

January 2023 - WI

Taxidermy In Focus

Quarterly Newsletter



Javelina

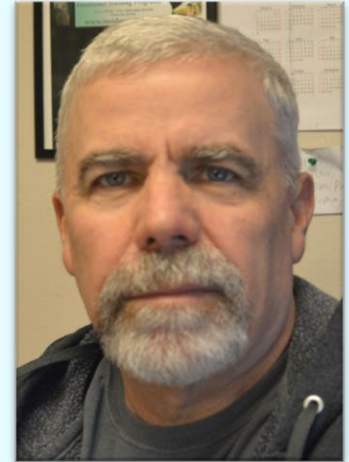
Mounted By Chloe Smith

Taxidermy Tech

Vocational Training and Mentorship

Taxidermy In Focus

In the summer of 2021, a couple of visitors stopped by the shop looking to buy some deer eyes to use in restoring an old deer mount. We rarely ever get folks looking for supply items, but I am never really surprised by it. In this case, I have to admit I was surprised and especially so to find out that the one planning to do the restoration work was a fairly typical 17 year old high school girl. As a girl though, there was really nothing typical about her taxidermy aspirations. Now I am the last person in the world that would even think about



Ken Darville

discriminating or stereotyping in any way. Our student load over the last few years has been increasingly women and that is something that we are proud of. It is exciting to me to see more and more women getting in to and further excelling at taxidermy. Some of my biggest influences in my early days were Jan Van Hoesen, Jean Roll, Wendy Christensen and Sallie Dahmes so I never looked at taxidermy as I think it was stereotypically viewed by the general public as a male dominated industry. But I am a bit embarrassed to admit that I was a somewhat surprised if not downright skeptical of this young lady with the big smile and endless enthusiasm standing there glowing like a hundred watt light bulb while her Mom filled me in. It turns out that her interest in taxidermy was not new and in fact went back several years. This girl was skinning coons, rabbits, muskrats and other critters from the time she was about 10 years old. What was equally if not more surprising as the daughters enthusiasm was the Mothers support. What came though was that this was not the fleeting interest of a child nor was it the obligatory or blind support of a parent. It was genuine and it was determined.



Taxidermy In Focus

I was with a student at the time and I asked them to come back for a further discussion when I had a little more time to talk. I thought I might be able to help though I wasn't sure at that time what I was going to do or if I could do anything other than just run her through a course and mentor her as with the other students. I needed some time to figure it out. I am not sure how but I knew there was something special about this young lady and I



wanted to really give a lot of thought on what I could do give her the opportunity that she deserved. The next meeting would put everything in to motion.

I do not do apprenticeships or internships. By definition an apprenticeship is a paid position that does not require any experience...basically OJT... and I could argue that of the 15 or so folks I have had working at Expressions of Wildlife over the last 9 years, all of them were essentially "apprentices".

Most of them lasted a few weeks at best and all the time spent getting them to a point where they could contribute was wasted...time and money I cannot get back. An internship is considered an unpaid type of position but even that takes precious



time away from customer work for training. So the best answer is usually finding someone who already has the experience to be productive that can immediately contribute. Those folks are hard to find and not always open to following someone else's rules.

Taxidermy In Focus

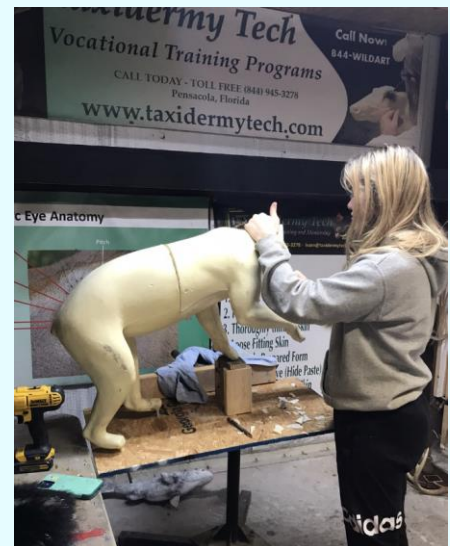
So that's my rule...no apprentices or interns...and yet here I was making Chloe Smith and her Mom, Brenda an offer they couldn't refuse...an internship...training in my shop for nothing other than an investment of time. For the next several months, Chloe came in to the shop for about 2 to 3 hours a day, after school and before she started her shift at Chick-fil-a. Unlike many of those before her, she was faithful and I used the time to expose her to a wide variety of tasks from skinning and fleshing where she was already proficient to finishing work where she showed a high level of aptitude, clearly a product of her natural artistic talent. She helped me put together a few mounts during that time ...a hog and maybe a deer or two and helped with an African order. She was building skills but as the months passed it became harder and harder for me to balance time with Chloe with the number of courses I was running and as we approached of 2022 everything slowed down to a point that for a period of a few weeks we didn't see her as much in the shop.

