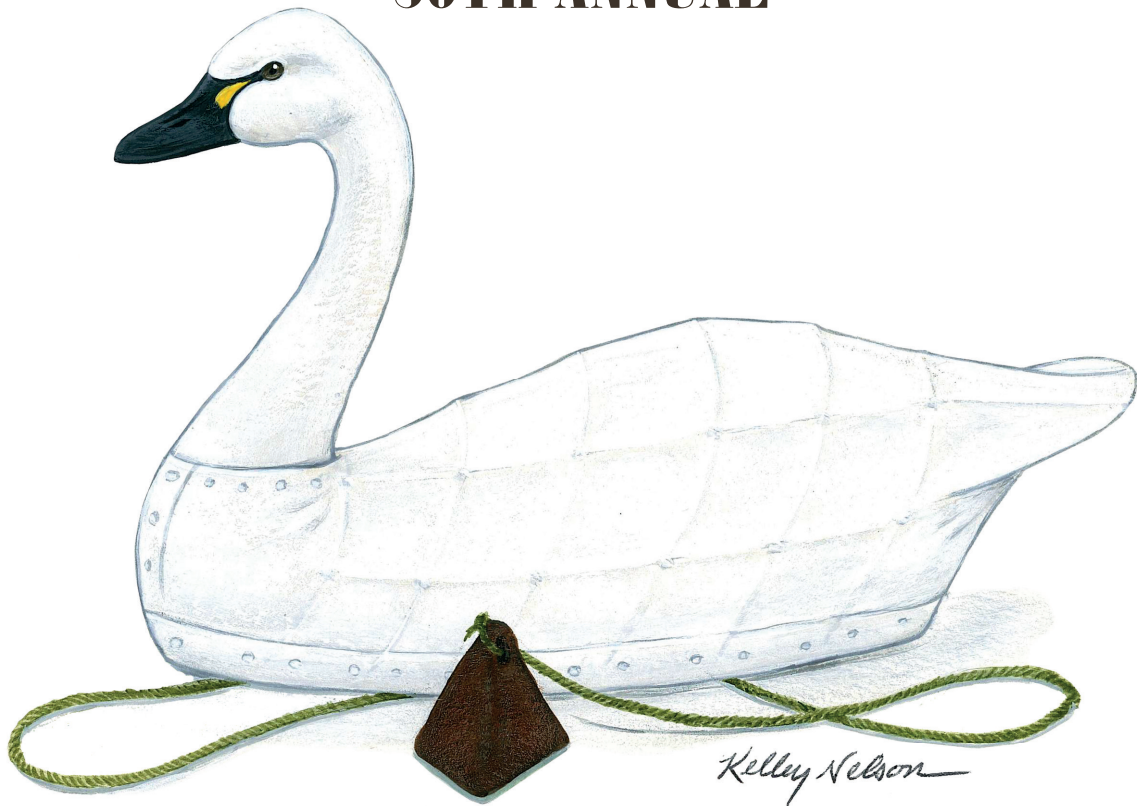


36TH ANNUAL



Core Sound
**DECOY
FESTIVAL**

HARKERS ISLAND, NC

DECEMBER 7-8, 2024



IMPACT

in North Carolina

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NCWRC COMMISSION

Contributions to Canadian projects

\$1,685,478

ATLANTIC HABITAT INITIATIVE

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MANITOBA

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MARITIME AG WETLAND RESTORATION



479 ACRES

GOOSE CREEK GAME LANDS

DU is partnering with North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission to complete several projects on three units of Goose Creek Gamelands in Beaufort and Pamlico Counties, which lies within the Tar-Pamlico River Basin—Campbell Creek (310 acres), Smith Creek (25 acres), and Spring/Hunting Creeks (144 acres).

Goose Creek Game Land is located on a priority area along the Atlantic Flyway and is managed for its primary users which include hunters, trappers, anglers, and wildlife viewers.



265 ACRES

CAPE FEAR ACQUISITION (NAWCA PASS-THRU)

DU assisted NCCLT with the acquisition of 265 acres along the Cape Fear River comprised of mature cypress-gum swamp and forested uplands. The property lies within the Steep Run Swamp Significant Natural Heritage Area ranked of very high ecological significance by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program. A Wood Stork colony as well as a Swallow-tailed Kite nest (the only one documented in NC) have been documented on this site. NCCLT purchased the property and transferred it in a same day closing to the State of North Carolina to be managed by North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission as public game lands.

