. - 7 p.m.
Badge or VIP pass required	
<b>Sunday, April 27</b>	10 a.m. - 3 p.m.
Award Ceremony	Noon
Performing Arts Center	

### ADMISSION

**Show Hours** FREE thanks to WCAC

### After Hours Events

**Badge** \$5 for Members & Competitors  
\$8 for Non-Members & Public



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### ENTRY FEES

<b>World Class</b>	\$150 each Division
<b>Masters Class</b>	\$100 first entry, \$50 each add'l
<b>Advanced</b>	\$60 first entry, \$35 each add'l
<b>Intermediate</b>	\$35 first entry, \$15 each add'l
<b>Novice</b>	\$20 first entry, \$10 each add'l
<b>Youth</b>	Paid for by Gary & Pam Stenger
<b>Sculpture other than Wood</b>	\$75 first entry, \$35 each add'l
<b>Wooden Sculpture other than Wildfowl</b>	\$35 first entry, \$15 each add'l
<b>Lem &amp; Steve Ward Divisions</b>	\$35 first entry, \$15 each add'l
<b>Champagne</b>	\$35 first entry, \$15 each add'l
<b>Feathers &amp; Fonds</b>	\$50 first entry, \$35 each add'l
<b>Photography</b>	\$25 first entry (2 photos), \$5 each add'l
<b>Flat Art</b>	\$15 first entry, \$10 each add'l
<b>Fish</b>	\$35 first entry, \$15 each add'l



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### COMPETITION COMMITTEE

Kristie Clattenburg (Chair),  
J Arthur Leonard (Board Liaison), Pam Morris, Alan  
Humes, Rich Smoker, Chris Pusey, Peter Palumbo

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## The ONLY Magazine Dedicated to Bird Carving!

**Wildfowl Carving Magazine** is your premier resource for carvers of all skill levels. Build and refine your skills with expert guidance that will help you master the basics through advanced techniques. We have proudly served the carving community since 1985. Join us and bring birds to life... one carving at a time!

Laurie J. McNeil



### Step-by-Step Tutorials

Experts guide you through the carving and painting process with photographs and comprehensive explanations.

Jean Minaudier



### Patterns & Color Guides

Your next project is always waiting within our pages! Find patterns for your workbench and detailed color guides.

Tom Christie



### Expert Advice

Learn the secrets to success from award-winning carvers. Improve your skills with their invaluable tips!



Katlyne Danko, Editor

I'm thrilled to welcome you to Wildfowl Carving Magazine—where carvers of all levels can find inspiration, share tips, and celebrate this historic art form.

Dazzle competition judges with your artwork, attract ducks to your blind with handmade decoys, or create thoughtful gifts that last a lifetime.

Join our flock and transform a block into a beautiful bird!

*Katlyne Danko*

## Exclusive Ward Show offer!

Join or Renew  
Wildfowl Carving  
Magazine...  
**SAVE \$15**



Scan the QR code, or visit us online at:

[wildfowl-carving.com/WARD26](http://wildfowl-carving.com/WARD26)





## Classes, Workshops, Lectures, & Panels

*VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO SIGN UP FOR CLASSES. SIGN UP AT THE SHOW  
FOR SEMINARS, WORKSHOPS, & PANELS*

Whether you're a seasoned master or picking up a bird for the first time, the 2026 Ward World Championship (April 24–26) in Ocean City, MD, is more than a competition; it's a masterclass in wildfowl art. This year's educational lineup is designed to bridge the gap between tradition and modern technique.

### Sharpen Your Skills

The Ward World Championship Education Conference returns with a robust schedule of lectures, workshops, and hands-on demonstrations. Featured highlights include:

- **Master-Led Classes:** Refine your craft with intensive, expert-led sessions. Join Rich and Ross Smoker for a three-day decoy carving class in the iconic Ward Brothers style, or master structural accuracy with Tommy Stewart's "The Art of Shorebirds." For those looking to perfect their form, World Champion Josh Guge leads a specialized clay modeling workshop, focusing on the critical anatomical "pre-carving" stage that defines world-class sculpture.
- **Invaluable Knowledge:** Thursday through Sunday, join well-known legends and upcoming masters to explore a variety of topics such as miniatures, pattern styles, color, technique, and more. Speakers may include Pat Godin, Mali Vujanic, Pete Palumbo, Tom Christie, Josh Guge, and more to be announced.
- **Live Demonstrations:** Watch top-tier carvers in action. These informal sessions allow you to see hatchet carving, simplistic painting, pattern making, and canvas decoy construction up close.
- **The Art Corner:** A dedicated space for the next generation of artists, featuring "make-and-take" projects for children and families. On Friday from 3–5p join Matt Sewell to paint some simplistic folk owl decoys, and on Saturday, come back to paint some mini ducks.

### Join the Conversation

Don't miss the Carving Critique sessions, a rare opportunity to have your work reviewed by Pete Palumbo in a supportive, constructive environment. It's the perfect way to refine your entries before the 2027 season!

\*Educational offerings are subject to change.



# 2026 LIVING LEGENDS AWARDS

Friday, April 24, 2026

Reception begins at 5:30 PM

Badge or VIP required

**This award recognizes individuals who:**

- Have been long-time advocates for wildfowl art and the Ward Foundation.
- Are generous in spirit and commitment to teaching others and passing on their knowledge, skills, and talents.
- Have created an impact on the field of wildfowl art and the Ward World Championship Wildfowl Carving Competition.



2026 LIVING LEGEND  
ANNOUNCEMENT  
COMING  
SOON

STAY TUNED





# WORLD COMPETITION RULES

THE COMPETITION IS OPEN TO WOOD SCULPTORS OF ANY LEVEL OF ARTISTIC SKILL. IN ADDITION TO WORLD AND MASTERS, THERE ARE THREE GENERAL LEVELS OF COMPETITION: ADVANCED, INTERMEDIATE AND NOVICE.

## Competition Levels

Carvings are grouped together by levels indicated by signage on the tables.

• **World:** In the six World Divisions, entrants compete for the title of World Champion, championship ring and cash award.

• **Masters:** Only carvers who have previously won two Best of Show awards in Advanced, or placed 1st, 2nd or 3rd in World in any division other than SR Shootin' Rig are eligible to enter in Masters and are no longer eligible to enter Advanced. They are eligible to enter any of the four divisions of the Masters Class competition and/ or they may elect to compete for a World title. This applies to either an individual carver or a carver in partnership with another artist. If it is discovered that a carver has entered Masters without meeting the eligibility requirement, the entry will be immediately removed from the Masters area. If judging has already occurred, any awards will be rescinded.

• **Advanced:** This level represents advanced amateur and professional carvers, including those who have obtained top rankings in competitions. Entrants compete for cash awards, ribbons, and rosettes. Advanced is not open to MASTER carvers. Any carver who is not eligible for Masters but has entered at the World Level must enter Advanced.

• **Intermediate:** This level includes carvers who have refined their sculpture and painting skills beyond the novice level. Intermediate carvers compete for ribbons, rosettes, and Best in Show cash awards. Carvers who have won one Best in Show or two Best in Division (excluding Bench) awards at this level in the World Competition must move to the Advanced level. Carvers who have been consistent blue ribbon winners at this level are encouraged to move up to Advanced.

• **Novice:** This level is reserved for entry-level carvers. Novice carvers compete for ribbons, rosettes and Best in Show cash awards. Carvers who have won one Best in Show or two Best in Division (excluding Bench) awards at this level in the World Competition must move to the Intermediate level. Carvers who have been consistent blue ribbon winners at this level are encouraged to move up to Intermediate.



## Judging Criteria

The following definitions of judging criteria have been adopted by the Ward Foundation. Each criteria is given equal weight in the judging process. The higher the level the more critically assessed. These criteria will be used for all of the following levels of competition—World, Masters, Advanced, Intermediate, and Novice—in all divisions except Interpretive:

• **Technique/Craftsmanship** refers to the technical skills involved in bird carving: sculpting, painting and finishing techniques and their execution. It covers the bird or birds, any habitat or accessories that may be involved and the base itself if there is one. Craftsmanship should be consistent throughout the entire piece. Good craftsmanship is basic to bird carving. Without it, a piece will go no further.

• **Accuracy** involves the correctness of a piece from a scientific perspective. Is the bird the right size? Are the feathers the right shape? Is the coloration and pattern correct? Are the eyes properly placed? Do the toes have the right number of joints and are they in the right places? All these are questions of accuracy. Anything accompanying the bird must be given the same scrutiny. Accuracy involves the natural history of the whole piece, all of its components and the appropriateness of these components together.

• **Essence of the Species** involves taking accuracy one step further. It involves a thorough knowledge of one's subject and the ability to capture an attitude in wood. You see a bird on your lawn at dusk. You can't see any details in the failing light, just a silhouette, and yet the hop and cock of the head immediately identify it as a robin. The essence of the bird is there without a feather count, a measurement of length or a check on color. You may have flawlessly crafted your bird with faultless accuracy, but unless you have captured the essence of your subject and given it the spark that brings it alive, your bird will not achieve its fullest potential.

• **Artistry** of a piece involves its design and composition. This is where presentation, innovation and creativity all come into play. There should be a beauty in the concept apart from the beauty of the bird itself. Line, form, content, color, mass and movement should all be working together to create an integrated whole. Of all the concerns in carving, artistry is the most elusive, the most difficult to explain, to teach, to analyze in the work of others, and to instill in one's own work. But the difficulty is an indication of the importance.



# WORLD COMPETITION RULES

THE COMPETITION IS OPEN TO WOOD SCULPTORS OF ANY LEVEL OF ARTISTIC SKILL. IN ADDITION TO WORLD AND MASTERS, THERE ARE THREE GENERAL LEVELS OF COMPETITION: ADVANCED, INTERMEDIATE AND NOVICE.

## Judging Criteria

- Overall Presentation. What is rare is often what is valuable. Bird carving requires a multitude of technical skills brought together in the overall presentation. Additionally, it requires a thorough knowledge and understanding of birds scientifically as well as emotionally. But most importantly, it involves the ability to bring all these elements together artistically. If bird carving is to move beyond craft to art, our goals and expectations must do the same. No artificial lighting will be used during judging, artificial lights (handheld or tabletop) are not permitted and will not be on the display.

- All criteria are important. They all overlap and build on each other. In order for a piece to reach its fullest potential it must succeed in all five areas simultaneously. For the sake of clarity we have dealt with them individually, but in reality the distinctions are not so clear cut.

As the competitor moves through the different levels of competition and eventually to the Masters and Advanced levels, technique/craftsmanship and accuracy as criteria are taken almost for granted, as these are the tools expected to have been mastered, allowing the artist to concentrate on the essence of the species and artistry of the competition piece entered. Please refrain from posting images of your work in progress to finished carving of your entry pieces on social media.

Some rules are open to individual interpretation, giving an artist as much artistic license as possible; some are very specific. It is up to the judges to interpret the rules with guidance from the Ward Foundation. The judges' decisions are final.

**DECORATIVE MINIATURE MEASURING CRITERIA**  
Entries must be one half lifesize or less. The Ward Foundation reserves the right to move entries deemed too large for miniature to the bench class.

### WATERFOWL PAIR

Unless otherwise stated, a waterfowl pair is a drake and a hen of the same species.