As the holiday period came to an end and the new year was underway I knew that I needed to make a decision about her future with us or we were going to lose her. I knew she had the talent and the determination to succeed and I couldn't let my obvious inability to give her the time she needed impede her path. It was now or never. I talked it over with Valerie and Sarah and decided that I had to go for it and effective February 4th of 2022 we hired her on a part time basis. She was in her Senior year and I knew I would only get afternoons a couple days a week until she graduated but it was an important transition for all of us.



Taxidermy In Focus

Today Chloe works 4 full days a week which gives her Fridays and the weekend to pursue her many interests...she has a motorcycle, scuba dives, spearfishes and has done her first tandem skydive. She loves the outdoors, fishing and hunting and every critter you can imagine from snakes and turtles to chickens and everything in between. She is not afraid to get dirty...I have seen her covered from head to toe in bear fat (still shaking my head in disbelief over that one). When its necessary she is willing to work overtime to complete a project and will often come in to work on her own personal projects on her day off, even then willing to lend an extra hand if needed. She has become my right hand....figuratively and sometimes quite literally as I have struggled with a condition with my hands which at times has impeded my ability to do some tasks. I can turn her loose with just about anything. She even helps me with some of our course work and has become a very good instructor. I see a time in the not too distant future when Chloe will be able to run an entire week long course. More and more I put the pressure on her to explain to me how she would approach a problem...rather than simply tell her how to do it. I progressively increase her responsibilities as well as the level of difficulty of the tasks she is assigned and like a trooper, she steps up and gets it done. Chloe has proven herself and I believe in her and trust her completely. She is the best hiring decision I have ever



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made for Expressions of Wildlife and I know she is destined for success. She can mount anything...birds, bears, bobcats, coyotes, gameheads...you name it, she can do it. As she continues develop and advance her skills, it will be important to get her into a more competitive mindset. In a way, she already has that mindset to some degree. She wants so bad to get it perfect and sometimes I have to remind her that we are a commercial operation and we have to make money to survive....We get as close as we can in accuracy but we also have to closely manage the amount of time we are putting in to a project. There are some things you can not do with commercial mounts if you expect to be profitable. I know she is excited at the prospect of taxidermy competitions...time is not an obstacle and she can really challenge herself and explore a higher standard. I am probably more excited than she is for her to start competing.

As of this newsletter, my team is better than it has ever been. It has truly become a family affair. My stepson Christopher has been with us for a couple of weeks now, My daughter Erin is with us and Sarah still helps out a bit when she can. Chloe has become a part of our family too and I can not even image any of this without her. We all start together, break for lunch and eat together and close out the day together. Everyone brings different strengths and personality to the table and everyone has a good sense of humor. What really makes it all work is the chemistry. It is nice to work in an environment like that.

I am thankful that Chloe came into our lives and has become such an important part of the business. I have big plans for her future with us. I am also thankful for the support and encouragement that her parents have given her. She would not have come this far without it.



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Monday – Friday
9 AM -5 PM

In Memorium

Justin Kendrick 1999-2022



Tanning Principles

In our furbearer courses we tan almost exclusively with Krowtan. Its simple, safe and perfect for folks just getting started. Its also perfect for a 5 day course! Still I do get a lot of requests for information on traditional synthetic tanning steps and since that is the primary way we tan in shop I wanted to cover it this newsletter. We have had a tanning guide for several years that we make available to students after they complete their courses that covers both traditional synthetic methods and the Krowtan method. This article is mostly an excerpt from that guide.

1.Skin and Flesh

After the cape or hide has been skinned from the carcass, remove as much meat and fat as possible from the hide. Split the lips, turn the ears and nose. The longer the hide remains in its raw state the more likely the hair is to slip. Get it to the next step ASAP!

Alternate fleshing can be done with a pressure washer...Minimum 2800 psi and preferred over 3000 psi with a Turbo Tip. There are plenty of video on YouTube of fleshing with a pressure washer. If you are using the pressure washing method of fleshing you MUST salt the hide afterwards to draw the water out of the fibers. Pressure washing forces water into the fibers which the skin will retain, blocking penetration of pickling and tanning agents.