KEY PROJECT PARTNERSHIPS



Acquisition of this property will allow the public the opportunity to interact with wildlife relatively uncommon to the area while also protecting the habitats of the wildlife. This project supports the SAMBI objective of protecting forested wetlands in the South Atlantic region.

ATLANTIC FLYWAY CONSERVATION

752,080

TOTAL ACRES CONSERVED

NORTH CAROLINA CONSERVATION

146,750

TOTAL ACRES CONSERVED

PERCENT OF ALL FLYWAY CONSERVATION EFFORTS ARE IN NORTH CAROLINA

20%

AMOUNT SPENT TO DATE IN STATE

\$34,205,129



AMOUNT SPENT TO DATE IN FLYWAY

\$275,756,532

12%

OF TOTAL FLYWAY FUNDS

FISCAL YEAR 2023

BASED ON NUMBERS AS OF 1/1/23

\$3,692,438

TOTAL EVENT INCOME

raised by **78**

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CONTACT: DAVE NEAL
Sr. Regional Director, SE NC
dneal@ducks.org

FEATURES

4

WELCOME to
the 36th Annual
Core Sound Decoy
Festival!

6

THANK YOU

9

KIDS
CARVING AND
PAINTING-
Every 3rd Saturday
at the Guild.

11

FEATURED
BIRD-
Swan

12

FEATURED
CARVERS-
Kelley Nelson

15

2024 POSTER
CONTEST
WINNER-
Kelley Nelson

17

LOON DAY- An
annual event that
honors tradition.



21

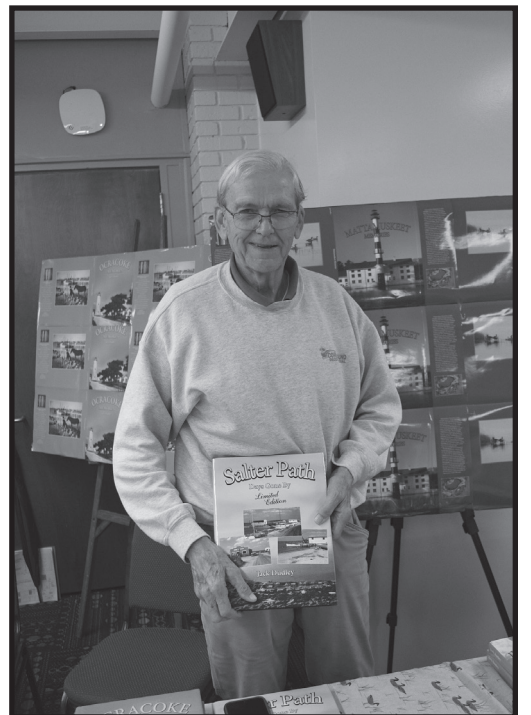
SCHEDULE
of daily festival
events

22

COMPETITION
information and
past winners

24

FESTIVAL
ACTIVITIES-
There's something
for everyone!



WELCOME

Welcome to Harkers Island and the 36th Annual Core Sound Decoy Festival!

We have found ourselves in December once again, celebrating the 36 years of the Core Sound Decoy Festival, an event that we all look forward to all year. Even though some of the faces have changed over the years the family atmosphere is unmistakable and the reunion is always welcomed.

Without your commitment and continued support for the past festivals, the Core Sound Decoy Carvers Guild and Harkers Island Elementary School, it would be impossible to offer a festival that many feel is the best of its kind. The vision for this festival has always been inspired by individuals and organizations with a collective dream to foster a culturally rich heritage of the art of decoys, decoy carving, and decoy collecting. In today's age of high-tech and mass produced plastic decoys, our traditional decoy heritage and preservation is perhaps more important than ever. Our decoy carving heritage holds the key to our identity, often helping to define us, while awareness and appreciation of the old traditions brings us together in a common bond. The Decoy Carvers Guild and Decoy Festival are rich in the legacy of the waterfowl hunters and carvers in and around Core Sound. Your support through the past 36 years will certainly help in keeping the craft alive and ensuring that it is passed along to future generations.