## Judging Criteria

### RULES FOR BEST IN CATEGORY AND DIVISION AWARDS

- First, Second and Third in Category winners (Division E, CD, GP, SW and YG) will be determined with First in Category being selected from the First in Species winners. Second in Category will be chosen from the remaining First in Species winners along with the Second in Species of the previously selected species. Third in Category will be chosen from the remaining First in Species winners plus the next runner-up at the species level in the species previously selected for First and Second in Category. In other words, it is possible to select First, Second, and Third in Category from the same species.

- Best in Division (All Divisions except World's, MH & H) will be selected from the winner of each of the Categories. Second in Division will be selected from the remaining First in Category winners plus the Second in Category winner from the previously chosen Category. Third in Division will be chosen from the remaining First in category winner(s) and the next runner-up at the Category level in the category(ies) previously selected for First and Second Division. In other words, it is possible for judges to select First, Second, and Third in Division from one species.

- Division MH & H will be judged for Best in Division with second and third awarded as well.

Competitors must submit documented reference materials at the time of registration for those birds not listed in the National Audubon Society's The Sibley Guide to Birds. These reference materials are necessary for the accurate judging of your bird. The Ward Foundation is not responsible for lost reference materials.





# WARD WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

## Support the Ward World Championship

Please note this guide can and will be updated as needed. Watch for update notes on our website.

[www.wardfdn.org](http://www.wardfdn.org)

Proudly support the Ward World Championship and the Ward Foundation. By championing this prestigious event and the noble mission of the Ward Foundation, you can contribute to the preservation of wildlife art, the celebration of artistic excellence, and the cultivation of a community passionate about nature and creativity. Together, we honor the legacy of Lem and Steve Ward while inspiring future generations to embrace their artistic talents and respect our natural world.

Membership has its benefits!

Whether you are an avid outdoorsman, an artist, or someone who just appreciates art, you will see significant value in a membership at the Ward Foundation. With your membership, you receive many benefits including helping support a traditional art culture. Now you can renew your membership or join by choosing a membership level on our website, [wardfdn.org](http://wardfdn.org).

You can choose the level of membership which is best suited for you. Individual membership is \$30 per year, a Pair membership is \$60, and the Ward Goose Membership is \$150. Sponsorships for our legacy events are also available.

Every dollar of support helps advance our mission and expand the impact of this organization and membership is tax-deductible as a donation to a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization. Keep in mind, that membership provides the Foundation with a steady and reliable source of income.



## 2026 ANNAPOLIS DECOY SHOW

Sponsored by the  
*Potomac Decoy Collectors Association*

**Sunday, June 7, 2026**  
**9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

Annapolis Elks Lodge  
2 Pythian Drive  
Edgewater, MD 21037



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*For details:*  
[chad.tragakis@gmail.com](mailto:chad.tragakis@gmail.com)  
(703) 593-3024



# REGISTRATION INFO

## Registration

Thursday, April 23, from 11 a.m.-8 p.m. and Friday, April 24, from 7-9 a.m.

**Watch for updates on our website, [wardfdn.org](http://wardfdn.org).**

LOCATION: Roland E. Powell Convention Center, 40th and Coastal Highway, Ocean City, Maryland.

- All entries must be hand-delivered either by the carver or a designated second party, except for mail-ins.
- Mail-in entries will be accepted for Lem & Steve and Youth. See page 11 for instructions.
- Entry fees are paid at registration. Registration forms will be completed on-site.
- The Ward Foundation will assign a registration number when your entries are processed.
- The name of the competitor should not be visible on entries; covering with masking tape is adequate. The name of the species should be on the bottom of the base.
- Competitors will receive a competitor badge and can purchase guest badges at registration, \$5 for members and \$10 for non-members.
- Competitors will be allowed early admittance to the show at 8 a.m. Sunday. Official competitor name badges must be visibly worn to gain entry during these pre-show hours. Competitor's guests, with guest badges, may accompany the competitor.
- We do not allow the removal of entries before 3 p.m. Sunday. All persons removing carvings must be carrying the registration receipt for those carvings.
- Competitors are asked to submit documented reference materials at the time of registration for those birds not listed in the National Audubon Society's The Sibley Guide to Birds. These reference materials are for the accurate judging of your bird.
- Provide documentation at registration about the construction of your entry that would help the judging process, i.e. structural strengthening techniques used in SR. These notations will be given to the judges for their attention during their initial evaluation.
- Any artist with an entry not suitable for tabletop display is required to notify the Ward Foundation by April 2. Under no circumstances should an artist drill (or attach in any way) an entry or base onto a table in the convention center.

## Registration

- Artists are encouraged to place their business cards beside their work after judging is completed.
- Names of carvers of the Champagne Waterfowl Division entries will be identified by the Ward Foundation after judging if time allows.
- Youth carvers are welcome to enter "adult" levels of competition but once a carving is entered outside of the youth competition, it is no longer eligible to be judged in the youth competition.
- Please note that once an entry is placed in the competition hall, competitors will not be allowed to move their entry for any reason without prior permission of the show director or a floor captain nor enter the center areas of the World and Master divisions.
- Contact the Ward Foundation by email [kclattenburg@wardfdn.org](mailto:kclattenburg@wardfdn.org) with any questions. Visit us on the web at [wardfdn.org](http://wardfdn.org).
- The ultimate responsibility of accurately registering an entry rests with the carver. The Competition Committee reserves the right to move a carving prior to judging if it is discovered that it was inappropriately registered or misplaced.
- Pre-register in April online at [wardworlds.org](http://wardworlds.org)

# Castle IN THE Sand

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# MAIL-IN INSTRUCTIONS

**For international artists and competitors, please check with U.S. Customs before shipping. The Ward Foundation is not responsible for any loss or damage to mail-in entries. Please contact us if you are shipping an entry so we know to watch for the box.**

**Please email**

**[kclattenburg@wardfdn.org](mailto:kclattenburg@wardfdn.org) for**

**SHIPPING ADDRESS!!!**

DEADLINE: Must be received by April 15.

1. Entrants must pre-pay with credit card, check (Ward Foundation, Inc.) or money order:

a. Shipping, including a pre-paid, return-postage, shipping label with insurance. Record tracking numbers for your own records.

b. \$5 handling fee per box (not per entry). Fee not required for youth entries.

c. Entry fees, including membership or \$10 non-membership fee.

2. Entrants must complete registration online at [wardworlds.org](http://wardworlds.org).

a. Print off copies of all paperwork for the box.

b. If you use the old sample form, it is not an official registration form. And your entry will be registered by the competition registrar.

c. Enclose payment or receipt of payment with the correct totals. Carvings mailed without full payment will not be entered.

e. By entering, you authorize registration of your entries and compliance with all rules, guidelines, and waivers.

f. Make a copy of your filled-out registration form for your own records.

g. In an envelope, enclose the completed registration form(s) as well as your payment and return postage label. Put the envelope in the shipping box with your carving(s).

3. Carvings will be shipped to the owners no later than two weeks after the competition. Arrival times will vary depending on your distance from Salisbury, MD.

4. If you or your agent will be picking up your carving at the show closing (Sunday, 3 p.m.), please provide instructions along with your registration form.



5. Packing Recommendations: The following is based on recommendations of USPS, UPS, and FedEx to ensure the utmost safety for your carvings.

a. Use a rigid corrugated box large enough for carving(s) and cushioning materials.

b. Wrap each carving separately using proper cushioning material such as bubble wrap.

c. Each carving should be surrounded by at least two inches of cushioning and be placed at least two inches from inside wall of box. Use peanuts or foam for loose fill to avoid shifting.

d. Enclose envelope with sample form, fee payments, and return postage label.

e. Seal box securely with packing tape.

6. Mail in box.

**Please No Stamps for return postage. Postage to ship back can be added on to your check or credit card payment for registration.**





# 2026 WORLD COMPETITION CHAMPION LEVEL

THE SIX WORLD DIVISIONS PROVIDE THE OPPORTUNITY FOR ADVANCED LEVEL CARVERS TO COMPETE FOR THE TITLE OF WORLD CHAMPION. THESE ARE ELITE DIVISIONS FOR THOSE CARVERS WHOSE WORK DEMONSTRATES THE HIGHEST LEVEL OF ARTISTRY AND TECHNIQUE. JUDGING STANDARDS ARE THE MOST DEMANDING WITH THE VERY BEST CARVINGS EARNING THE TITLE "BEST IN WORLD." IF A CARVER ENTERS IN THE WORLD CLASS AND PLACES IN THE FUTURE THEY MUST ENTER MASTERS; IF THEY DO NOT PLACE AND NEVER HAVE PLACED, THEY MUST ENTER ADVANCED.

Any artist with an entry not suitable for tabletop display is required to notify the Ward Foundation by April 1, 2026.

## ENTRY FEE

\$150 per entry, each division

Entries are limited to one per division. World division competitors entering additional pieces must enter at the Advanced levels or, if qualified, at the Masters level.

## Divisions

A–Decorative Lifesize Wildfowl  
B–Decorative Lifesize Waterfowl Pair  
C–Decorative Miniature Wildfowl  
D–Interpretive Wood Sculpture  
SR–Shootin' Rig  
WG–Single Gunner Decoy

1. Entries must never have entered at the Ward World Championship before.
2. Entries must be original in design and concept. If after judging it is determined that this policy has been ignored, the award will be rescinded.
3. Entries are limited to one per Division, per entrant.
4. Species and sex must be designated on the entry.
5. Name of artist should not be visible.

## Divisions A and C–Decorative Lifesize Wildfowl and Decorative Miniature Wildfowl

Entries will be judged on Technique/Craftsmanship, Accuracy, Essence of Species, and Artistry and Overall Presentation.

1. The entry will consist of one or more birds of any species with emphasis on creating an innovative and artistic composition.
2. Entries are to be made of wood. Other materials may be used for habitat and structural purposes; however, they are to be hand formed with the exception of eyes.

## Division B–Decorative Lifesize Waterfowl Pair

The 2026 species is a Blue Goose. Entries will be judged on Technique/Craftsmanship, Accuracy, Essence of the Species, Artistry, Overall Presentation, and Proper Floatation.

1. Entries are to be made of wood; glass eyes are permitted, and materials other than wood can be used in fragile tails and crests.
2. Entries must float in a natural position but do not have to self-right.
3. Judging for Decorative Lifesize Waterfowl will be limited to the designated waterfowl only.
4. If a base is used, it must be separate from the carving and indicate placement. The base will not be considered part of the carving and will not be displayed during judging.
5. Any deterioration of the paint or structural integrity at the completion of judging will result in the disqualification of the entry.

## Division C–Decorative Miniature Wildfowl

1. Entries must be one half lifesize or less. All other criteria are the same as Division A.

## Division D–Interpretive Wood Wildfowl Sculpture

Entries will be judged on craftsmanship, artistry, interpretation of the essence of the wildfowl and originality. A carving should emphasize form, content and movement rather than a realistic duplication of the wildfowl. It should be presented in a style that provokes thought and wonder.

1. Subject may be entrant's choice of any wildfowl.
2. Entry is to be entirely of wood with the exception of the structural elements and eyes. The base may be of other material and will be considered as part of the sculpture.
3. If a supporting pedestal under the base is needed, it must be provided by the artist and it will not be considered as part of the sculpture.
4. Interpretive Wood Sculpture entries have no size restrictions.