2. Salting-

Capes and hides that are going to be tanned should be salted immediately after fleshing. Salting draws out moisture and globular proteins, slows the process of decomposition and will eventually render bacteria dormant once the skin is completely salt dried (although it is not necessary to take it to that extreme if you are going to the next steps right away), Salting can be done using one of several different methods.

If you are shipping hides or will not be able to get to them immediately and are not wanting to freeze them, salt drying is necessary for long term storage. If you salt dry you must store them in a dry area. If there is a lot of moisture or humidity they will likely rehydrate enough to eventually cause spoiling. Lay the hair side down and flesh side up on a flat working surface. Salt the hide with a fine ground salt...you can get pure feed salt from a feed store. Tractor Supply carries American Stockman Fine Stock Salt but the best source I have found is pool salt. Use the fine salt...not the rock salt (never use rock salt or reuse old salt). Clorox and Morton are both common brands sold by most pool stores, Walmart, Lowes, Home Depot and even Publix in 40 lbs bags. It's about \$10 per bag. Salt is cheap...don't skimp on it when it comes to your hides. Thoroughly rub the salt into the flesh side. Leave a layer of salt on the tray and pour another layer on the salted hide. Slightly elevate one end of the tray to allow the fluids to run off. Leave the well salted hide laying on the salt tray for 12 to 18 hours then rehydrate until pliable (usually 30 minutes or so after single salting) and go straight to pickle OR re-salt with fresh salt in the tray or hanging for 24 hours and then hang to dry with circulating air (fan).

The other option would be to salt brine...use about a pound of salt per gallon of water...at least 3 gallons of water per cape. Let the cape brine for about 15-20 minutes and then drain. This removes a lot of blood and soluble proteins from the skin and helps to maintain a cleaner pickle. This is not the preferred method but will at least draw out some of the proteins prior to pickling.

Tanning Principles



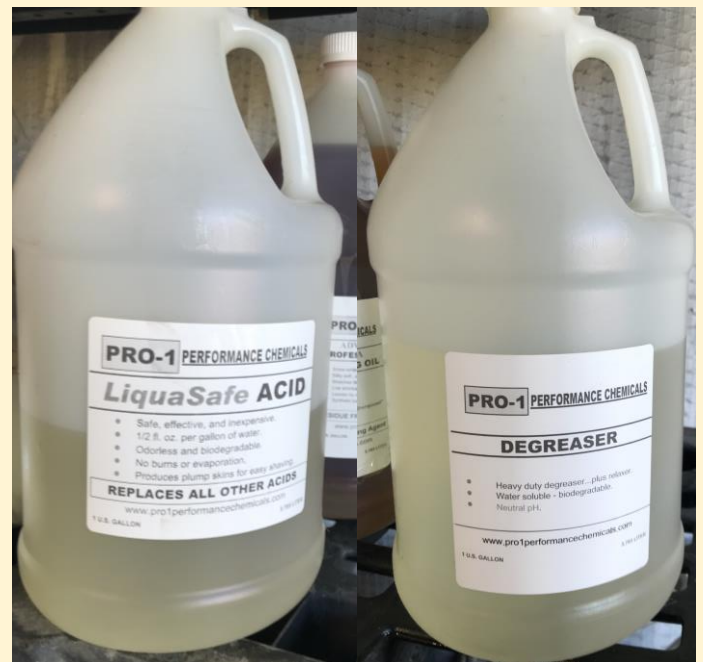
3. Rehydration

If your skins are salted and especially if they are hard dried you will need to rehydrate. The amount of water to rehydrate depends on the size of the skin and container available...you can not get too much water and if you get too little you wont be able to submerge the skin. It needs to stay under the surface of the water. I would highly recommend adding a half ounce of Degreaser/Relaxer to every gallon of water. We prefer Pro-1 but there are other Degreaser/Relaxers out there. It could take up to 24 hours depending on how thick the hide is but most whitetails that are hard dried should fully rehydrate in just a few hours. Monitor your rehydration bath.

Pickling

In the pickling process, the PH level of the collagen fibers in the dermis must be significantly reduced to set the right conditions for the tannins to bond...sort of like making room for new furniture! The

salt in the pickle is there to buffer the sudden swell associated with the rapid increase in acidity associated with the pickling agent of which there are many different options...formic acid, oxalic acid, citric acid...even vinegar (although vinegar is an extremely mild pickle and not really suitable for maintaining the PH level low enough or stable enough). Our preference is Pro-1 Liquasafe Acid but McKenzie Acid is fine. In fact any of the acids mentioned here are perfectly fine, some of which are easily purchased on Amazon.