Though it may be stating the obvious, the success of the decoy festival has depended on so many people through the years, whether through contributions, donations, and service. As always, we extend a HUGE THANK YOU to Al Roberson, principal of Harkers Island Elementary School, as well as all the teachers, staff, students, and parents who continually support our festivals. Through the years they have made their school building and classrooms available to us, and the guild would like to thank each and every person for their extraordinary contributions and generosity. The festival also serves as a fundraiser for the school by selling food in the cafeteria over the weekend. The clam chowder, shrimp burgers, and banana pudding are definitely the best around.

THANK YOU to James Lewis, our Festival Chairman, who oversees all the volunteers and coordinates all the exhibitors and their displays. We have one of the best decoy festivals on the East Coast, and that is due to the wide range of talented artisans and craftsmen that are part of our show. THANK YOU to all of our exhibitors who travel to be a part of our show, and thanks to everyone who participates in the various competitions during the festival.

Last but certainly not the least, 36 years of decoy festivals could not have happened without the countless hours put in by our steadfast VOLUNTEERS. Thank you to those that have given time to set-up, work, and take-down the festival every year. They are there long before visitors arrive and are still there long after the have gone. We would not have made it 36 years without each and everyone of you, THANK YOU for all you do!

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THANK YOU!!

Thank you for your support of the 36th Annual Decoy Festival. It is humbling to be a part of and to carry on the vision of those seven founding members and the many that have followed. We could not carry on without all of you!

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the program, whether that was writing articles or selling ads.

Thank you to Amie Talton for her continued support of the Guild in so many ways!!

Thank you to Tom O'Brien and his staff at Acculink for all of their invaluable help laying out and the excellent job printing the program!!

As always, a BIG THANK YOU goes out to Jack Dudley for his wonderful article on the 2024 Featured Bird.

Photographs are courtesy of **Gordon Allen, James Morton, and Stan Rule... THANK YOU!!**

Thank you to our long standing EXHIBITORS and their continuous support of the Decoy Festival!

Thank you to our many advertisers that help make this publication possible!

Thank you to EVERYONE for your help, we sincerely appreciate each and every one of you and all you do!!

Sincerely,
CSDCG Program Committee

In Remembrance

Please take a moment to remember these long-time guild members that we have lost over the past year. As part of our decoy family, they are missed terribly.

Jack Gardner

Jamie Lewis



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KIDS CARVING

Decoy carvers have always regularly taught their craft to the next generation and the Core Sound Decoy Guild continues this heritage, not only with members mentoring individual family and friends, but also by

offering a carving experience to youth the third Saturday of each month (except December). Kids Carving is offered free of charge to school age youth beginning at 10 a.m. and finishing at about noon. Youth carvers complete a carved and painted half-sized decoy to take home at the end of the session. Begun by Curt Salter and Walter "Brother" Gaskill two decades ago, approximately 1,600 new carvers have been given an opportunity to experience decoy carving through this guild program. The guild believes this connects us not only to prior

generations of carvers but also promotes a focus on our local Down-east natural beauty and regional heritage. Our guild has also had three World Champion Youth Carvers in recent years and many returning youth carvers.

Brother Gaskill, Ken Brennan, Doug O'Neal, James Morton, and Steve

Robertson deserve special thanks for their repeated help this year. They seem to have a good time as well. Dr. Stan Rule, who leads this wonderful program, also deserves a HUGE THANK YOU for his continued support and dedication to Kids Carving. Our new carving room now has updated dust collection and safety gear is always provided. Guild members coach youth through the process and create an enjoyable and memorable experience.



A reservation is not required but encouraged to allow us to be sure we have adequate materials and carver support. Please call Dr. Rule the preceding Thursday or earlier at (252) 241-1523 and leave a message that you are coming, or e-mail us at decoyguild@gmail.com. Groups are welcome with more advanced notice.