## World Lifesize Waterfowl Pair Species:

2026 Blue Goose  
2027 Mandarin Duck  
2028 Scoter (any, worldwide)  
2029 Puffin (all and a pair)





# 2026 WORLD COMPETITION CHAMPION LEVEL

## Division SR–Shootin’ Rig

These decoys are rooted in the classic gunning decoys’ function and design. As a World Class division, they are judged on Technique/Craftsmanship, Accuracy, Artistry, Overall Presentation and Proper Floatation. Judging is a two-part process. It begins on the table where they are judged in hand and reviewed for compliance of the rules. Final judging is done while the entries are floating on Assawoman Bay at a minimal distance of 20 feet. Judges remain on the judge’s platform until the judging is completed. Decoys once set remain at anchor for the duration of judging.

1. Any worldwide species of waterfowl, including pelagic and coastal seabirds, may be selected. All seasonal plumages are acceptable.
2. Three birds are required: a drake and hen of the same species with a third bird of choice.
3. Decoys shall be floated as a rig and they must self right. Anchor lines with a maximum length of 6 to 8 feet will be attached to each rig component. Sufficient weights are required.
4. Decoys will be judged under natural weather conditions in Assawoman Bay and demonstrate proper floatation.
5. Decoys shall be constructed of wood or cork; glass eyes are permitted. All vulnerable areas must be durable; materials other than wood can be used in tails and crests. During registration, carvers have the option to submit in writing any structural strengthening techniques used in their rig. This information will be identified by carver’s number and given to the judges during their initial evaluation.
6. No burning or fine stoned texturing is allowed. However, simulated texture using gesso, modeling paste, or texture paint in combination with combing, scratching, or brushing is acceptable. Minimal carving techniques used to simulate feather texture on heads, i.e. merganser heads, are acceptable.
7. Any deterioration of the paint or structural integrity at the completion of judging will result in the disqualification of the entry.

## Division WG – Single Gunner Decoy

The 2026 species is a Black Duck. This division emphasizes simplicity and most resembles the functional tool of the decoy maker. Entries will be reviewed for compliance with rules prior to judging. Decoys will be judged 20 feet from the judges on Assawoman Bay (weather dependent).

1. Carving and painting should be functional enough to be used as tools for hunting. No undercut feathers. Wood, cork and canvas allowed.
2. Decoys will be floated and must self-right from any position, except geese, swan and confidence, which must right only from their side(s). All entries will be judged for stability and proper floatation.
3. Carvings must be a drake of said species. They should be lifesize or oversized with no preference shown by judges.
4. No burning or fine-stoned texturing is allowed. However, simulated texture using gesso, modeling paste or texture paint in combination with combing, scratching or brushing is acceptable. Minimal carving techniques used to simulate feather texture on heads, i.e. merganser heads, are acceptable.
5. Painting: Can be simple in style, or in the style of a contemporary antique with no preference shown by judges.
6. Any deterioration of paint or structural integrity at the completion of judging will result in the disqualification of the entry.

## World Single Gunner Species:

2026 Black Duck (Drake)

2027 Goldeneye (Drake)

2028 White-fronted Goose



## AWARDS

### A-Decorative Lifesize Wildfowl

BEST IN WORLD John Scheeler Memorial Award  
\$3,000, trophy, ring, and rosette  
SECOND IN WORLD \$1,500 and rosette  
THIRD IN WORLD \$750 and rosette

### C-Decorative Miniature Wildfowl

BEST IN WORLD  
\$3,000, trophy, ring, and rosette  
SECOND IN WORLD \$1,500 and rosette  
THIRD IN WORLD \$750 and rosette

### SR- Shootin’ Rig

BEST IN WORLD Jimmy Vizier Memorial Award  
\$3,000, trophy, ring, and rosette  
SECOND IN WORLD \$1,500 and rosette  
THIRD IN WORLD \$750 and rosette

### B- Decorative Lifesize Waterfowl Pair

BEST IN WORLD Tan Brunet Memorial Award  
\$3,000, trophy, ring, and rosette  
SECOND IN WORLD \$1,500 and rosette  
THIRD IN WORLD \$750 and rosette

### D- Interpretive Wood Sculpture

BEST IN WORLD  
\$3,000, trophy, ring, and rosette  
SECOND IN WORLD \$1,500 and rosette  
THIRD IN WORLD \$750 and rosette

### WG- Single Gunner Decoy

BEST IN WORLD Rich Smoker Heritage Award  
\$1,500, trophy, ring, and rosette  
SECOND IN WORLD \$750 and rosette  
THIRD IN WORLD \$375 and rosette



# 2026 LEVELED COMPETITION

## MASTERS

THE MASTERS CLASS OPENS UP OPPORTUNITIES FOR CHAMPION CARVERS TO ACHIEVE A NEW LEVEL OF EXCELLENCE IN THEIR ART AND TO BE RECOGNIZED AND HONORED WITH AWARDS AT THIS MOST COMPETITIVE LEVEL.

Only carvers who have previously won two Best of Division awards in Advanced, or placed 1st, 2nd or 3rd in World in any division other than SR, Shootin' Rig, are eligible to enter in Masters. They are eligible to enter any of the four divisions of the Masters Class competition and/or they may elect to compete for a World title. This applies to either an individual carver or a carver in partnership with another artist. If it is discovered that a carver has entered Masters without meeting the eligibility requirement, the entry will be immediately removed from the Masters area. If judging has already occurred, any awards will be rescinded.

Any artist with an entry not suitable for tabletop display is required to notify the Ward Foundation by April 2, 2026.

## ENTRY FEE

\$100 first entry, \$50 each additional entry

## DIVISIONS

ME–Decorative Floating Lifesize Waterfowl

MF–Decorative Lifesize Wildfowl

MG–Decorative Miniature Wildfowl

MH–Interpretive Wood Sculpture

1. Entries must never have entered at the Ward World Championship before.
2. Entries are to be made out of wood. Other materials may be used for habitat and structural purposes; however, they are to be hand-formed with the exception of eyes.
3. Multiple entries in each division are allowed.
4. Sex and species must be designated on the entry.
5. Name of the artist should not be visible.

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Special Thanks: Jeff and Marg Bounds wish to recognize the high level of achievement attained by the winners of this prestigious competition by sponsoring the Master Medallions in the memory of their parents, Charles and Eleanor Bounds. Thank you to the Bounds Family.

## Division ME– Decorative Lifesize Floating Waterfowl

1. Decorative Lifesize Floating Waterfowl consists of three categories: Marsh Ducks; Diving Ducks; and Geese, Swan and Confidence.
2. If the artist enters more than one carving of the same species, both sexes must be represented.
3. Entries are to be made of wood; glass eyes are permitted and materials other than wood can be used in tails and crests.
4. Entries must float in a natural position but do not have to self-right.
5. Judging will be limited to the waterfowl floating in the tank only.
6. Any deterioration of the paint or structural integrity at the completion of judging will result in the disqualification of the entry.

## Division MG–Decorative Miniature Wildfowl

1. Entries must be one half lifesize or less.

## Divisions ME, MF and MG

1. Entries will be judged on Technique/Craftsmanship, Accuracy, Essence of Species, and Artistry and Overall Presentation.
2. Divisions MF and MG are divided into the following categories with species in each category judged against one another:  
Category 1: Waterfowl, Shorebirds, Wading Birds and Seabirds  
Category 2: Upland Game Birds, Birds of Prey  
Category 3: NP Land Birds and Songbirds

## Division MH–Interpretive Wood Sculpture

- Entries will be judged on artistry, interpretation of the essence of the wildfowl and originality. A carving should emphasize form, content and movement rather than a realistic duplication of the wildfowl. It should be presented in a style that provokes thought and wonder.
1. Subject may be the entrant's choice from any wildfowl.
  2. Entry is to be entirely of wood with the exception of the base and eyes. The base may be of other material and will be considered as part of the sculpture.
  3. If a supporting pedestal under the base is needed, it must be provided by the artist and it will not be considered as part of the sculpture.
  4. Interpretive Wood Sculpture entries have no size restrictions.





# 2026 LEVELED COMPETITION

## MASTER AWARDS

### ME–Masters Decorative Lifesize Floating Waterfowl

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
3 Categories	ribbon	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Masters.	\$1000	\$500	\$250
	Rosette & Medallion	Rosette & Medallion	Rosette & Medallion

### MF–Masters Decorative Lifesize Wildfowl

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
3 Categories	ribbon	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Masters.	\$1000	\$500	\$250
	Rosette & Medallion	Rosette & Medallion	Rosette & Medallion

### MG–Masters Decorative Miniature Wildfowl

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
3 Categories	ribbon	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Masters	\$1000	\$500	\$250
	Rosette & Medallion	Rosette & Medallion	Rosette & Medallion

### MH–Interpretive Wood Sculpture

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Masters	\$1000	\$500	\$250
	Rosette & Medallion	Rosette & Medallion	Rosette & Medallion

## Division ME– Decorative Lifesize Floating Waterfowl

1. Decorative Lifesize Floating Waterfowl consists of three categories: Marsh Ducks; Diving Ducks; and Geese, Swan and Confidence.
2. If the artist enters more than one carving of the same species, both sexes must be represented.
3. Entries are to be made of wood; glass eyes are permitted and materials other than wood can be used in tails and crests.
4. Entries must float in a natural position but do not have to self-right.
5. Judging will be limited to the waterfowl floating in the tank only.
6. Any deterioration of the paint or structural integrity at the completion of judging will result in the disqualification of the entry.

## Division MG–Decorative Miniature Wildfowl

1. Entries must be one half lifesize or less.

## Divisions ME, MF and MG

1. Entries will be judged on Technique/Craftsmanship, Accuracy, Essence of Species, and Artistry and Overall Presentation.
2. Divisions MF and MG are divided into the following categories with species in each category judged against one another:  
Category 1: Waterfowl, Shorebirds, Wading Birds and Seabirds  
Category 2: Upland Game Birds, Birds of Prey  
Category 3: NP Land Birds and Songbirds

## Division MH–Interpretive Wood Sculpture

Entries will be judged on artistry, interpretation of the essence of the wildfowl and originality. A carving should emphasize form, content and movement rather than a realistic duplication of the wildfowl. It should be presented in a style that provokes thought and wonder.

1. Subject may be the entrant's choice from any wildfowl.
2. Entry is to be entirely of wood with the exception of the base and eyes. The base may be of other material and will be considered as part of the sculpture.
3. If a supporting pedestal under the base is needed, it must be provided by the artist and it will not be considered as part of the sculpture.
4. Interpretive Wood Sculpture entries have no size restrictions.



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# 2026 LEVELLED COMPETITION

## ADVANCED, INTERMEDIATE AND NOVICE

CARVERS MAY ENTER AT ONLY ONE LEVEL WITHIN ADVANCED, INTERMEDIATE, AND NOVICE. WORLD DIVISION COMPETITORS ENTERING ADDITIONAL PIECES MUST ENTER AT THE ADVANCED LEVEL OR, IF QUALIFIED, AT THE MASTERS LEVEL.

Any artist with an entry not suitable for tabletop display is required to notify the Ward Foundation by April 2, 2026.