Mix the pickle at the following proportions:

For every 1 gallon of water add:
1 pound salt.

1/2 ounce Pro-1 Liquasafe Acid

The pH should be 2.0 or below

Tanning Principles

Check every few hours during the day for the first day or 2 and check first thing the following morning. It sometimes takes a while for this acid to stabilize, particularly if you use other elements with it.

Place the drained hide into the pickle. The minimum amount of time for the hide to stay in the pickle is 72 hours. Remove the skin after 48-72 hours and shave then put back in the pickle for another 12 to 24 hours, then drain and shave again while wet. The thinner the skin is shaved the softer and more flexible it will be.

Once the allotted time for pickling has been completed, remove the hide from the pickle and rinse in cold water. (you can leave the hide in the pickle longer).



Tanning Principles

Neutralizing

Mix a neutralizer bath to the following proportions:

For every 1 gallon of water add 3 to 5 ounces of Sodium Bicarbonate (baking soda). Leave the hide in the neutralizer solution for 15 minutes for light skinned animals or 20 minutes for deer, etc. Turn every 5 minutes. Remove the hide from the neutralizer and rinse in clean water a couple of times. Hang and drain for 30 minutes.

Tanning

There is more than one way to tan. 1) The submersible methods like LUTAN or Pro-1 LTC or 2) a brush on like Pro-1 Brush on Tanning Oil, Liqui-Tan or McKenzie Tan. For capes, the brush on is the most common and popular method. After Neutralizing and draining you would simply lay the skin out on a table skin side out and rub the oil thoroughly into the hide with a sponge. I prefer to cut it with a little water...1 part warm water to 2-3 parts oil. This helps with absorption which helps to eliminate seepage of oil over time. Let hang for about 4-6 hours hair side out at room temperature. At this point you can wash and mount or bag and freeze.

Tanning with LUTAN F:

For every gallon of water add:

2 ounces of LUTAN F

1/2 pound of non-iodized salt

Use enough water to allow the hide to float freely in the LUTAN® FN solution.



OR



Submerge the hide or cape in the LUTAN F for 12 to 24 hours, depending on the hide. (Caution: do not leave skins in the tan longer than the recommended time!)

12 to 14 hrs for Raccoon and Fox size animals

13 to 15 hrs for Coyote size animals

16 to 18 hrs for Deer

20 to 22 hrs for Elk or Moose

Remove from the LUTAN F. Rinse in cold water and drain for 30 minutes.

Tanning Principles

Oiling

If you are using Brush-On you can omit this step.... If you are using a submersible tanning method such as the Lutan F method you will need to oil the skin after tanning.

Drain the skin for about several hours until it is "thirsty". Mix McKenzie Leather Oil (or Pro-Plus Oil), 2 part to 1 parts hot water. Lay the skin out on a table and rub the oil and water mixture thoroughly into the hide with a sponge, paint brush or small roller.

Turn the skin hair side out and allow to sit at room temp for 4 to 6 hours. Then wash and mount or bag and freeze.

Final Steps

When ready to mount, simply thaw and mount. I like to wash mine in tide before mounting. Agitate for a minute or two and then rinse carefully by hose and by submersing in clear water until you see no more suds. Drain for 20-30 minutes then roll up in a towel until ready to mount.

I don't care much for this approach but skin may also be dried out completely and stored away until ready to mount. To rehydrate after tanning and drying, soak in water and a bactericide (available at McKenzie) for 2 hours. Roll up and cover with a large towel until completely rehydrated. If you do this the night before and refrigerate it should be ready in the morning.

For rug or furs the hide should be stretched and broken as it dries. Drag the skin side against a breaking tool or against the side edge of a table to soften. You can further sand with a band sander or vibrating sander to clean and soften the skin side.

If you have any questions please feel free to call!

Importing International Shipments

International Shipments

Summary

Shipment from Africa to the US Port at Atlanta is coordinated through your outfitter or hunting operation. They will do the prep, package and shipment of the skins and horns from Africa to the US. There should be coordination between client and outfitter during the time the skins are processed and quarantined in Africa (or wherever the hunt destination). The client or designated representative should be notified when the shipment is leaving for the US port.

There are many US ports but we typically use Atlanta and Dallas. Responsibility for actual clearance at the US port is best facilitated by a broker (we recommend Coppersmith) and the USDA approved tannery/taxidermist. Historically we have used Seminole Fur Dressing in Phenix City Alabama as our tannery for incoming African skins and they are a USDA approved facility to receive your trophies. We also use Quality Fur Dressing in Spring Texas and many folks use Wildlife Gallery, all of which are USDA approved.



