

Wisconsin Waterfowl Association's 2017 Decoy Competition

The Wisconsin Waterfowl Association is presenting its first annual decoy carving competition at Stevens Point, Wisconsin, at UW-Stevens Point, in conjunction with the Federal Duck Stamp art judging, occurring the same weekend. The decoy carving competition will take place on the UW-Stevens Point Campus, at the Dreyfus Center, in the Laird room: 1015 Reserve St., Stevens Point, WI. It is the goal of WWA to secure assistance and support from carvers, nonprofit organizations, corporate sponsors, and individual benefactors to continue this decoy competition in future years, promoting decoys, decoy carvers, and our rich waterfowling heritage.

Objectives:

WWA has the following objectives for this and future competitions:

1. To honor the traditions of hand-carved working decoys that have played an important role in water fowling in Wisconsin and throughout much of the United States
2. To showcase the decoys of the best carvers in Wisconsin and the United States, providing opportunities to compete, learn, and network for carvers of all levels, from first time competitors to world champions.
3. To encourage and influence water fowlers and artists to continue the practice and art of making hand carved decoys for actual gunning, for competition, and as unique pieces of art.
4. To include vendors, displays, and demonstrations at this competition that will initiate participation by Wisconsin hunters, artists, and youth in decoy carving and decoy competitions.
5. Identify Wisconsin decoy artists by region, location, and interest, forming a database of talent that can be contacted to assist as judges, instructors/demonstrators, volunteers, committee members, and mentors.

General Information:

The 2017 Competition shall have four opportunities for carvers to compete: two being IWCA classes that follow IWCA rules, and two that are non-IWCA classes. By the IWCA rules, to compete in an IWCA sanctioned class, competitors must be IWCA members. The WWA urges carvers to support IWCA, become members, and compete in one or more of the IWCA classes. If you are not an IWCA member, you can apply for membership, pay the membership fee at the contest, and compete in IWCA classes.

(International Waterfowl Carvers Association: <http://www.iwfca.com/>)

For competitors who are not and do not want to become an IWCA member, but want to compete, we have a non-IWCA gunning decoy class, dubbed "Sconnie Gunners" that allows non-IWCA members to compete their working decoys. Although called "Sconnie" this class is open to carvers residing anywhere and is also open to carvers with IWCA membership.

The other non-IWCA class is a replica, or antique decoy class, where carvers can compete decoys of the old style, antiqued and distressed to imply age, although they were produced recently. These decoys will be judged "on the shelf" meaning they will not be floated.

All classes have the applicable rules for that class listed under that class in the Appendix. Carvers are urged to not just be familiar with the rules, but also the type of decoys being produced in each IWCA class, and how judges actually evaluate your decoy against others. The IWCA website does show examples of decoys in each class. Familiarize yourself with judging criteria, and make it easy for the judges to keep your decoy in the tank, not eliminate it as one of the first decoys out.

In the IWCA Divisions, competitors can compete at the Novice level, Intermediate level, or Open level. Novice being the entry level and Open being the highest. Competitors are urged to read the IWCA rules regarding designation of Novice, Intermediate, and Open. There are specific rules relating to levels. Carvers may declare themselves at a higher level, but once they declare themselves at that level, they cannot go back to a lesser level without a hearing or appeal to the IWCA. New carvers who declare themselves Intermediate or Open carvers and discover they want to compete at the Novice level must go through an appeals process at the IWCA. New carvers are best advised to compete as Novices. If you win two Best of Shows at that level you will be forced to move up and are ready to compete at the Intermediate level.

IWCA Decoy Division: (must be an IWCA member to enter)

The IWCA Decoy Division is typified by extremely detailed decoys with realistic paint, especially at the open level. While sturdiness is part of judging, decoys in this class may have open bills, some texturing, and elaborate paint renditions. Competing in this class requires a dedication to anatomical accuracy in all details, including paint. Paint on Open class IWCA Decoy Division entries is breathtaking, complex, and realistic, mimicking the real bird, but also must be attractive from a distance as the final judges' decision is made from 20 feet. Still judged as a decoy, entries must self-right, have a means of attaching an anchor cord, ride in the correct position, stability, and attitude for the specie imitated and withstand being in a tank without the water affecting paint or any other part of the decoy. While these are more complex decoys, newer carvers should not avoid this level as they will, as novices be competing against others of their experience and capability. If you like to get more detailed with paint, poses, animation, and realism, this is probably the IWCA Division for you. Ribbons per IWCA rules in Open, Intermediate, and Novice classes. Cash awards for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Best of Show in Open class, Best of Show and 2nd Best of Show in Intermediate class and Best of Show in Novice class. Please carefully review the rules in the Appendix.