### ADVANCED CLASS

REPRESENTS ADVANCED AMATEUR AND PROFESSIONAL CARVERS, INCLUDING THOSE WHO HAVE OBTAINED TOP RANKINGS IN COMPETITIONS.

#### ENTRY FEES

\$60 First entry, \$35 Each additional entry

### INTERMEDIATE CLASS

THE INTERMEDIATE CLASS INCLUDES CARVERS WHO HAVE ADVANCED BEYOND THE NOVICE LEVEL.

#### ENTRY FEES

\$35 First entry, \$15 Each additional entry

### NOVICE CLASS

THE NOVICE CLASS IS RESERVED FOR ENTRY-LEVEL CARVERS.

Species list, see page 34.

#### ENTRY FEES

\$20 First entry, \$10 Each additional entry

#### Divisions

E–Decorative Floating Lifesize Waterfowl

F–Decorative Lifesize Wildfowl

G–Decorative Miniature Wildfowl

H–Interpretive Wood Sculpture

J–Bench (Intermediate and Novice)

Entries must never have entered at the Ward World Championship before.



Divisions E, F, and G

Entries will be judged on:

Technique/Craftsmanship, Accuracy, Essence of the Species, Artistry, and Overall Presentation.

1. ADVANCED and INTERMEDIATE entries must be original in design and concept. Work done directly from study birds, published patterns or a classroom project will NOT be considered as original in design and concept. If after judging it is determined that this policy has been ignored, the award will be rescinded. NOVICE carvers will be permitted to enter carvings created from published patterns. Entries created from study birds or classroom projects will not be permitted except in bench. Originality continues to be strongly encouraged.

2. Entries are to be made of wood. Other materials may be used for habitat and structural purposes; however, they are to be hand formed with the exception of eyes.

3. Novice only- Although hand-formed feet and legs are encouraged, novice carvers are permitted to use cast feet and legs.

4. Novice only – Although hand-formed habitat is encouraged, it is not required.

5. Name of the artist should not be visible.

### Division E–Decorative Lifesize Floating Waterfowl

1. Entries must be life sized.

2. If the artist enters more than one carving of the same species, both sexes must be represented.

3. Materials other than wood can be used in tails and crests.

4. Entries must float in a natural position but do not have to self-right.

5. Judging will be limited to the waterfowl floating in the tank only.

6. Any deterioration of the paint or structural integrity at the completion of judging will result in the disqualification of the entry.

### Division F–Decorative Lifesize Wildfowl

Entries must be life sized.

### Division G–Decorative Miniature Wildfowl

Entries must be one half lifesize or less. The Ward Museum reserves the right to move entries deemed too large for miniature to the bench class.





# 2026 LEVELED COMPETITION

## Division H—Interpretive Wood Sculpture

Entries will be judged on craftsmanship, artistry, interpretation of the essence of the wildfowl and originality. A carving should emphasize form, content and movement rather than a realistic duplication of the wildfowl. It should be presented in a style that provokes thought and wonder

1. Subject may be entrant's choice from any wildfowl.
2. Entry is to be entirely of wood with the exception of the base and eyes. The base may be of other material and will be considered as part of the sculpture.
3. If a supporting pedestal under the base is needed, it must be provided by the artist and it will not be considered as part of the sculpture.
4. Interpretive Wood Sculpture entries have no size restrictions.

## Division J—Bench (Intermediate and Novice Only)

This division is reserved for the entries that do not meet the rules for any other division. Classroom carvings, group projects with a group leader, and carvings from cast study birds are permitted only in this division and should be identified as such. Entries will be divided into four major categories: waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, and all other wildfowl.

1. Entries must be made of wood or cork. Glass eyes are permitted.
2. Waterfowl entries will not be floated during judging

### NOVICE/INTERMEDIATE

#### E—Decorative Lifesize Floating Waterfowl

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
33 Species	ribbon	ribbon	ribbon
3 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Marsh Ducks, Diving Ducks, Geese & Confidence Decoys			
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette

#### F—Decorative Lifesize Wildfowl

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
8 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Waterfowl, Shorebirds and Wading Birds, Seabirds, Upland Game Birds, Birds of Prey, NP Land Birds, Songbirds A, Songbirds B			
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette

## AWARDS/ADVANCED

### E—Decorative Lifesize Floating Waterfowl

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
33 Species	ribbon	ribbon	ribbon
3 Categories	\$100	\$50	\$25
	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Marsh Ducks, Diving Ducks, Geese & Confidence Decoys			
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	\$400	\$200	\$100
	rosette	rosette	rosette

### F—Decorative Lifesize Wildfowl

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
8 Categories	\$100	\$50	\$25
	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Waterfowl, Shorebirds and Wading Birds, Seabirds, Upland Game Birds, Birds of Prey, NP Land Birds, Songbirds A, Songbirds B			
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	\$400	\$200	\$100
	rosette	rosette	rosette

### G—Decorative Miniature Wildfowl

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
8 Categories	\$100	\$50	\$25
Waterfowl, Shorebirds and Wading Birds, Seabirds, Upland Game Birds, Birds of Prey, NP Land Birds, Songbirds A, Songbirds B			
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	\$400	\$200	\$100
	rosette	rosette	rosette

### H—Interpretive Wood Sculpture

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	\$400	\$200	\$100
	rosette	rosette	rosette

### NOVICE/INTERMEDIATE

#### G—Decorative Miniature Wildfowl

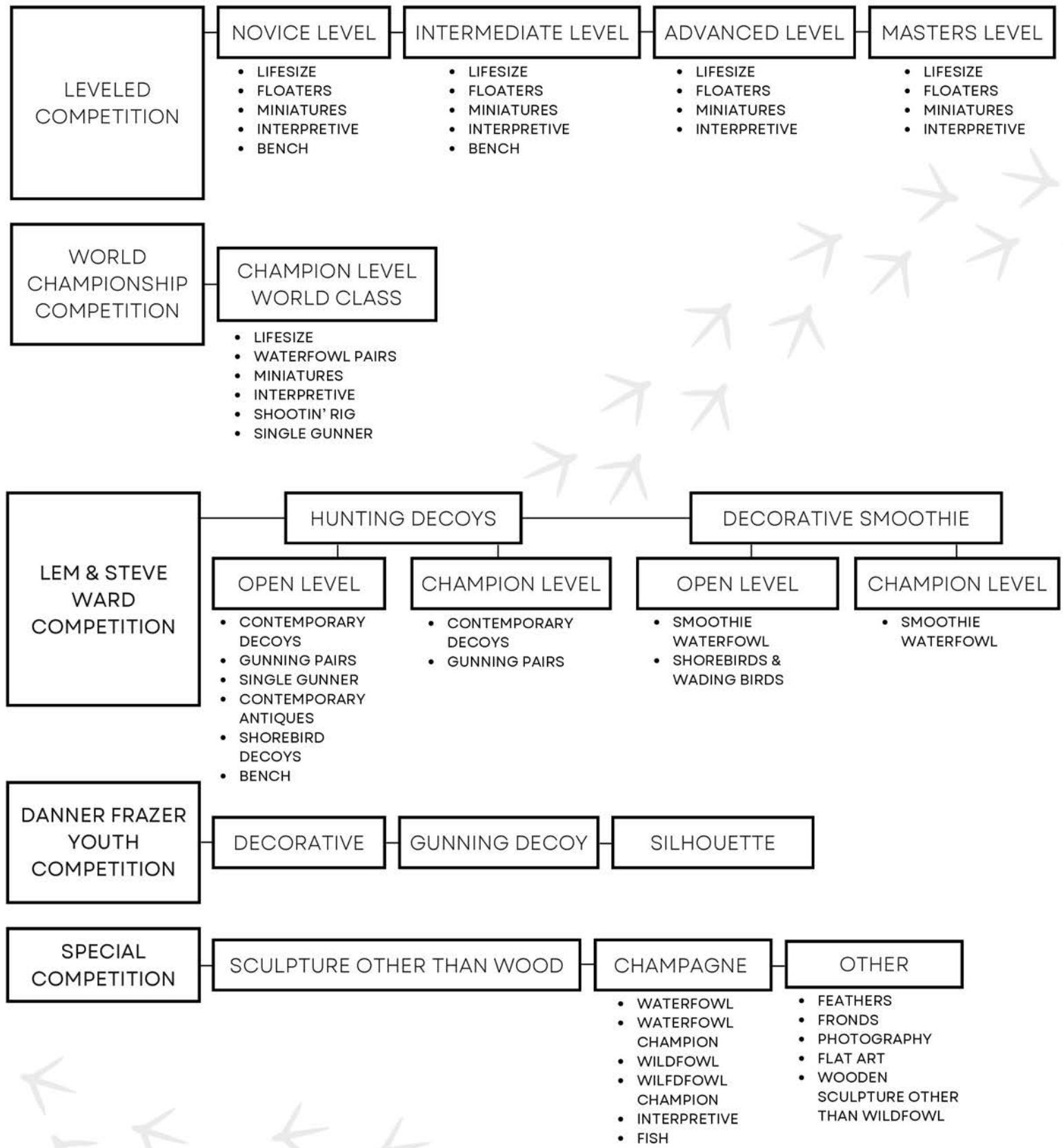
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
8 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Waterfowl, Shorebirds and Wading Birds, Seabirds, Upland Game Birds, Birds of Prey, NP Land Birds, Songbirds A, Songbirds B			
	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette

#### H—Interpretive Wood Sculpture

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette



# 2026 COMPETITION LEVELS & DIVISIONS





44TH ANNUAL

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## WARD BROTHERS WORKSHOP

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June: 13<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup>

July: 11<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>

August: 8<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>nd</sup>

September 5<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

September: 9<sup>th</sup>

October: 3<sup>rd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup>

See our ad on page 23



Easton, MD

January 2026

## Carvers wanted! APPLY TODAY

Easton, MD. The Waterfowl Festival, a celebration of the outdoor heritage of Maryland's Eastern Shore, is looking for a few good carvers! All ages are welcome to apply to be a part of our extraordinary 55<sup>th</sup> year celebration. Since our founding in 1971 by Dr. Harry Walsh (author of *The Outlaw Gunner*) and Bill Perry we have donated over six million dollars to conservation and education. You can join us in our efforts!

### The People

Whether you do traditional or ornamental carving, everyone is welcome to join us at the 55<sup>th</sup> Festival. If you are a collector or active carver, there are spots for you to share your passion with others.



Image: Kanner Mertz, Star Democrat 2025

### The Event

The 55<sup>th</sup> Annual Waterfowl Festival will take place November 15-26, 2026 in Easton MD. Venues range from high-end art galleries to casual buy-sell-swap rooms. Last year's festival attracted 35,000 people from 45 states - next year we expect the same success!

[waterfowlfestival.org](http://waterfowlfestival.org)

### Vendors wanted!

There are four venues at the festival to consider. They include the Fine Arts Pavilions, The Chesapeake Room at the Waterfowl Building, Easton High School (Buy Sell Swap), and the Marshland Mercantile! Contact our office today to inquire about your options! 410-822-4567.



Vendor portals will be listed here as they open:  
<https://waterfowlfestival.org/exhibitor-applications/>

# 2026 FISH COMPETITION

## ENTRY FEES

**\$35 First entry, \$15 Each additional entry**

Open to all levels of carvers.