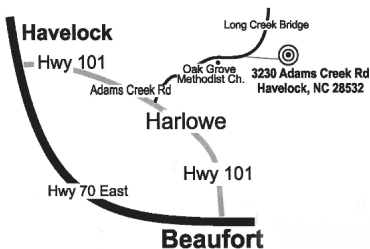
We can always use more kids and more volunteers. We also encourage youth to enter our Youth Competition at the Core Sound Decoy Festival and to enter youth division competitions at other shows. For more details, please visit www.decoyguild.com, find us on Facebook.



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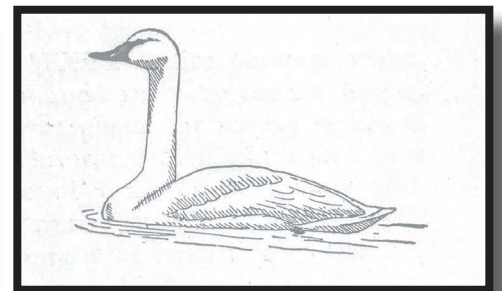
2024 FEATURED BIRD

The Swan

The featured waterfowl for the 2024 Core Sound Decoy Festival is the swan. Actually, there are several different species of these beautiful, graceful birds, but the most common species in Eastern North Carolina waters is the Tundra Swan, nicknamed the Whistling Swan. Like most migratory waterfowl, swans breed in the far north and winter in southern waters. The eastern band primarily winters in the coastal waters from Delaware to North Carolina, and Lake Mattamuskeet. Like geese, swans mate for life.

These elegant birds were declining in numbers but have recovered immensely, and now a low limited number can be harvested by hunters with permits obtained through a lottery. Each bird usually weighs between 12 and 20 pounds. Swans are reputed not to be as savory as geese or many of the duck species.

While resting on water swans usually display a straight neck and their heads are horizontal, except when they are feeding. Sometimes their head and neck exhibit a graceful “S” curve. When feeding, they mostly dip their long necks down to the bottom for vegetative matter. During flight, their wings are high over their backs and their long, white necks are straight ahead. They pitch into the water gracefully and swim with ease and grace, but are awkward when walking on land. When they take flight, they must face the wind and putter 15-20 feet. Once airborne, their legs and feet extend out behind their bodies. On long flights, like geese, they fly in a “V” formation. For short distances, they may fly in a wavy line or no formation at all. According to ornithologists, swans fly a bit faster than geese--roughly 50 miles per hour. Throughout Hyde County and along the Northern Outer Banks, there is no other such captivating sight as seeing swans in flight.



Special thanks to Jack Dudley for providing this information!

2024 FEATURED CARVER

Kelley Nelson

This year's featured carver is the talented Kelley Nelson. His talent needs no introduction if you have had the privilege of attending previous festivals; Kelley's wonderful carvings are always on display as soon as you enter the gym.

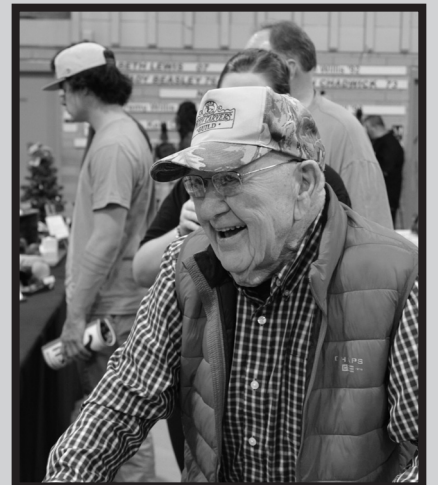
Kelley, a Carteret County Native, worked in carpentry and boat building for ten or twelve years as well as professional diving. He got his start decoy carving in 1999 after attending a carving class taught by Curtis Watkins at Carteret Community College. From there Kelley was hooked and his carving career took off. He continued taking classes at the community college and, when the time came, he took over as instructor where he taught for fourteen years. Since that time he has mentored many, and is a familiar face at the regular Guild meetings giving his continued support to the Guild and Decoy Festival.

Since the first pair of buffleheads that he carved Kelley has carved thousands of ducks, shorebirds, miniature decoys, and even fish. "I came in third place at the Wards World Championship with a three foot Blacktip Shark, the first year I entered" Kelley recalled. He has entered many competitions since then and has entered his birds in the IWCA Working, Root head, Decoy Painting Competition here at the Core Sound Decoy Festival. I asked Kelley what his favorite bird was to carve, to which he replied "no preference", stating that he thoroughly enjoyed carving Redheads, Canvasbacks, and Pintails.