IWCA Working Decoy Division: (must be an IWCA member to enter)

The working Decoy Division is typified by well carved, properly proportioned gunning decoys that from a distance are convincingly real. Restrictions on bill detail, paint, and carving make this a class more commonly associated with the average decoy. Some great artists compete in this division, and to earn blue ribbons you will need to know anatomy, proportion, attitude, location of feather groups, and how to make a stylized yet realistic paint rendition. Again, this division will have three levels: Open, Intermediate, and Novice, aiming to have carvers of similar experience and capability compete against each other. Although the decoys appear simpler, it still takes an artist's touch to place well in this division. Ribbons per IWCA rules in Open, Intermediate, and Novice classes. Cash awards for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Best of Show in Open class, Best of Show and 2nd Best of Show in Intermediate class, and Best of Show in Novice class. Please carefully review the rules in the Appendix.

“Sconnie” Gunning Decoys:

This non-IWCA class is offered to allow carvers who are not IWCA members, to have an opportunity to get their decoys in the tank. The rules are similar to IWCA Working Decoy Division, with the addition of allowing rasping for texture and also allowing sturdy bill detail such as carved nails and nostrils. Open bills and carved feathers will not be allowed, and the intent is much like the IWCA Working Decoy Division: to produce authentic working decoys that are anatomically accurate, ride the water properly, and have stylized yet effective paint jobs. This is an “open” competition, meaning there will be no carver class designations, although a Junior division for carvers 17 and under with separate awards for Junior carvers will be offered. Ribbons to first through third place decoys when specie classes are opened, ribbons for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd best decoy in each category, and ribbons and cash awards for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Best of Show. Under the separate category for Juniors ribbons will be awarded for specie (when needed), and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Best of Show. Best of Show Junior decoy will receive a cash award. Juniors may choose to compete as an Open carver, but they do not qualify for separate Junior ribbons or cash award. Juniors may not enter both Open and Junior Division with different decoys, Juniors must choose one class or the other. IWCA Working Decoys entered in the IWCA Working Decoy Division cannot be also entered into the “Sconnie” Gunning Decoy class and compete in two different classes. Please carefully review the rules in the Appendix.

Antique Style Decoy Division:

This non-IWCA class is designed to offer those who carve antique replica decoys and traditional decoys an opportunity to compete and display their art. Please review the rules in the Appendix.

Foam Decoys:

Decoys may, in the IWCA Working Decoy Division and the “Sconnie” Division be constructed using foam. It is the intent for the foam to be carved by the entrant, not a manufactured body or manufactured head or both, put together and merely painted by the entrant. Like working decoys made of cork, wood, or other materials, the judges will consider durability and the ability to endure actual gunning use. Fragile or easily dented/damaged components of any working decoy will be detrimental to its competitiveness or may in certain instances lead to disqualification. Foam decoy carvers have a number of methods used to make the foam durable and dent resistant. If you plan on competing a foam decoy, research those methods and consider their use.

Entry Fees:

Entry fees for decoys shipped to the show include a handling fee for unpacking and repacking the decoys. Entry fees for hand carried decoys include admission to the competition for the carver and his or her family.

Entry fees shall be as follows:

1. Registration and entry fee for one decoy \$15.00
2. 1st Additional decoy \$10.00
3. 2nd and additional decoys, \$5.00 each
4. Maximum registration and entry fee \$35.00 per carver (5th and additional decoys are entered for free)

Sending/Shipping Decoys to the Competition:

Decoys shipped to the competition must meet the following criteria:

1. Must be received no later than **September 12, 2017**
2. Shipping charges to and from the competition must be paid by the carver
3. Return shipping labels and prepaid shipping must be included so we can send the decoys back
4. A completed registration form must be included with the shipped decoys indicating the carver's name, decoys being competed, divisions for each decoy, proof of IWCA membership, and all other requested information on the registration form. The form may be downloaded from the WWA website.
5. Payment may be made by Post Office money order made payable to Wisconsin Waterfowl Association (WWA), or by credit card, please do not send cash.
6. Ribbons and any award checks will be returned with the decoys unless otherwise requested by the carver
7. The competition will take every means possible to assure that decoys are properly packed for return and do not sustain damage on the return shipping, but the competition cannot be responsible for damage on the return shipment.
8. If a decoy (or decoys) when received have damage, the carver will be immediately notified and consulted as to how they want to proceed.
9. Decoys that are shipped shall be sent to:

Joe Porten, 1966 County Road O, Sturgeon Bay, WI 54235.

Hand delivered decoy entries:

Hand carried decoys will be accepted the day of judging up to 10:30 AM. Persons will also be available Friday from 1-4 pm to check in decoys and take payment at the competition site in Stevens Point. Competitors who can deliver decoys Friday are asked to assist the show by getting them in our hands Friday. When hand delivering decoys, please make sure you have a fully completed registration form, including payment. Hand carried entries may be paid for in cash, Post Office money order (payable to WWA) or credit card.