## Divisions FD & FM - Decorative Lifesize Division (FD) & Decorative Miniature Division (FM)

- The entry will consist of one or more fish of any species with an emphasis on creating innovative and artistic compositions.
- Entries are to be made of wood. Other materials may be used for habitat and structural purposes; however, they are to be hand-formed except for the eyes. Pre-painted eyes of glass, plastic, or other materials may be used and are eligible.
- Entries for the Miniature Division must be one-half size or less than 8 inches or less in every dimension for the fish only. Both criteria must be met.
- Large fish may compete in the Decorative Lifesize Division as a reduced version, provided the carved fish(es) are at least 18 inches in length. There is no maximum size. For example, a 12-foot, 600-pound marlin or a 6-foot, 80-pound chinook Salmon would be carved so that the minimum size is 18 inches and reflects the mature anatomy of the life-size fish.
- 2 Categories - Freshwater and Saltwater

## FI Division - Interpretive Wood Sculpture

Entries will be judged on craftsmanship, artistry, interpretation of the essence of the fish, and originality. A carving should emphasize form, content, and movement rather than a realistic duplication of the aquatic life. It should be presented in a style that provokes thought and wonder.

- Subject may be entrant's choice from any fish/aquatic life.
- Entry is to be entirely of wood with the exception of the base and eyes. The base may be of other material and will be considered as part of the sculpture.
- If a supporting pedestal under the base is needed, it must be provided by the artist and it will not be considered as part of the sculpture.
- Interpretive Wood Sculpture entries have no size restrictions.

## FA Division - Aquatic Life other than Fish

- The entry will consist of one or more aquatic life species with an emphasis on creating innovative and artistic compositions.
- Entries are to be made of wood. Other materials may be used for habitat and structural purposes; however, they are to be hand-formed except for the eyes. Pre-painted eyes of glass, plastic, or other materials may be used and are eligible.
- Entries have no size limit. Can be lifesize or miniature.
- 3 Categories - Mammals that live in the water, Life with a shell, and all others.

## AWARDS

FD-Decorative Lifesize

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
2 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Freshwater, Saltwater			

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette

FM-Decorative Miniature

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
2 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Freshwater, Saltwater			

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette

FI - Interpretive Wood Sculpture

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette

FA - Aquatic Life other than Fish

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
3 Categories.	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Mammals that live in the water, Life with a shell, and all others			
Best in Division	rosette	rosette.	rosette

## FRESHWATER FISH

1. Trout, Salmon, and Char: Brown, rainbow, brook, cutthroat, golden, grayling, chars, and all salmon species.
2. Other Freshwater Game Fish: All bass, pike, muskie, walleye. Panfish such as crappie, perch, bluegill, and sunfish.
3. Miscellaneous Freshwater Fish: Includes all other freshwater

fish not classified elsewhere including such species as gar, sturgeon, carp, catfish, paddlefish, shad.

## SALTWATER FISH

Any division that has a saltwater category can have classes

established for the following groups if there are three or more

fishes of these groups represented.

1. Tropical reef fish: Includes wrasses, butterflys, angels, damselfish, squirrelfish, groupers, eels, and other primarily reef-dwelling species.
2. Offshore game fish: Includes bluefish, dolphin, mahi mahi, mackerels, tunas, dories, jacks, and billfish.
3. Coastal game fish: Includes striped bass, bonefish, tarpon, permit, redfish, sea trout, weakfish, snook, and bonita.
4. Miscellaneous saltwater fish: Includes all sharks, rays, flounder, halibut, seahorse.



# 2026 YOUTH COMPETITION

## A. DANNER FRAZER YOUTH COMPETITION

### DECORATIVE, GUNNING DECOY, SILHOUETTE

THIS COMPETITION IS TO ENCOURAGE YOUTH TO BECOME ENGAGED IN THE ART FORM OF WILDFOWL CARVING, PROVIDE A VENUE TO PRESENT THEIR CARVINGS TO THE PUBLIC AND GIVE THEM THE COMPETITION EXPERIENCE. ENTRIES MAY BE DONE UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF AN ADULT, BUT THE YOUTH MUST DO THE CARVING AND PAINTING. DIVISIONS WILL BE DIVIDED INTO CATEGORIES AND CATEGORIES INTO SPECIES IF THERE ARE THREE OR MORE NUMBER OF ENTRIES.

#### ENTRY FEES

\$5 Per entry - Sponsored by Gary and Pam Stenger

#### Division YD - Decorative Wildfowl

Each age group will be judged 1st, 2nd and 3rd Best in Division.

YD1 - 16-17 years of age at time of registration

YD2 - 12-15 years of age at time of registration

YD3 - 11 and under years of age at time of registration

1. Prior entries into World Youth Competition are not permitted.
2. Entries are to be lifesize or less, realistic or interpretive in nature.
3. Decorative Waterfowl will not be floated.
4. Entries must be made of wood. Glass eyes are permitted. Other materials are permitted for habitat and structural purposes. Hand-formed habitat is encouraged but not required.

#### Division - YG Gunning Decoy

Entries will be reviewed for compliance prior to floating. The final judging of entries as gunning decoys shall be conducted while entries are floating on the bay at a minimum distance of 20 feet. Once set, decoys shall remain at anchor for the duration of judging. This division will be divided into three categories: Marsh Ducks; Diving Ducks; and Geese, Swan and Confidence.

YG1 - 15-17 years of age at time of registration

YG2 - 14 and under years of age at time of registration

1. Prior entries into competition at the World Championship are not permitted.
2. Carving should be simplistic without fragile areas. No highly defined wings or undercut feathers.



3. Entries must have 6 feet of line and an anchor. Decoys will be floated in the bay under natural conditions.
4. Painting should be simplistic. Combing and scratching are permitted.
5. Decoys must self right from any position except geese and confidence decoys which must right from the side.
6. Entries are to be made of wood, cork or stretched canvas; glass eyes are permitted and materials other than wood can be used in fragile tails and crests.
7. If entry is determined to be inappropriate for Gunning Division, it will be transferred to Decorative Division.



## YOUTH AWARDS

YD - Decorative Wildfowl: YD1, YD2, YD3

FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Rosette	Rosette	Rosette

Division YG - Gunning Decoy: YG1, YG2

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
3 Categories	Rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Division	Rosette	Rosette	Rosette
	Plaque		

Division YS - Silhouette: YS1, YS2, YS3

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Silhouette	Rosette	Rosette	Rosette
	Plaque		

Division YSCA - Silhouette: YSCA1, YSCA2, YSCA3

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Silhouette	Rosette	Rosette	Rosette
	Plaque		

#### THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS!

- Entry fees provided by Gary and Pam Stenger
- Silhouette Division supported by the Habbart Dean Memorial Fund

# 2026 YOUTH COMPETITION

## Division YS - Silhouette: Redhead

Entries in this division can be done either as a group project or as an individual. One entry per person. Each age group will be judged 1st, 2nd and 3rd Best in Group.

YS1- 16-17 years of age at time of registration

YS2 - 12-15 years of age at time of registration

YS3 - 11 and under years of age at time of registration

1. Entries are to be made of wood, one inch thick or less and may be lifesize or less in size.
2. Edges may be rounded; wing and bill definition permitted.
3. Glass eyes are permitted.
4. Must be mounted on a simple base with a wood or metal dowel.
5. Entries should be realistically painted.



## Division YSCA - Silhouette: Redhead

Entries in this division can be done either as a group project or as an individual. One entry per person. Each age group will be judged 1st, 2nd and 3rd Best in Group.

YSCA1- 16-17 years of age at time of registration

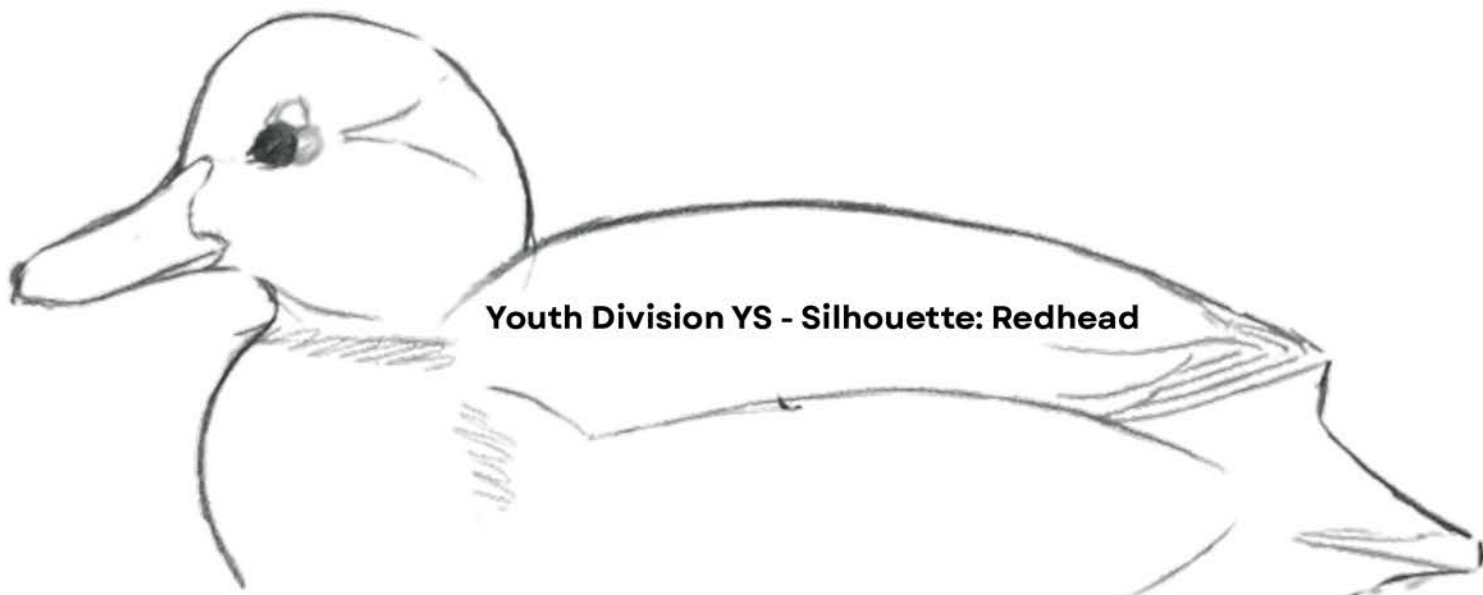
YSCA2 - 12-15 years of age at time of registration

YSCA3 - 11 and under years of age at time of registration

1. Entries are to be made of wood, one inch thick or less and may be lifesize or less in size.
2. Edges may be rounded; wing and bill definition permitted.
3. Glass eyes are permitted.
4. Must be mounted on a simple base with a wood or metal dowel.
5. Entries should be painted in the style of a contemporary antique.

## For Youth Flat Art See Flat Art Rules

Youth will be divided into two age groups: 15-17 and 14 and under.





*See where it all started...*



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FOR MORE THAN 50 YEARS, THE CARVING TEAM OF STEVE WARD AND LEMUEL T. WARD CREATED HUNTING DECOYS AND DECORATIVE BIRD CARVINGS WHICH ELEVATED THEM TO WORLD-RENOUNDED STATUS AS MASTERS OF "WATERFOWL COUNTERFEITERS" AND THE FATHERS OF DECORATIVE DECOY CARVING.



