



WISCONSIN WATERFOWL ASSOCIATION

HABITAT EDUCATION LEGISLATION

2018 Wisconsin Waterfowl Association Decoy Carving Contest & Exhibition Judges

Jacob Straub, PhD, is a proud Wisconsin native who grew up enjoying the outdoors. His time as an undergraduate student at UW-Stevens Point provided countless hands-on opportunities and educational experiences and inspired him to pursue a teaching and applied research career. His educational journey took him to Ohio and Mississippi before bringing him back to Wisconsin where he currently serves as a Waterfowl Biologist, Associate Professor, and Kennedy-Grohne Chair in Waterfowl and Wetlands Conservation. Straub, his collaborators and students study waterfowl and their habitat needs in Wisconsin.

Jeff Galat started carving decoys in 2004. He originally started carving cork and wood decoys to phase out his plastic decoys for waterfowling. Since that time, Jeff has won numerous ribbons for his decoys in competitions through the country.

Tom Lutes is the CEO of Everything Ecom LLC and GearUp2Go LLC. The last twenty years of his career have been in the outdoor industry, primarily hunting related. It was during the period of running the Final Approach waterfowl brand that he learned the most about decoys. He had the fortune of working closely with two nationally acclaimed master carvers and sculptors; Marty Hanson and Doug Eck, while developing a complete new line of duck and goose decoys. They both have exceptional knowledge of waterfowl anatomy, posture and paint detail. This business process, along with his personal hobby of decoy collecting, has enabled me to become a well-informed amateur in decoys.

Bob Swan is a retired aerospace engineer whose interests include waterfowling, upland hunting, fishing, bird taxidermy, turtle trapping and nature history. Bob began decoy carving with decorative decoys in 1978. By 1980 and on he primarily carved cork bodied decoys and has carved close to 2000 to date. In 2009 Bob was honored with a grant through the Ward Museum of Wildlife Art, funded by the National Endowment for the Arts to teach six individuals in his style of cork bodied decoys. During the judging of the Chesapeake Challenge Competition in 2019 his Greater Yellowlegs carving won a 2nd place ribbon.

Pat Gregory is the great-grandson of famed Illinois River carver George "Homerun" Barto, who began carving in the late 1890's and was influenced by legendary Illinois Carvers Robert Elliston, Bert Graves and Charlie Perdew. Gregory inherited Barto's tools, patterns and love for waterfowling. Gregory began hunting in 1972 and started carving decoys in 1984. He carves more than 100 decoys annually, making most every species of ducks and geese indigenous to North America, from cork, white pine or white cedar. He has twice been selected as a Master Carver by the Ward Foundation Museum of Collectible Decoys and was the featured carver at the 2018 North American Vintage Decoy & Sporting Collectibles Show.

Taylor Finger was born and raised in Wisconsin. He received his Bachelor's degree from UW - Stevens Point in wildlife management and biology and received his Master's degree from the University of Western Ontario in waterfowl ecology. Ducks and duck hunting have been a part of Taylor's life from a young age. This interest turned into a professional passion during his wildlife years at UWSP. Since then he has interned as a waterfowl bander for the MN DNR, worked as a wildlife technician on black duck and brant research in New Jersey, on teal research for the WI DNR under Ron Gatti and completed his Master's research on lesser scaup migration. Taylor worked as the Assistant Migratory Game Bird Ecologist for 3 years and was promoted to the Migratory Game Bird Ecologist position with the Wisconsin DNR in early 2017. Taylor lives north of the Wisconsin Dells with his wife Michelle on a 15 acre piece of property and enjoys all things outdoors, hunting, fishing, hiking and spending time with his family.