<https://www.huntingtrophy.com/>

Once the shipment has been cleared by the broker it is forwarded to the assigned USDA facility/ tannery by the broker. Once it has arrived, the tannery will contact the taxidermist and arrangements are made for receipt of horns and skulls while hides and capes are being processed. Once the hides and capes are tanned we will pick up from the tannery and begin taxidermy work per our schedule.

Below is a copy of what we provide our hunters prior to departing for hunt abroad.

Importing International Shipments

Steps

When you have booked your trip you must decide whether you want your skins tanned in Africa or the US. We have no control over tanning methods used in Africa and have had mixed results. We recommend shipping back to the US for tanning.

You should then contact us at Expressions of Wildlife Taxidermy as soon as possible so that we can discuss the process with you again and provide you with a Quote on taxidermy services. We can also provide you with pre-filled tags from both Coppersmith and the Tannery if you wish.

You will then need to contact the Broker directly. We can provide you with the copy of the Power of Attorney that will be required for the Broker to clear your shipment. We can help facilitate communication with the Broker, but you will deal directly with the Broker at that point. If you choose to use Coppersmith, our POC for the Atlanta port is Tammy Lewis. Please contact her before you depart the US (404-366-1650 or tlewis@coppersmith.com) . I would recommend establishing contact as soon as possible to avoid any last minute surprises. You will then need to provide your outfitter or hunting operation with the following information for shipment of your animal skins and horns back to the US.



Shipment should be directed through Hartsfield International Airport, Atlanta Georgia. The following information must be on each shipping label:

Ship to:

(Hunters name, address and phone number)

Expressions of Wildlife Taxidermy
c/o Seminole Fur Dressing
3746 Opelika Rd
Phenix City Alabama 36870

On arrival notify :

Coppersmith Inc
114 South Field Parkway Suite 130
Forest Park Georgia 30297
Attn: Tammy Lewis (404-366-1650)

Importing International Shipments

Upon the shipments arrival, Coppersmith will invoice all customs and USDA inspection fees and any additional freight charges directly to the hunter prior to the shipment being forwarded to Quality Fur Dressing.

Coppersmiths charges a flat fee for Customs, USDA and USFW but this ensures your shipment gets cleared and sent on its way to the tannery. It is a complex process and they do it every day. It is the same single fee for multiple animals. If you had any CITES animals, ie, Lion, Leopard, Zebra there would be an additional charge. The good news is there are no other USDA, Customs or USFW charges.

Shipping costs by Coppersmith to the USDA approved tannery is additional but with small shipments should be minimal. Large shipments could be as much as \$200-\$300. All Coppersmith fees are billed directly to you after the shipment is cleared.

Next

Once the shipment has been cleared by Coppersmith it will be forwarded to the Tannery. Upon receipt, the Tannery will notify Expressions of Wildlife Taxidermy that shipment has arrived and being processed. Arrangements will be made for pickup or shipment of skulls/horns while skins are being processed.