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Also, be sure to visit the Tawes Museum to view the film, "Nature's Counterfeiters," and to see many original carvings by the Ward Brothers and other Crisfield carvers. The museum is located at 3 Ninth St., Crisfield, Maryland 21817.

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# 2026 LEM & STEVE WARD COMPETITION

## HUNTING DECOYS

### ENTRY FEES

\$35 First entry; \$15 Each additional entry

VIEW THE EVOLUTION OF DECOY CARVING THROUGH THE DIVISIONS OF THE LEM AND STEVE COMPETITION.

### Divisions

CA – Contemporary Antiques

CD, CDC –Contemporary Decoys

GP, GPC–Gunning Pair

SD–Shorebird Decoy

JB–Bench

Prior entries into competition at the World Championship are not permitted.

**Divisions CD, CDC, GP, GPC** - Waterfowl are to be made of wood, cork or stretched canvas; glass eyes are permitted and materials other than wood can be used in fragile tails and crests.

### **Division CD & CDC–Contemporary Decoy**

Entries are modern contest grade decoys, judged on form and function.

This division is divided into two levels, CD and CD Champion (CDC). The rules for each level are the same. CD is open to all except for those who qualify for the Champion level.

The Champion level will be divided into three categories: Marsh Ducks; Diving Ducks; and Geese, Swan, and Confidence. Anyone who has placed in a World division, competes at the Masters level or has won two best in shows at the World in CD must enter the Champion level. Anyone can choose to enter CDC, but once they have competed at the CDC level they cannot return to the regular CD.

1. Decoys will be floated in the tanks and must self-right from any position, except Geese, Swan and Confidence, which must right only from their side(s). All entries will be judged for stability and proper floatation.
2. Carvings must have sturdy tails and all raised wings must be durable.
3. No burning or fine stoned texturing is allowed. However, simulated texture using gesso, modeling paste, or texture paint in combination with combing, scratching, or brushing is acceptable. Minimal carving techniques used to simulate feather texture on heads, i.e. merganser heads, are acceptable.

4. Painting techniques shall be typical of a modern functional decoy. Entries may include some simple blending of feather edges and internal markings, feather splits, highlighting and hand vermiculation. (Carvings with fully developed decorative painting should be entered into Smoothie Waterfowl.)

5. Any deterioration of the paint or structural integrity at the completion of judging will result in the disqualification of the entry.

The Washington Brant Foundation is sponsoring a Purchase Prize for Best in Species – Brant in both CD and CDC categories. By entering these categories, artists acknowledge that the First Place Brant winner in CD and CDC will become the property of the category sponsor.

### **Division SG, GP & GPC–Single Gunner and Gunning Pairs**

This Division emphasizes simplicity and most resembles the functional tool of the decoy maker. Entries will be reviewed for compliance with rules before floating. Thereafter the judges will remain on the judge's platform until the judging is complete. The final judging of entries as functional decoys shall be conducted while entries are floating on the bay at a minimum distance of 20 feet. Once set, decoys will remain at anchor for the duration of judging. This division will be divided into two levels, GP and GP Champion (GPC). The rules for each level are the same. GP is open to all except for those who qualify for the Champion level.

The Champion level will be divided into three Categories: Marsh Ducks; Diving Ducks; and Geese, Swan, and Confidence. Anyone who has placed in a World division or competes at the Masters level or has won 2 best in shows in CD or GP must enter the Champion level. Anyone can choose to enter GPC, but once they have competed in GPC level they cannot return to the regular GP.

1. Carving and painting should be functional enough to be used as tools for hunting. NO undercut feathers.
2. Decoys will be floated and must self-right from any position, except Geese, Swan and Confidence, which must right only from their side(s). All entries will be judged for stability and proper floatation.
3. Entries must be tandem rigged with 2-3 feet of line between decoys and must have 6 feet of line and a weight. They will be floated in the bay under natural conditions.





# 2026 LEM & STEVE WARD COMPETITION

4. Carvings must be hen and drake of the same species and should be life size or over sized with no preference shown by judges. \*Exception of Single Gunner.
5. No burning or fine stoned texturing is allowed. However, simulated texture using gesso, modeling paste, or texture paint in combination with combing, scratching, or brushing is acceptable. Minimal carving techniques used to simulate feather texture on heads, i.e. merganser heads, are acceptable.
6. Simplicity of painting is required.
7. Any deterioration of the paint or structural integrity at the completion of judging will result in the disqualification of the entry.

## Division CA—Contemporary Antique

Decoys will be judged in hand to include all surfaces and attachments. Contemporary Antique will be divided into 10 categories representing Pristine for antique style pieces which have not been subjected to any field use with minimal wear and patina permitted and Worn for pieces which have received heavy field use in which moderate to severe deterioration is apparent. There will be five categories each for Pristine and Worn: Marsh Ducks, Diving Ducks, Geese and Confidence, Shorebirds and All Others.

1. Entries can be inspired by old decoys from geographic areas but must be the carver's original design and interpretation of an 'old' decoy.
2. Entries will be a single decoy. Multiple birds, waterfowling memorabilia, and "copies" are not permitted.

3. All entries must be signed and dated.
4. Decoys should be made to look old by the manner in which they are carved, painted, and finished.
5. Shorebirds and Wading Birds must be mounted on a dowel and have a simple base.

## Division SD—Shorebird Decoy

Entries are contemporary shorebird decoys that emphasize the simplicity of line and paint. The division is divided into seven categories.

1. Entries will be a single decoy constructed of either wood or cork with no preference shown by the judges.
2. Separation between wings and tail is permitted providing both are durable.
3. Simplicity of painting is required.
4. Must be mounted on a simple base with a wood or metal dowel. \*Exception Single Gunner may be either sex.

## Division JB—Bench

This division is reserved for the entries that do not meet the rules for any other division. Classroom carvings, group projects with a group leader and carvings from CAST STUDY BIRDS ARE permitted in this division. Entries will be divided into four categories: waterfowl, shorebirds, songbirds, and all other wildfowl.

1. Entries must be made of wood or cork. Glass eyes are permitted.
2. Waterfowl entries will not be floated during judging.
3. Entries will not be considered as gunning decoys, therefore may be textured.



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# 2026 LEM & STEVE WARD COMPETITION

## AWARDS

### CD—Contemporary Decoy

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
31 Species	ribbon	ribbon	ribbon
3 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette
Best Brant Award** \$500	rosette		

### CDC—Contemporary Decoy Champion

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
3 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Division	\$400 rosette	\$200 rosette	\$100 rosette
Best Brant Award** \$1000	rosette		

### SG—Single Gunner

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
31 Species	ribbon	ribbon	ribbon
3 Categories	rosette	rosette	rosette
Best in Division	\$150 rosette	\$100 rosette	\$50 rosette

### GP—Gunning Pairs

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
31 Species	ribbon	ribbon	ribbon
3 Categories	rosette	rosette	rosette
Best in Division	\$300 rosette	\$200 rosette	\$100 rosette

### GPC—Gunning Pairs Champion

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
3 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Division	\$400 rosette	\$200 rosette	\$100 rosette

### CA—Contemporary Antique

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
10 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Division	\$300 rosette	\$200 rosette	\$100 rosette

### SD—Shorebird Decoy

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
7 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Division	\$300 rosette	\$200 rosette	\$100 rosette

### JB—Bench

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
4 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette

\*\*indicates a PURCHASE AWARD



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# 2026 LEM & STEVE WARD COMPETITION

## DECORATIVE SMOOTHIE

This competition challenges the artist to capture the essence of the species via form and paint. Only the bird will be judged, feet and habitat will not be considered. Entries are non-textured carvings done to the artist's highest abilities. The carving will be judged for the likeness and essence of species and artistry. SW and SS are to be lifesize.

Prior entries into competition at the World Championship are not permitted.

### Divisions

SW, SWC—Decorative Smoothie Waterfowl

SS—Decorative Smoothie Shorebirds and Wading Birds

### Division SW & SWC – Decorative Smoothie Waterfowl

This division will be divided into two levels, SW and SW Champion (SWC). The rules for each are the same. SW is open to all except those who must enter SW Champion.

The Champion level will be divided into three categories: Marsh Ducks; Diving Ducks; and Geese, Swan and Confidence. Anyone may choose to enter the Champion level, but anyone who has placed in a World Division, competes at the Masters or CD Champion level, or has won two best of divisions in Decorative Smoothie Waterfowl must enter the Champion level.

1. Entries will be a single decoy made of wood; glass eyes are permitted and materials other than wood can be used in fragile tails and crests.
2. Entries can either be flat-bottomed or have a keel. Preference will not be given to either by the judges.
3. Sturdy tails are not required. Realism and creative postures are encouraged.
4. Decorative painting to the artist's highest ability, i.e. barbles, translucence and shading are encouraged.
5. No burning, stoning or fine texturing is allowed.
6. Groups of feathers can be defined, i.e. tertials, scapulars, sidepockets, etc.

## 2.Division SS - Decorative Smoothie Shorebirds and Wading Birds

1. Entries must be made of wood. Glass eyes are permitted.  
Realism and creative postures are encouraged.
3. Decorative painting to the artist's highest ability is encouraged.
4. No burning or fine texturing is allowed.
5. The name of the species must be written on the bottom of the base.
6. Groups of feathers can be defined.

### AWARDS

#### SW—Decorative Smoothie Waterfowl

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
31 Species	ribbon	ribbon	ribbon
3 Categories	rosette	rosette	rosette
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette

#### SWC—Smoothie Waterfowl Champion

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
3 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Division	\$400 rosette	\$200 rosette	\$100 rosette

#### SS—Decorative Smoothie Shorebirds and Wading Birds

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
10 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Division	\$400 rosette	\$200 rosette	\$100 rosette

## Thank you to our sponsors!

(At time of Print)

- The Washington Brant Foundation
- Sharp Gas and Energy sponsors the Contemporary Antique Division.
- Knotts Knives sponsors the Gunning Pairs Division
- Tom Christie, John Day, Karl & Deb Yankey
- Maryland Folklife Network
- Maryland State Arts Council

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WARDWORLDS.ORG!**

# 2026 SPECIAL COMPETITIONS

## ENTRY FEES

**\$35 First entry, \$15 Each additional entry**

## CHAMPAGNE DIVISION

This competition challenges the artist to capture the essence of the species via form and paint. Entries are non-textured carvings done to the artist's highest abilities. The carving will be judged for the likeness and essence of species and artistry. All carvings must fit within a 3 1/2 inch circle (including bases) and must be no taller than 7 inches. CW and CWC are floated in a small tank. **BEST IN DIVISION FROM EACH WILL BE AUCTIONED, by entering you agree to this.**

Prior entries into competition at the World Championship are not permitted.

### Divisions

CW, CWC—Champagne Waterfowl & Champagne Waterfowl Champion

NCW, NCWC—Champagne Wildfowl & Champagne Wildfowl Champion

CI—Champagne Interpretive

CF—Champagne Fish

## Division CW & CWC - Floating - Champagne Waterfowl Division

Entries will be divided into four categories: Marsh Ducks, Diving Ducks, Geese, Swan and Confidence and Pelagic and Coastal Seabirds. This division will be divided into two levels, CW and CW Champion. The rules for each are the same. CW is open to all except those who must enter CW Champion. Anyone can choose to enter the Champion level, but anyone who has placed in a World Division; competes at the Masters, CD or SW Champion level; or has won two best of divisions in Champagne Waterfowl must enter the Champion level. Once a person has entered CWC, they are not eligible to return to CW.