Kelley likes to use a variety of carving styles to keep things interesting. He routinely carves with cork, canvas, tupelo, and juniper; carving full sized birds, contemporary antiques, and miniatures. Whatever your preference in decoys Kelley will likely have a piece that will catch your eye so stop by his booth to see Kelley and his wife Erin.

Kelley, thank you for supporting the Festival through the years, congratulations on being selected as featured carver!





2024 POSTER CONTEST

The annual poster contest presents the guild members with the difficult task of choosing the artwork for the Decoy Festival. Each year talented artists submit their original, hand painted entries in hopes that their piece will be selected to be the “face of the Decoy Festival” for the next year. The competition is always fierce and this year was no exception with a familiar face making his way back to the winners circle for the 2024 poster contest, our featured carver Kelley Nelson.

Kelley is an extremely talented carver and painter who got his start back in the early 2000’s after taking a carver class at Carteret Community College. He continued with decoy carving and took over teaching the class from Curt Watkins when he retired. While he has always enjoyed carving decoys and shorebirds he also carved fish at one time. One of the first competitions Kelley entered was the fish category at the Wards World Championships where he placed third with a carved Black Tip Shark.

Many folks will recognize Kelley’s decoys with a unique style of their own, especially his miniatures. Kelley is a past winner of the poster contest with the Tundra Swan being his sixth poster contest win. Be sure to pick up a signed copy of the poster and to stop by their booth to say “Hello!” to Kelley and his wife Erin.

Congratulations on the win Kelley!



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2024 LOON DAY



The Guild gathers each May for food, fellowship and a friendly decoy competition celebrating the heritage unique to Bankers and their multi-generational descendants of the hunting and eating of loons for sustenance. Community and group hunts occurred till the late 1950s—although outlawed long before. Although loons do not “decoy”, loon decoys were included in regional hunting rigs as “confidence” decoys.

This year, the Guild chose this occasion to also celebrate

the life of Jack Gardner. Jack was a festival Featured Carver, a longtime guild member, board member and mentor to many of us. Sawdust seemed to run in his blood. His skill at creating beautiful patterns and shaping life-like decoys was envied by us all. Although Jack was a frequent winner of competitions, it was his mischievous grin outward and his inward deep character that made him beloved. Whenever he told a joke or story, everyone leaned close to listen. Like the best of decoy carvers, his storytelling and conversation while whittling, is a precious memory. But most of all, Jack was respected for his deep and active devotion to his Maker, his family and his friends. Jack will long be missed.



The winners of this year’s strong competition were:

Ducks:

- 1st--Kelly Nelson--Lesser Scaup
- 2nd--Jason Michels--Canvasback
- 3rd--Robbie Robertson--Gadwall Hen
- 4th--Andy Pope--Widegon

Shorebirds:

- 1st--Gail Gerringer--Yellowlegs
- 2nd--Robbie Robertson--Spotted Sandpiper
- 3rd--Jack Hofer--Dowitcher

Competition entries are donated to the Guild for the auction that is held after the feast.



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Deborah Van Dyken
Author



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36TH ANNUAL CORE SOUND DECOY FESTIVAL

36TH CORE SOUND DECOY FESTIVAL

SCHEDULE

DECEMBER 7TH AND 8TH 2024

Saturday , December 7th 9am - 5 pm

- 9:00am** -Show Opens
- 9:00am** -Carving Competition Registration
- 10:00am** -Competition Judging
- 10:00am** -Children's Decoy Painting (all day)
- 10:00am** -Carving Demonstration, gym
- 11:00am** -Retriever Demonstration
- 2:00pm** -Carving Demonstration, gym
- 2:00pm** -Retriever Demonstration, gym
- 5:00pm** -Show Closes

Sunday , December 8th 10am - 4 pm

- 10:00am** -Show Opens - YOUTH DAY!!
- 10:00am** -Competition Judging
- 10:00am** -Carving Demonstration, gym
- 10:00am** -Children's Decoy Painting (all day), Youth Archery (all day)
- 1:00pm** -Head Carving Contest
- 1:00pm** -Retriever Demonstration
- 3:00pm** -Youth Prize Drawing (ages 6-17)
- 3:30pm** -Awards Presentation, Announce 2024 Featured Carver/bird, and raffle drawing winners for the Shotgun, Decoy, and Print.