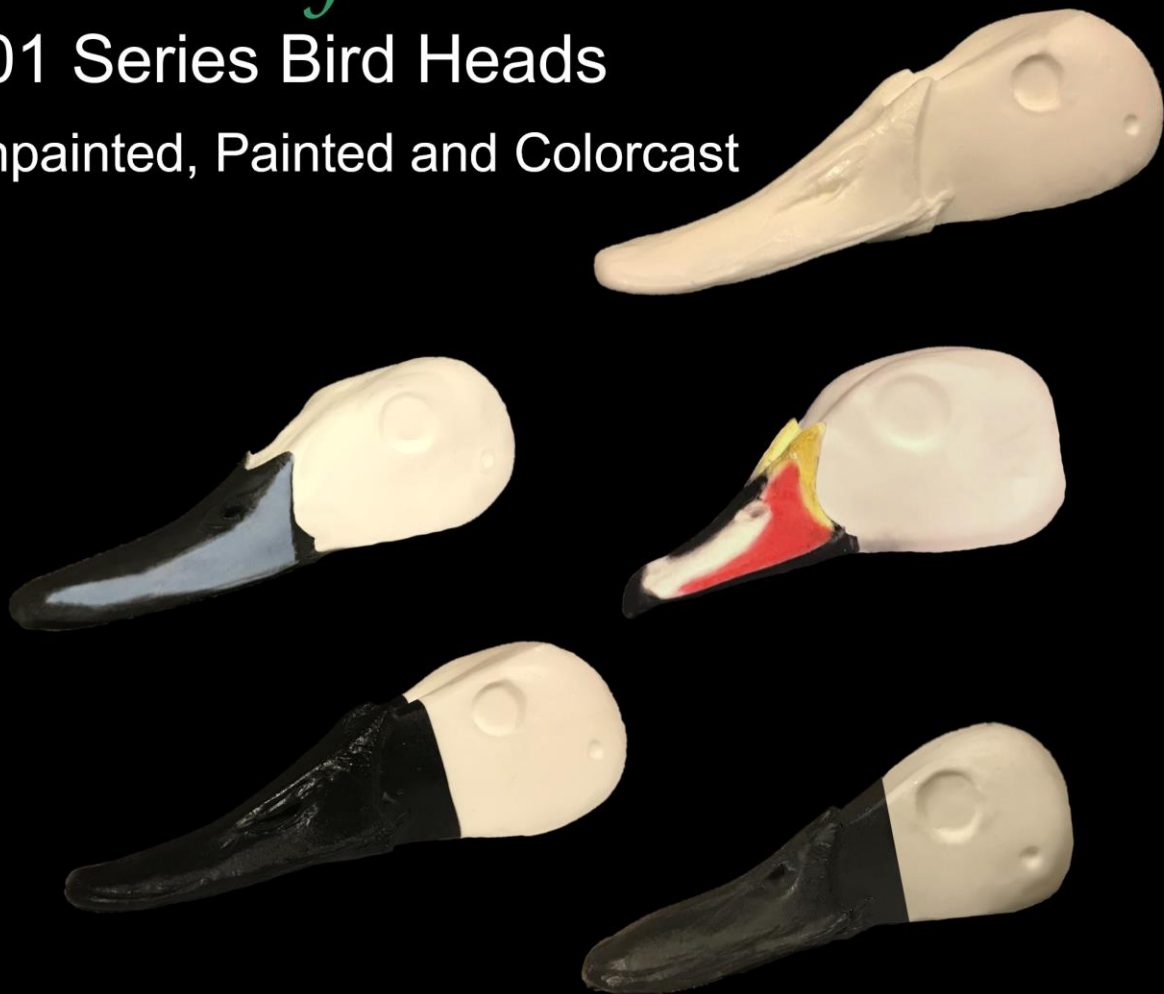
At this time your 50% deposit on your mount(s) is due. Deposits cover tannery and all other associated fees, forms and materials and ensures the client has a vested interest in the final product. Any additional handling of USDA restricted products by Seminole Fur Dressing such as boiling of swine or monkey skulls, crate disposal or repacking are covered in your Taxidermy fees. We also incur a financial obligation to the Tannery/USDA approved facility at the time we pick up the skull/horns.

Upon completion of tanning, Expressions of Wildlife Taxidermy will receive the tanned skins and taxidermy work will begin per our schedule.

Taxidermy Tech

101 Series Bird Heads

Unpainted, Painted and Colorcast



Available

Wood Duck Hen

Pintail Drake

Blue Wing Teal

Canvasback

Mallard

Wood Duck Drake

Mallard Hen

Redhead

Hooded Merganser

Wood Duck (open bill)

Green Wing Teal

Common Eider

Unpainted heads are \$9. All painted heads are \$14.50.

Colorcast heads are \$10.50 and are currently only available in BW Teal, Hooded Merganser and Canvasback.

Forms produced for sale by Taxidermy Tech are copyrighted .
Any reproduction or copying of the forms or any parts of the forms is strictly prohibited.

Recent Alumni

November-December-January

Gracelyn Mogelnicki – Basic Whitetail
Gracelyn Mogelnicki – Basic Waterfowl
Shirley Almeida – Predator
Austin Culpepper- Basic Whitetail
Brice Cape- Basic Waterfowl/Turkey
Harley Clyne- Basic Waterfowl
Brannon Mobley- Basic Whitetail

Future Alumni

February-March-April

Chase McClellan - Basic Whitetail
Jeremy Guerin – Basic Whitetail
Petra Venum – Basic Predator
Megan Marshall – Basic Waterfowl
Brannon Mobley – Basic Waterfowl

Our Preferred Suppliers

[Foster Taxidermy Supply](#)

[Mears Whitetail Forms](#)

[Joe Coombs Taxidermy Supply](#)

[Dixie Classic Panels](#)

[Rocky Mountain Materials](#)

[Reynolds Advanced Materials](#)

[Pro-1 Performance Chemicals](#)

[Havalon \(Blades\)](#)

[Uline](#)

[FleshingMachines.com](#)

[Hobby Lobby](#)

[StickerBanners](#)

Wood Duck Eye Rings

I have always rebuilt my own eye rings with apoxie sculpt. I am fully aware that there are pre-molded cast eye rings on the market...I have tried every one of them and for one reason after another they just did not measure up. The Flex Eye rings require a lot of drilling out for the capsule to fit, and some of the other eye rings out there don't install as seamlessly as the apoxie sculpt eye rings. Truth of the matter is that the apoxie sculpt eye ring approach is a simple and very efficient way to finish out your wood ducks.

