

# Holmes plover flies high at Copley Fine Art Auctions annual “Sporting Sale”

**A**RUNNING BLACK-BELLIED plover by Lothrop Holmes of Kingston, Massachusetts sold below estimate for a single bid of \$144,000 to a New England dealer at the Copley Fine Art Auctions “Sporting Sale” on July 24, 2016 at The Hotel 1620 in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Formerly in the collection of Dr. James McCleery. It was the top lot in an auction that had strong contributions from a great variety of carvers, primarily from New England and the Mid-Atlantic states.

A hollow-carved wigeon by John Blair Sr. of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, from his “classic” period, sold to a phone bidder just short of estimate at \$90,000. A wigeon attributed to Blair, reportedly made after he moved to Elkton, Maryland in the early 1900s, sold to a South Carolina dealer for \$4800, well short of estimate.

A hollow-carved preening mallard hen by Bert Graves of Peoria, Illinois, painted by Catherine Elliston and formerly in the collection of Gene Konopasek, sold to a phone bidder within estimate at \$75,000. A pair of hollow-carved mallards by Charles Schoenheider Sr. of Peoria sold for \$4800 and a hollow-carved pintail by Robert Elliston of Bureau brought \$4200, each lot missing estimate.

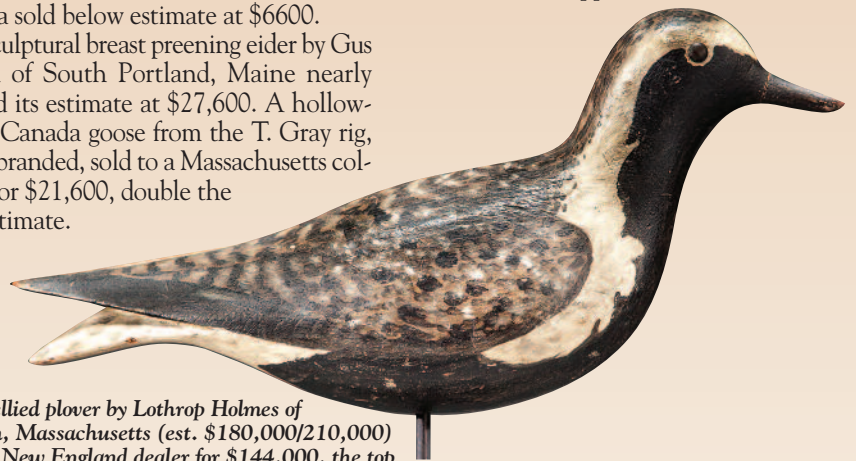
A bluebill, cataloged as a wigeon hen, by

By Decoy Magazine  
Photos courtesy Copley Fine Art Auctions

Lee Dudley of Knotts Island, North Carolina was the top Southern decoy, selling after the auction short of estimate for \$34,800. A hollow-carved Canada goose by Dave “Umbrella” Watson of Chincoteague, Virginia sold below estimate at \$6600.

A sculptural breast preening eider by Gus Wilson of South Portland, Maine nearly doubled its estimate at \$27,600. A hollow-carved Canada goose from the T. Gray rig, and so branded, sold to a Massachusetts collector for \$21,600, double the high estimate.

There were four lots on the top 25 list by A.E. Crowell of East Harwich, Massachusetts and all were shorebirds, topped by a rare sanderling that sold for more than double the estimate to a Massachusetts collector at \$25,200. A golden plover in winter plumage brought \$8400 and two in spring plumage sold for \$6000 and \$5100, all making estimate. A golden plover from Nantucket Island topped estimate at \$9600.



*Black-bellied plover by Lothrop Holmes of Kingston, Massachusetts (est. \$180,000/210,000) sold to a New England dealer for \$144,000, the top lot in the auction.*



*Hollow-carved wigeon by John Blair Sr. of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania (est. \$96,000/120,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$90,000.*

*Hollow-carved preening mallard hen by Bert Graves of Peoria, Illinois (est. \$54,000/78,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$75,000.*





*Bluebill by Lee Dudley of Knotts Island, North Carolina (est. \$48,000/72,000) sold after the auction for \$34,800.*

*Sanderling by A.E. Crowell of East Harwich, Massachusetts (est. \$9600/14,400) sold to a Massachusetts collector for \$25,200.*



*Breast preening eider by Gus Wilson of South Portland, Maine (est. \$12,000/16,800) brought \$27,600.*



A gull, the rigmate to the one pictured on the cover of Dr. Starr's "Decoys of the Atlantic Flyway," was the top lot of a consignment from the Southold Historical Society on Long Island, New York, selling to a phone bidder over estimate for \$21,600. Two black ducks from the same consignment, an upright and a sleeper, sold for \$11,400 and \$6600, the first over estimate and the other within.

A one-of-a-kind feeding Canada goose by Sam Soper of Barnegat, New Jersey sold to a New Jersey collector for its low estimate \$16,800. Two shorebirds by Harry V. Shourds of Tuckerton, New Jersey made the top 25 list: red knot at \$9600 and yellowlegs at \$7800, both lots short of estimate.

A hollow-carved lowhead broadbill by John English of Florence, New Jersey sold to a phone bidder for \$11,400, just short of estimate. Also of note, a hollow-carved black duck by Joe King of Edgely, Pennsylvania brought \$4500 and a hollow-carved pintail by Jess Heisler of Burlington, New Jersey sold for \$3000.