Admission is \$10 daily, children under 12 free. Sunday is Youth Day with all children under 18 free.

JOIN THE GUILD

We would like to invite you to join the Core Sound Decoy Carvers Guild. Meetings are held monthly to share ideas and exchange experiences related to carving and collecting, as well as conservation and preservation efforts in our area. The annual membership fee is \$25.00 and includes free admission to the Core Sound Decoy Festival, as well as a quarterly newsletter. For more information, please visit the Guild's table in the library during the Festival or visit decoyguild.com.

CORE SOUND DECOY FESTIVAL COMPETITION

Welcome to the 36th Annual Core Sound Decoy Festival. We hope that you enjoy your visit to the festival and that your experience is a great one. Take time to visit the classrooms and gym to see some beautiful hand crafted decoys, and make sure you swing by the cafeteria where you are sure to experience the delicious aroma of some of the tasty food prepared by the Harkers Island Elementary school staff. Chances are you won't be able to resist the homemade clam chowder or shrimp burgers. Once you have entered the cafeteria you have also made your way into the decoy competition area, so please take a few minutes to watch the competition. Many of the birds will be required to self-right in our unique float tank, which is designed as a layout boat.



Over the two day festival the competition will involve over 200 hand-carved and painted entries in various categories from approximately 70-80 different carvers. Many styles of decoys will be entered into competition during our festival, including the detailed and extremely beautiful decorative decoys and birds, contemporary antique decoys, shorebirds, canvas decoys, miniatures, and the NC Traditional Championship, sponsored by the Kent Hood Foundation. This year, we are honored to be hosting the 2024 International Waterfowl Carvers Association (IWCA) Working Championship and Young Guns Championship.



While the competition is underway, we ask that you observe the DO NOT ENTER signs so that the judges and other volunteers can complete the judging in a timely fashion. Once the judging is complete, we will remove the signs and allow you the opportunity to view the birds up close. We also ask that you do not handle the decoys as accidents do happen and we want to protect the decoys as the carvers have invested quite a bit of time (and sweat) in creating these pieces of artwork. On Sunday, you will have the opportunity to watch decoy carving live as several carvers will have one hour to carve the head of a duck decoy. Not only is this an enjoyable opportunity to watch the carvers, but you also get the chance to listen to the carvers heckle and rib each other as they whittle away!!

Once again, 'thank you' for attending our festival and we sincerely hope that you will come by and watch the competition.

The Core Sound Decoy Carvers Guild is extremely pleased to be affiliated with the International Wildfowl and Fish Carvers Association. Our affiliation began with the 2000 Core Sound Decoy Festival and we continue to look forward to seeing the results of being an IWCA associate show.

Winners from the 2023 Competition

IWCA CANVAS

Rob Oliver

IWCA STYLE DECOY

Brother Gaskill

IWCA STYLE SHOREBIRD

Britt Vinson

IWCA WORKING

Gary Doviak

CHAMPIONSHIP

YOUTH 11 UNDER

Zackery Doviak

CHAMPIONSHIP

YOUTH

13 AND OVER

John Millush

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FESTIVAL EVENTS

Aside from the delicious food and tons of decoys, there are plenty of fun activities for the whole family at the 36th Annual Core Sound Decoy Festival! A full schedule can be found on page .

The Core Sound Decoy Festival Competition commences at 10:00 am on Saturday...several hundred hand-carved birds will be judged throughout the day in the cafeteria. It's worth a few minutes of your time to check it out...and while you're there, grab some tasty clam chowder from the cafeteria!! Save room for the banana pudding....delicious as always!



Don't miss the carving demonstration both Saturday (10:00 am and 2:00 pm) and Sunday (10:00 am) in the gym, given by Casey Arthur. This is a great opportunity to see how a block of wood turns into a decoy!