1. Entries must fit within a 3 1/2 inch circle.
2. Entries must float properly but do not have to self-right.
3. Entries can be either flat bottom or with a keel; the judges will not give preference to either.
4. Entries must be smooth. Groups of feathers can be defined, i.e. tertials, scapulars, side pockets, etc. No texturing is allowed.
5. There are no restrictions on paint.

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**For more information or to join:**

chad.tragakis@gmail.com • (703) 593-3024





# 2026 SPECIAL COMPETITIONS

## Division NCW & NCWC - Non-Floating – Champagne Wildfowl Division

Entries will be divided into categories: Songbirds, Raptors, Shorebirds, and Water birds and perching birds excluding ducks and geese. This division will be divided into two levels, NCW and NCW Champion. The rules for each are the same. NCW is open to all except those who must enter NCW Champion. Anyone can choose to enter the Champion level, but anyone who has placed in a World Division; competes at the Masters, CD or SW Champion level; or has won two best of divisions in Champagne Waterfowl must enter the Champion level. Once a person has entered NCWC, they are not eligible to return to NCW.

1. Entries must fit within a 3 1/2 inch circle.
2. Entries should be in realistic positions with feet. May be mounted on bases to enhance sculptural effects; the judges will not give preference to either.
3. Entries must be smooth. Groups of feathers can be defined, i.e. tertials, scapulars, side pockets, etc. No texturing is allowed.
4. There are no restrictions on paint.
5. Entries DO NOT need to float.

## DIVISION CI - CHAMPAGNE INTERPRETIVE

Entries will be judged on artistry, interpretation of the essence of the wildfowl, and originality. A carving should emphasize form, content, and movement rather than a realistic duplication of the wildfowl. It should be presented in a style that provokes thought and wonder. Natural finish ONLY.

1. Entries must fit within a 3 1/2-inch circle, this includes the base.
2. Subject may be entrant's choice from any wildfowl.
3. Entry is to be entirely of wood with the exception of the structural elements. The base may be of other materials and will be considered as part of the sculpture.
4. If a supporting pedestal under the base is needed, it must be provided by the artist and it will not be considered part of the sculpture. Must also fit in the 3 1/2 inch circle/cylinder (Height limit of 7 inches tall).



## DIVISION CF - CHAMPAGNE FISH

Champagne Fish Division Entries will be divided into categories: Freshwater and Saltwater. The rules for each are the same. CF is open to all.

1. Entries must fit within a 3 1/2 inch circle.
2. Entries should be realistic. May be mounted on bases to enhance sculptural effects; the judges will not give preference to either.
3. Anatomical features can be defined. Texturing is encouraged.
4. There are no restrictions on paint.
5. Entries DO NOT need to float.

### AWARDS

#### CWC & NCWC Floating & Non-Floating

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
4 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Division	\$800* rosette	\$250 rosette	\$100 rosette

#### CW & NCW Floating & Non-Floating

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
4 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Division	\$400* rosette	\$150 rosette	\$75 rosette

#### CI - CHAMPAGNE INTERPRETIVE

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	\$250* rosette	rosette	rosette

#### CF - CHAMPAGNE FISH

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
2 Categories	rosette	ribbon	ribbon
Best in Division	\$250* rosette	rosette	rosette

\* Purchase Award





# 2026 SPECIAL COMPETITIONS

## SCULPTURE OTHER THAN WOOD

### ENTRY FEES

\$75 First entry, \$35 Each additional entry

1. Any sculpture that has not been entered into a prior World Championship may be entered into competition.
2. Wildlife sculptures must be original in design and concept and may either be wildfowl or wildlife in subject matter.
3. Sculpture may be lifesize or miniature, realistic or interpretive in nature.
4. Artists may enter more than one sculpture.
5. Sculptures are to be of materials other than wood.
6. A variety of finishing techniques may be utilized.
7. No casting from real wildlife is permitted.

### AWARDS

#### AS - SCULPTURE DIVISION

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	\$400	\$200	\$100
	rosette	rosette	rosette

## FEATHERS

### ENTRY FEES

\$50 First entry, \$35 Each additional entry

1. Use means and materials that would provide a lifelike feather, provided that the feather itself is made out of wood.
2. The quill, shaft and down can be painted to emulate the feather you are representing.
3. PLEASE DO NOT BRING YOUR MODEL FEATHER.

### AWARDS

#### FE- FEATHERS

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	\$200	ribbon	ribbon
	rosette		

## FRONDS

### ENTRY FEES

\$50 First entry, \$35 Each additional entry

1. Major portion of entry must be made of palm frond.
2. The challenge is to portray the "essence of species" of your subject while retaining as much of the character of the palm frond as possible.
3. Palm fronds will be judged on the table.

### AWARDS

#### FR- FRONDS

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	\$200	ribbon	ribbon
	rosette		

## PHOTOGRAPHY

### ENTRY FEES

- \$25 First entry (2 photos) ; \$5 Each additional entry
1. Two categories: Birds and Nature
  2. Photos must be printed (largest side maximum 24 inches). No frame or matting
  3. Images: All photographs must have been taken by the entrant on or after January 1, 2012, and accurately reflect the subject as it appeared in the viewfinder/LCD. Nothing can be added to the image, and nothing can be removed from the image aside from dust spots. Normal processing of image files, including global and localized tonal adjustments, saturation, color balance, sharpening, noise reduction, black and white conversion, HDR, and focus stacking, is acceptable. AI editing is highly discouraged.

The following are not eligible for entry:

- Previously published photographs for which exclusive rights were granted to the publisher or someone else.
- Photographs that violate or infringe on another person's rights, including but not limited to copyright and the privacy rights of persons in the photographs.
- Photographs that involve the harassment of wildlife or damage to the environment or involves putting any individual or animal in danger.
- Photographs that contain nude or obscene images not fit for a minor to view.
- Photographs that have placed (Best through honorable mention, including people's choice) in a past Ward Museum Photo Festival or the Art in Nature Photo Festival.

The eligibility of an image will be determined initially by Ward Foundation staff. Their decision to exclude an image will be made at their sole discretion.



**2022 Ward Museum Photo Festival Best in Birds -  
The Raven by Heather Orkis**



# 2026 SPECIAL COMPETITIONS

## All FLAT ART Intellectual Property Rights:

Photographers/Artists retain all their rights to any photograph/Art entered into the competition and show. However, all entrants (or their parent or guardian), by entering an image, grant the Ward Foundation, Inc. a royalty-free, non-exclusive right to display the photograph/art in the festival and on its social media channels.

If an entered photograph/art wins or places (Best in Show to Honorable Mention) in any category of any division, the photographer/artist or their guardian grants the Ward Foundation, Inc., by acceptance of the award, a high-resolution digital copy of the image and royalty-free, non-exclusive rights to:

- Display the photograph/art at the Ward World Championship and on its website, and to use the photograph in any of the Foundation's educational programs, publications, fundraising, advertising, e-mails, social media outreach efforts, and other activities;
  - Allow third parties to share the photograph on social media;
  - Provide the photograph to other individuals and organizations for Ward Foundation-related use in news stories, newsletters, reports, slide shows, displays, web pages, videos, and other; and
  - Use the artist's/photographer's name, city, and state in promotions and other activities in connection with any of the above activities,
  - The Ward Foundation will endeavor to credit all photographs/artwork with your full name and copyright date for winning photographs/artworks. The name, city, and state of a winning entry in the Youth division will be requested from a parent or guardian before publishing the name of any Youth division winner.
- General Terms: By entering the contest, you agree to release and hold harmless the Ward Foundation, Ward Foundation, affiliates, subsidiaries, and parent entities, and all officers, directors, employees, agents, judges, online platform, and volunteers from any claim or cause resulting from your participation in the Ward World Championship competition. You waive the right to claim any attorneys' fees and any damages whatsoever, including, but not limited to, punitive, consequential, direct, or indirect damages. You also agree to hold harmless the Ward Foundation, affiliates, subsidiaries, and parent entities, and all officers, directors, employees, agents, judges, online platforms, and volunteers from any intellectual or privacy claims or causes arising from entered images. You also agree that all of your and sponsor's obligations under these rules and the construction, validity, interpretation, and enforceability of these rules will be governed by the laws of the State of Maryland without giving effect to any choice of law or conflict of law rules which would cause the application of the laws of any jurisdiction other than Maryland.

## FLAT ART ENTRY FEES

**\$25 First entry; \$10 Each additional entry**

### PAINTING

- Artwork must be wildfowl-related in subject matter.
- Flat artwork only; no three-dimensional or sculptural pieces.
- Maximum size: 24 inches (on the longest side).
- No frames permitted.
- Matting/backing is allowed for stabilization only (no glass).
- Artwork will be displayed on mobile walls using Velcro; please ensure your piece can accommodate this method.
- Any paint medium is acceptable (oil, acrylic, watercolor, gouache, etc.).
- While every care will be taken, the event is not responsible for damage or loss to artwork.
- By entering, artists grant permission for the artwork to be photographed and used in future promotional materials (print, digital, and social media) related to the event.
- Artists retain full copyright and ownership of their work.

### INK & PENCIL SKETCHING

Categories: Color and Black & White

- Artwork must be wildfowl-related in subject matter.
- Two categories will be judged: Color and Black & White.
- Flat artwork only; no three-dimensional pieces.
- Maximum size: 24 inches (on the longest side).
- No frames permitted.
- Matting/backing is allowed for stabilization only (no glass).
- Artwork will be displayed on mobile walls using Velcro; please ensure your piece can accommodate this method.
- Acceptable media include ink, pencil, charcoal, graphite, colored pencil, and mixed dry media appropriate to the category.
- While every care will be taken, the event is not responsible for damage or loss to artwork.
- By entering, artists grant permission for the artwork to be photographed and used in future promotional materials (print, digital, and social media) related to the event.
- Artists retain full copyright and ownership of their work.

# 2026 SPECIAL COMPETITIONS

## MULTIMEDIA ART

- Artwork must be wildfowl-related in subject matter.
- Multimedia works are permitted and may include textured elements, layered materials, or mixed media techniques.
- Artwork must be wall-hung and suitable for display on mobile walls using Velcro.
- Maximum size: 24 inches (on the longest side).
- No frames permitted.
- Matting or backing is allowed for stabilization only (no glass).
- Artwork must be secure and lightweight enough to hang; pieces that cannot be safely mounted will not be accepted.
- While every care will be taken, the event is not responsible for damage or loss to artwork.
- By entering, artists grant permission for the artwork to be photographed and used in future promotional materials (print, digital, and social media) related to the event.
- Artists retain full copyright and ownership of their work.

## SCULPTURE OTHER THAN WILDFOWL

### ENTRY FEES

\$35 First entry, \$15 Each additional entry

- Any sculpture that has not been entered into a prior World Championship may be entered into competition.
- Wildlife sculptures must be original in design and concept and cannot be wildfowl or fish in subject matter.

- Sculpture may be lifesize or miniature, realistic or interpretive in nature.
- Artists may enter more than one sculpture.
- Sculptures are to be made of wood.