You will have to wait until the bird is dry. It helps to place the wood duck on a stand and turn it sideways so you can work on the eyes hands free. Using a combination of an artists brush and a Q-tip swab, clean the eye thoroughly to get rid of any dirt, paint or glue.

You can order pre-colored apoxie sculpt for your eye rings or color it yourself. I color my own by mixing in a few drops of acrylic paint with part A and B as I am mixing. I use a glove for mixing and kneading and once its ready I slip the glove off. It can get really messy!



Wood Duck Eye Rings

The following are some pictures and a brief explanation of how to make your eye rings. This is very quick and easy!



Roll out a very thin roll of the pre-colored Apoxie Sculpt in the palm of your hand. You can see in the images how thin but I would estimate as thin as a wood toothpick...or even thinner!



Loosely drop the roughly 2 inch roll of Apoxie Sculpt on to the eye.



Wood Duck Eye Rings



Use a small wet pointed artist brush to carefully adjust the roll into position.



Cut away any excess length with a pin or a small scalpel blade. You can wet your finger at this point and lightly press in on the eye ring to ensure adhesion.



Wood Duck Eye Rings

Once the apoxie sculpt has had time to completely harden, use a small artist brush to texture the eye lid with Mod Podge. Let dry and your finished! Note: you can also add texture with a small insect pin in lieu of the Mod Podge. You should wait until the apoxie sculpt has firmed up a bit before using this particular method but it also yields excellent results.



A banner for Taxidermy Tech Vocational Training Programs. The banner features a green background with a white circle containing text. On the left, there is a taxidermy specimen of a lynx. On the right, there is a taxidermy specimen of a yellow dog's head. The text in the white circle reads: "Taxidermy Tech Vocational Training Programs", "CALL TODAY - TOLL FREE (844) 945-3278", "Pensacola, Florida", and "www.taxidermytech.com". To the right of the white circle, it says "Call Now! 844-WILDART".