Decoy Pickup:

Hand delivered decoys may be picked up at the close of the show Saturday. Representatives of the show will assist carvers in securing their decoys at the end of the show, and carvers are asked to not just grab their decoys off the tables unassisted to assure security for their decoys and the decoys of other artists.

Awards and Ribbons:

The competition will make every effort to assure the appropriate ribbons and awards are available to the carvers at the end of the show. In the event of unanticipated entry numbers resulting in insufficient ribbons to award during the competition, additional ribbons will be secured and sent to the carvers at the expense of the committee.

Judging:

WWA, the chairman of the show, and the show committee are committed to the IWCA code of ethics for both IWCA and non-IWCA classes. Every effort is made to secure capable and qualified judges. A judges' briefing will be held prior to judging to review the rules for the classes, answer questions and

assure a standardized approach. It is understood that any judging and critique of art will involve some subjective assessments by each judge, and a panel of three judges is used to minimize the impact of the subjective element while allowing individual judges to recognize good and bad attributes of various decoys during the deliberative process. In placing and assignment of awards, the decision of the judges is final. The only exception to that would be if, after judging is complete, it is found a decoy is ineligible to compete or after assigning places a decoy is found to have deteriorated in paint, cracked or separated. Ineligible and disqualified decoys will forfeit any ribbons or awards, and decoys below them will be moved up per IWCA rules, even in a non-IWCA class.

Judges may choose to discuss entrant decoys following the end of judging at the judge's discretion, to assist the carver in getting input as to the good attributes of the decoy and the things needing improvement. This is entirely a voluntary choice by judges and they are not required to do so. Time constraints may limit or eliminate the availability of critiques. Competitors are expected to be respectful and ask positive, pertinent questions directed to improvement, such as, "How can I improve this decoy?" and "What are the strengths of this decoy and where can I improve?" In most cases, asking, "How come that decoy got first and I got 2nd?" make it easy for the judge to give a short answer like "the bill on your decoy is too short and the wrong color" and not get you additional critical information about the strong and weak points of the entire decoy.

Rules:

Should a rule be found to not be explicit enough for entries in a class or division, or a problem occur for which there is not a specific rule or interpretation, the chairman of the competition will confer with the judges, the board of the competition, and if possible, the IWCA, to resolve any contradictions or gaps in the rules. The problem and resolution will be announced at the competition and published in the final results sheet. Every effort will be made to make decisions based on the letter and intent of the rules of this competition and the IWCA.

Entrant responsibilities:

Competitors are responsible for knowing the published IWCA rules and following them. The IWCA site has a downloadable PDF file listing the complete rules and regulations for IWCA competitions. The Appendix for this summary lists pertinent sections of IWCA rules, but is not all-inclusive. As a competitor, please access the IWCA website and read the rules. There have been some changes for 2017, and per IWCA, as a competitor, it is your responsibility to know the rules.

Carving Awards:

In addition to ribbons and rosettes the following cash awards will be awarded by division and class:

IWCA Decoy division

Open: Best of Show = \$300 cash; non-purchase, 2nd best of show = \$200, 3rd best of show = \$100

Intermediate: Best of Show = \$200 cash; non-purchase, 2nd Best of Show = \$100 cash

Novice: Best of Show = \$100 cash; non-purchase

IWCA Working Decoys Division

Open: Best of Show = \$100 cash; non-purchase, 2nd Best of Show = \$75 cash, 3rd Best of Show = \$50 cash

Intermediate: Best of Show = \$75 cash; non-purchase, 2nd Best of Show = \$50 cash

Novice: Best of Show = \$50 cash; non-purchase.

“Sconnie” Division

Best of Show = \$100 cash; non-purchase, 2nd Best of Show = \$75, 3rd Best of Show = \$50

Junior: Best of Show = \$75; non-purchase

Antique Division

Best of Show = \$100 cash; non-purchase, 2nd Best of Show = \$50, 3rd Best Of Show = \$25

Incentive: Entry fees and shipping (up to \$75 total, per carver) will be refunded to the two carvers who submit the two highest number of entries.

Appendices:

The Appendices contain printable entry form, rules, and IWCA information. Please reference them to complete your entry process and assure your entries comply and are competitive.

- Appendix A IWCA rules for Competition Levels, Advancement Rules, Categories, and Species
- Appendix B IWCA Decoy Division
- Appendix C IWCA Working Decoy Division
- Appendix D Non-IWCA “Sconnie” Gunning Decoys
- Appendix E Non-IWCA Antique Style Decoys
- Appendix F Entry Form