Children's Decoy Painting will be held on both Saturday and Sunday, starting at 10 am and continuing all day long. Guided by volunteers, future carvers get a taste of the decoy painting experience! The Head Whittling Contest will take place Sunday, December 8th, at 1pm in the gym. A juniper decoy head blank will be provided to each contestant. Carvers may use any hand tool, such as wood rasp, knife, sandpaper, gouge, etc. No motor tools are allowed. They must provide their own tools and the blank head will be provided by the guild. Carvers will have one hour to

complete their head carving. First, Second, Third, and Honorable Mention ribbons will be awarded, and the First Place winner will also receive a plaque. THANK YOU to Joe Fulcher for all of his hard work with the head whittling contest! Sunday is Youth Day at the Decoy Festival, and youth are welcomed with free entry, door prizes, and many other activities throughout the day! A big draw is the Youth Decoy Competition ...2008 was our first Youth Decoy Competition in which youth 17 and under were able to compete and be recognized and the youth competition has many different divisions for all ages and all skill levels!



AND ACTIVITIES



Retriever demonstrations, provided by Weller Kennels in New Bern, NC, will also take place at the festival. Come see what these talented trainers and dogs can do! A HUGE THANK YOU to Weller Kennels for coming out each year to show their dogs, and for their continued support of the Core Sound Decoy Festival! There is still more to see...don't forget to stop by the library for the assortment of book and magazine vendors, including Decoy Magazine. Renew your membership and purchase a few raffle tickets for the shotgun, decoy, and print at the Core Sound Decoy Carvers Guild table. You can't win if you don't enter!

There's also an amazing waterfowl artifacts collection, Steve Hamilton and family will have the Hamilton family collection of vintage shotguns, decoys, and other waterfowl relics on display.

If you haven't gotten a Decoy Festival t-shirt, sweatshirt, or hat, now's your chance to stock up...lots of colors and sizes are available. Don't wait, though, as apparel tends to sell out quickly!

What are we missing?? YOU!!! Chances are on trip through just isn't enough, and we encourage you to take another spin around the school...and grab a shrimp burger this time!!



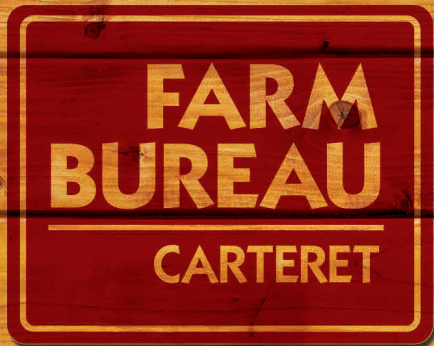
The Harkers Island Elementary School is a K-5 school and has been hosting the Decoy Festival in partnership with the Core Sound Decoy Carvers Guild for 36 years. We have been fortunate to have this opportunity. Just as the Guild uses this time to share a bit of Down East culture with patrons and friends, the school uses this event to teach our students about our past. We take great pride in our maritime heritage as we learn about our past and strive to enhance our future.

INDEX OF ADVERTISERS

Impact in North Carolina.....	Page 2
Kids Rule Pediatrics.....	Page 5
Lucky Duck Storage.....	Page 5
Brother's Decoys.....	Page 5
Hand Carved Core Sound Decoys by Jerry Talton.....	Page 5
CCBS & Sign-shop.....	Page 5
Kids Rule Pediatrics.....	Page 5
Beaufort Realty.....	Page 7
Beaufort Dental.....	Page 8
Weller Kennels.....	Page 8
Jason Michels Decoys.....	Page 8
Boardwalk Screen Printing & Embroidery.....	Page 8
Sure Shot Gun-Sports Shooting Range.....	Page 10
East Carolina Services, Inc.	Page 10
Carteret Health Care.....	Page 15
Taylor Furniture.....	Page 17
Casey A. Decoys	Page 17
DVD Books, Inc.	Page 17
Ocracoke Island Decoy Carvers Guild.....	Page 17
Brigadoon Animal Hospital.....	Page 18
Pizer Family Practice.....	Page 18
Klingspor's Woodworking Shop.....	Page 18
Waterfowl Weekend.....	Page 19
Carolina Tupelo.....	Page 19
Goose Creek Marina.....	Page 22
Farm Bureau.....	Page 26
The Lemmond Group.....	Page 27

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