## WILDFOWL RELIEF ART

- Artwork must be wildfowl-related in subject matter.
- Relief artwork is permitted and may include carved, molded, or built-up elements that extend from a flat backing.
- Pieces must be secure, stable, and, if able to be hung, overly heavy or unstable works will not be displayed hanging; they will sit on a table.
- Maximum size: 24 inches (on the longest side).
- No frames permitted.
- Backing or mounting is allowed for stabilization only (no glass) if needed.
- While every care will be taken, the event is not responsible for damage or loss to artwork.
- By entering, artists grant permission for the artwork to be photographed and used in future promotional materials (print, digital, and social media) related to the event.
- Artists retain full copyright and ownership of their work.

## AWARDS

### PHOTO - PHOTOGRAPHY DIVISION (ADULT & YOUTH\*)

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette
2 Categories	ribbon	ribbon	ribbon

### WILDFOWL PAINTING DIVISION (ADULT & YOUTH)

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette

### WILDFOWL DRAWING DIVISION (ADULT & YOUTH\*)

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette
2 Categories*	ribbon	ribbon	ribbon

### WILDFOWL MIXED MEDIA DIVISION (ADULT & YOUTH)

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette



### DIGITAL ART DIVISION (ADULT & YOUTH)

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette

### WILDFOWL RELIEF DIVISION

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette

### WOODEN SCULPTURE OTHER THAN WILDFOWL

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette

(\*) indicated only one category for youth - WILDFOWL



# 2026 ANTIQUE DECOY CONTEST

## SAM DYKE MEMORIAL "OLD BIRD" ANTIQUE DECOY CONTEST

**ENTRY FEES - \$0**

**Donations welcome**

**Sponsored by The Delmarva Decoy Collectors Association**

Entries must be 50 years old or older and will be judged in the following categories:

- Folkiest Decoy
- Best New England Eider
- Best Canadian Carver Redhead Decoy
- East Coast Shorebirds
- Best Ward Brothers Decorative
- Best Working Ward Brother Decoy
- Best Southern Working Decoy
- Best Mid-West Working Decoy
- Best West Coast Decoy

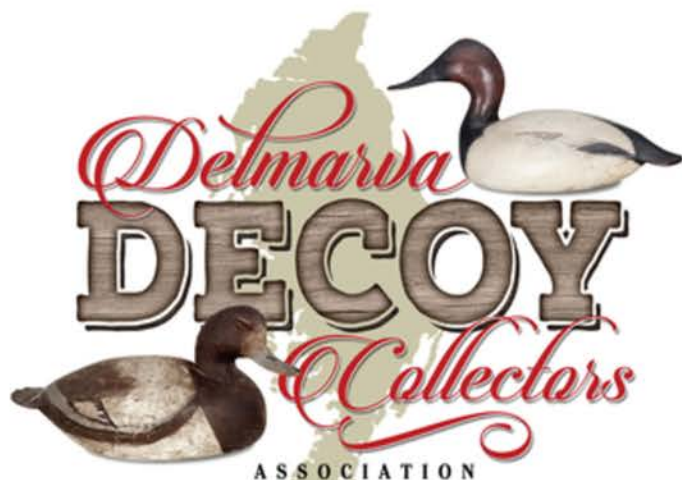
### AWARDS

SAM DYKE MEMORIAL "OLD BIRD" ANTIQUE DECOY CONTEST

	FIRST	SECOND	THIRD
Best in Division	rosette	rosette	rosette
10 Categories	ribbon	ribbon	ribbon

To enter this competition, you must:

- Register your decoys on Thursday or Friday during registration hours in the registration line.
- Pairs will be judged as a single entry.
- Agree to display entries during the show, allowing for entries to be photographed for the Ward Foundation and those photos to be shared.
- All decoys should be picked up at 3:00 pm on Sunday.



## JOIN OUR CLUB!

The **Delmarva Decoy Collectors Association** is a non-profit organization that promotes the knowledge, appreciation and collecting of vintage decoys and contemporary waterfowl carvings. Although our focus is on decoys made and used on the Delmarva Peninsula, we welcome members from all parts of the country!

### What the DDCA offers:

- ❖ Regular Monthly Meetings
- ❖ Special Collecting Events & Presentations
- ❖ Monthly Newsletters
- ❖ Guest Speakers
- ❖ Members-Only Facebook Group
- ❖ **ANNUAL DECOY SHOW**

### MEMBERSHIP DUES:

Only \$20 per year or \$50 for 3 years

### MEETINGS:

Held at Adam's Taphouse Grille in Fruitland the second Tuesday of each month

For more information, visit our website at  
**DelmarvaDecoyCollectors.com**



**Also Like Us on Facebook!**  
facebook.com/DelmarvaDecoyCollectorsAssociation



**Or call Burt Campbell at 302-750-0248**

# OFFICIAL SPECIES DESIGNATIONS

## **DIVISIONS CD, SW, AND GP- CONTEMPORARY**

### **DECOY, DECORATIVE SMOOTHIE WATERFOWL, AND GUNNING PAIR, DECORATIVE LIFESIZE FLOATING WATERFOWL**

#### **Marsh Ducks**

Black Duck  
Blue-winged Teal  
Cinnamon Teal  
Gadwall  
Green-winged Teal  
Mallard  
Northern Pintail  
Shoveler  
Wigeon  
Wood Duck  
All Other

#### **Diving Ducks**

Bufflehead  
Canvasback  
Common Merganser  
Eiders  
Goldeneyes  
Hooded Merganser  
Long-tailed Duck  
Red-breasted Merganser  
Redhead  
Ring-necked Duck  
Ruddy Duck  
Scaup  
Scoters  
All Other

#### **Geese, Swan & Confidence**

Brant  
Coot  
Geese  
Grebes  
Swan  
Confidence and all others

### **DIVISION SS - SMOOTHIE SHOREBIRD & WADING BIRDS**

1. Avocet, Oystercatchers, Stilt  
2. Curlew, Whimbrel, Godwits  
3. Dowitchers, Knots, Dunlins  
4. Phalaropes, Woodcock, Snipe  
5. Plovers  
6. Yellowlegs, Red and Green Shank, Solitary Sandpiper  
7. Small Sandpipers (under 9")

8. Large Sandpipers, Willets, Turnstones  
9. Egrets, Herons  
10. All Other Waders & Shorebirds

### **DIVISIONS F AND G DECORATIVE LIFESIZE WILDFOWL / DECORATIVE MINIATURE WILDFOWL**

#### **Waterfowl**

Ducks  
Geese  
Swans

#### **Shorebirds & Wading Birds**

Avocet  
Coot  
Cranes  
Curlew  
Egrets  
Flamingo  
Gallinules  
Godwits  
Herons  
Ibises  
Knots  
Limpkins  
Oystercatchers  
Phalaropes  
Plovers  
Rails  
Sandpipers  
Snipe  
Spoonbill  
Stilt  
Stork  
Turnstones  
Whimbrel  
Woodcock  
Yellowlegs

#### **Upland Game Birds**

Grouse  
Guineafowl  
Partridge  
Peafowl  
Pheasant  
Ptarmigan  
Quail  
Turkeys

#### **Birds of Prey**

Caracaras  
Eagles  
Falcons  
Hawks  
Kites  
Ospreys  
Owls  
Vultures

#### **Pelagic & Coastal Seabirds**

Albatrosses  
Anhinga  
Auks  
Boobies  
Cormorants  
Frigatebirds  
Gannets  
Grebes  
Gulls  
Jaegers  
Loons  
Pelicans  
Penguins  
Petrels  
Puffins  
Shearwaters  
Skimmers  
Skuas  
Terns  
Tropicbirds

#### **Non-Passerine Land Birds**

Anis  
Barbets  
Bee-eaters  
Cuckoos  
Doves  
Goatsuckers  
Hoopoes  
Hornbills  
Hummingbirds  
Kingfishers  
Parrots  
Pigeons  
Roadrunners, Swifts,  
Toucans, Trogons  
Woodpeckers  
South American and Old  
World Sub-Oscine Passerines





# OFFICIAL SPECIES DESIGNATIONS

## Songbirds A -

### Oscine Passerines

Birds of Paradise  
Bluebirds  
Bowerbirds  
Catbirds  
Chats  
Chickadees  
Creepers  
Crows  
Dippers  
Flycatchers  
Gnatcatchers  
Jays  
Kinglets  
Larks  
Magpies  
Mockingbirds  
Nuthatches  
Pipits  
Robins  
Shrikes  
Swallows  
Thrashers  
Thrushes  
Titmice  
Vireos  
Wagtails, Warblers  
Waxwings  
Wrens

## Songbirds B -

### Oscine Passerines

Blackbirds  
Bobolinks  
Buntings  
Cardinals  
Cowbirds  
Crossbills  
Finches  
Grackles  
Grosbeaks  
Juncos  
Meadowlarks  
Oroles  
Redpolls  
Sparrows  
Starlings  
Tanagers  
Towhees

## MEMORIAL AWARDS

For additional information visit: [www.wardfdn.org](http://www.wardfdn.org)

- Dr. John P. Trabuchi Memorial Award Intermediate Decorative Lifesize Floating Waterfowl, Best Diver
- William Schultz Memorial Award Intermediate Decorative Lifesize Wildfowl, Best in Waterfowl Category
- Richard "Dick" LeMaster Memorial Award Intermediate Decorative Lifesize Floating Waterfowl, Best in Species Mallard Hen
- Mike Wavercak Memorial Award Intermediate Decorative Lifesize Floating Waterfowl, Best in Species Bufflehead
- Robert "Bob" Guge Memorial Award Novice Decorative Lifesize Wildfowl, Best Songbird

**SAVE THE DATE**

**2026**

**JOIN US FOR THE CHESAPEAKE CHALLENGE  
HELD DURING THE CRISFIELD HERITAGE  
FESTIVAL IN CRISFIELD, MARYLAND, HOME OF  
LEM & STEVE WARD: OCT 10**

**WATCH FOR SAM DYKE MEMORIAL "OLD BIRD"  
ANTIQUA DECOY COMPETITIONS AT MULTIPLE  
DECOY SHOWS**



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# Carvers wanted!

## APPLY TODAY



Easton, MD - The Waterfowl Festival, a celebration of the outdoor heritage of Maryland's Eastern Shore, is looking for a few good carvers! All ages are welcome to apply to be a part of our extraordinary 55th year celebration.

Since our founding in 1971 we have donated over six million dollars to conservation and education.

## The People

Whether you do traditional or ornamental carving, everyone is welcome to join us at the 55th Festival. If you are a collector or active carver, there are spots for you to share your passion with others.



## The Event of the Season!

The 55th Annual Waterfowl Festival will take place November 13-15, 2026. Venues range from high-end art galleries to casual buy-sell-swap rooms. Last year's festival attracted 35,000 people from 45 states - next year we expect the same success!

image: Konner Metz. Star Democrat 2025

### Artists and Exhibitors welcome to apply!

There are multiple venues at the 2026 festival to consider. They include the Fine Arts Pavilions, the Chesapeake Room at the Waterfowl Building, the Sportsman's Pavilion, Easton High School (Buy Sell Swap), and the Marshland Mercantile! Contact our office today to inquire about your options! 410-822-4567.



[waterfowlfestival.org](http://waterfowlfestival.org)

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