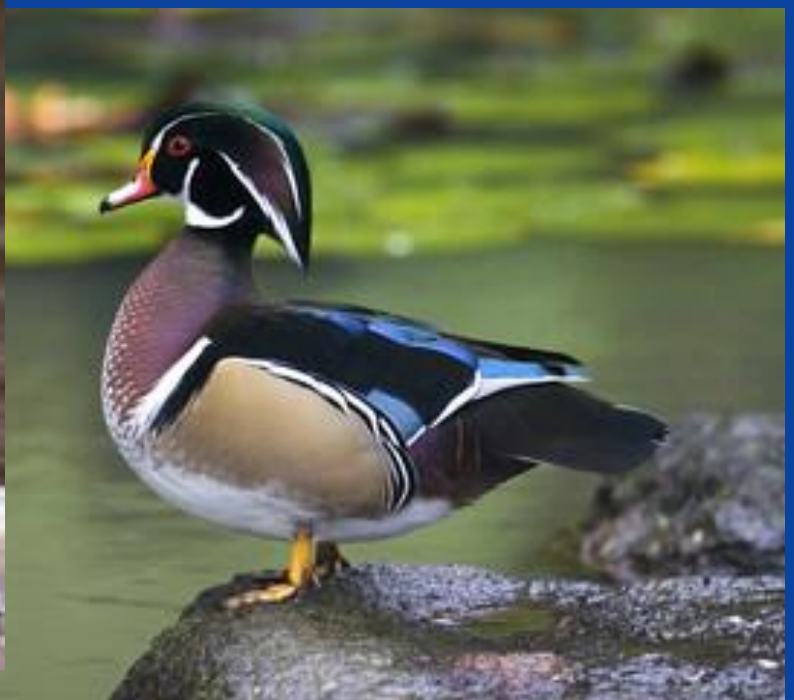


Reference Study

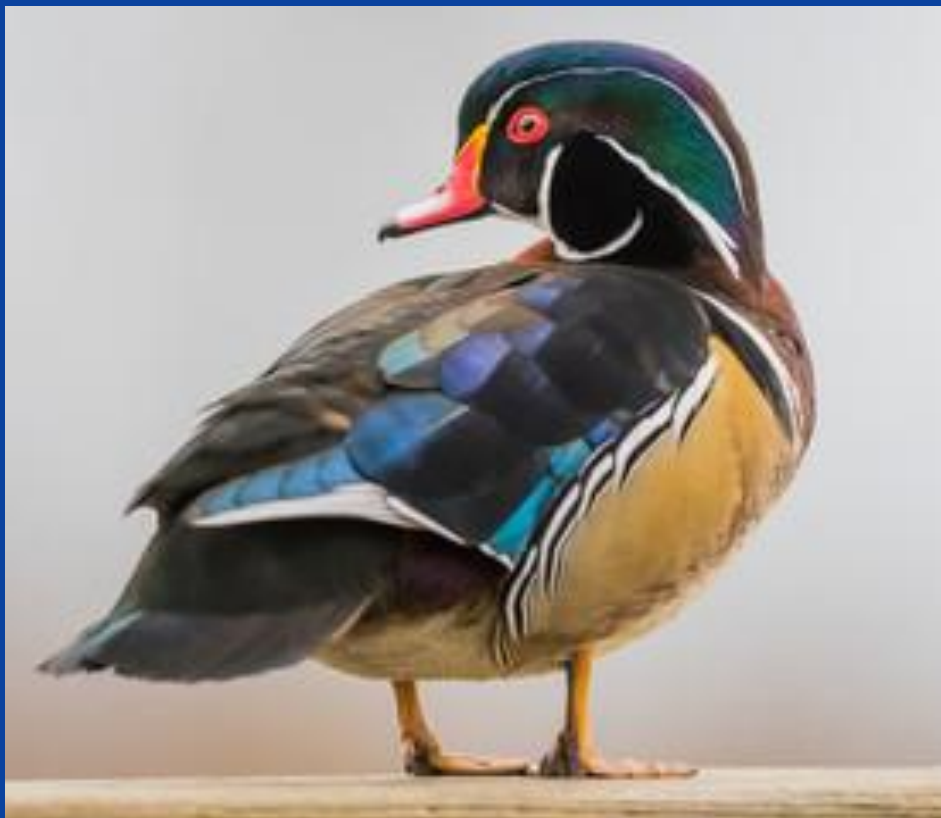
Wood Duck Drake



Reference Study



Reference Study



All Images in Public Domain



TAXIDERMY TECH REUNION

Next Level Training Event

We will host a free training event on Saturday, March 18, 2023 in Pensacola open to all Taxidermy Tech Alumni, families and all of our vendor friends and family. This will be an all day event...8 AM to 6 PM covering reinforcement and next level training across whitetails, small predators and birds.

Seminars Schedule

8:00 AM – 8:30 AM	Opening Brief
8:30 AM – 10:00 AM	Whitetail and Small Predator Eye Sets
10:30 AM – 11:30 AM	Ducks Heads with Pan Pastels (ongoing)
11:30 AM – 12:30 PM	Lunch
12:30 PM – 1:30 PM	Habitats – Water Scenes and Splashes
2:00 PM – 3:00 PM	Form alteration
3:30 PM – 5:00 PM	Earliners vs Bondo Method
5:30 PM to 6:00 PM	Whitetail ear rotation
6:00 PM – 6:30 PM	Questions Closeout

We will have food on site, BBQ, chips, water, soda, etc.

Bring your notepad, iPad, butt pad and any other pad you need and join us!

Please RSVP by March 1 2023 to learn@taxidermytech.com or text name and number of attendees in your party to 850-544-7865.

**Chloe Smith, Staff Taxidermist
Expressions of Wildlife Taxidermy Inc.
Pensacola Florida**



Taxidermy In Focus
Quarterly Newsletter



Javelina
Mounted By Chloe Smith

Taxidermy Tech
Vocational Training and Mentorship

A large graphic for a quarterly newsletter. The title "Taxidermy In Focus" is written in a stylized, green, serif font. Below it, "Quarterly Newsletter" is written in a smaller, plain font. The central image is a taxidermy specimen of a javelina head, shown in profile with its mouth open, revealing its teeth. The background is black. At the bottom, the text "Javelina Mounted By Chloe Smith" is written in a white, serif font. Below that, "Taxidermy Tech" is written in a stylized, green, serif font, and "Vocational Training and Mentorship" is written in a smaller, plain font.