*Gull from Long Island, New York (est. \$12,000/18,000) sold to a phone bidder for \$21,600.*

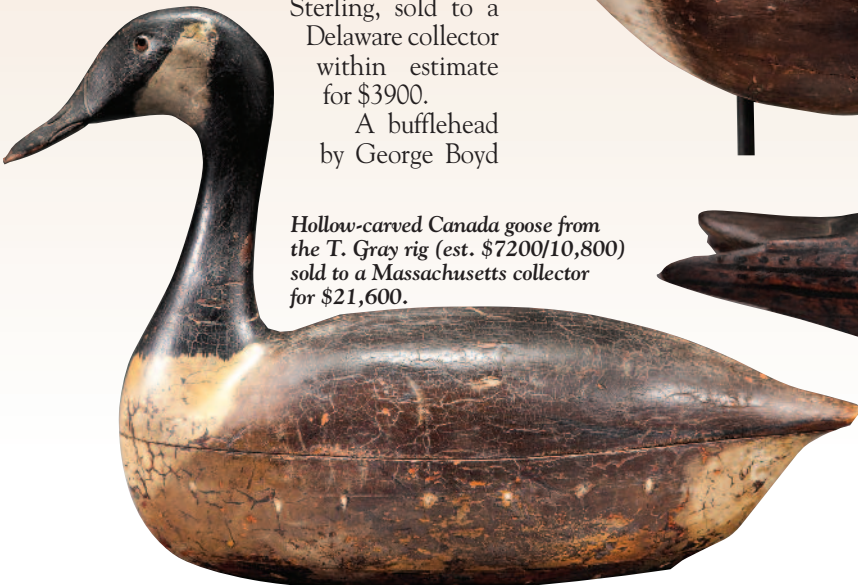


*Feeding Canada goose by Sam Soper of Barnegat, New Jersey (est. \$16,800/21,600) sold to a New Jersey collector for \$16,800.*

There were two decorative preeners by the Ward brothers of Crisfield, Maryland, a pintail and blue-winged teal, and each sold below estimate for \$6900. An early Crisfield decoy, a canvas-back hen attributed to Will Sterling, sold to a Delaware collector within estimate for \$3900.

A bufflehead by George Boyd

*Hollow-carved Canada goose from the T. Gray rig (est. \$7200/10,800) sold to a Massachusetts collector for \$21,600.*



*Black duck from Long Island, New York (est. \$4800/7200) sold to a phone bidder for \$11,400.*

## Top 25 Lots at the Copley “Sporting Sale” Plymouth, Massachusetts, July 24, 2016

Rank	Description (catalog no.)	Av. Est.	Price
1.	Lothrop Holmes (MA) black-bellied plover (309)	\$195,000	\$144,000
2.	John Blair Sr. (PA) HC wigeon (268)	108,000	90,000
3.	Bert Graves (IL) HC preening mallard hen (208)	66,000	75,000
4.	Lee Dudley (NC) bluebill (226a)	60,000	34,800
5.	Gus Wilson (ME) breast preening eider (311)	14,400	27,600
6.	A.E. Crowell (MA) sanderling (302)	12,000	25,200
7.	T. Gray rig HC Canada goose (306)	9,000	21,600
7.	Long Island (NY) gull (230)	15,000	21,600
9.	Sam Soper (NJ) HC feeding Canada goose (283)	19,200	16,800
10.	Long Island (NY) black duck (231)	6,000	11,400
10.	John English (NJ) HC lowhead broadbill (272)	13,200	11,400
12.	Harry V. Shourds (NJ) red knot (284)	15,000	9,600
12.	Nantucket (MA) golden plover (300)	7,200	9,600
14.	A.E. Crowell (MA) golden plover, winter plumage (301)	7,800	8,400
15.	Harry V. Shourds (NJ) yellowlegs (285)	10,800	7,800
16.	George Boyd (NH) mini bufflehead (325)	2,400	7,200
17.	Ward Bros. (MD) preening pintail, dec. (374)	10,200	6,900
17.	Ward Bros. (MD) preening blue-winged teal (375)	9,000	6,900
19.	Dave “Umbrella” Watson (VA) HC Canada goose (355)	10,200	6,600
19.	Long Island (NY) preening black duck (232)	6,000	6,600
21.	A.E. Crowell (MA) golden plover, spring plumage (303)	6,000	6,000
22.	Mark McNair (VA) pair of yellowlegs (182)	1,500	5,400
23.	A.E. Crowell (MA) golden plover, spring plumage (304)	6,000	5,100
24.	Feeding New Jersey ruddy turnstone (294)	3,000	4,920
#25.	Two lots tied for 25th place	8,700	4,800
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>\$621,600</b>	<b>\$575,220</b>
	# Charles Schoenheider Sr. (IL) HC mallard pair (222)	7,200	
	# John Blair attributed (PA) wigeon (273)	10,200	


**Key:** HC- hollow-carved      dec. – decorative

The top 25 lots (10% of the 250 sold) accounted for \$575,220 (70.4% of the \$817,170 gross) and were 7.4% below their total average estimate.

of Seabrook, New Hampshire by far brought the biggest price for a miniature in this sale, more than triple its estimate at \$7200. A pair of yellowlegs with wire legs by Mark McNair of Craddockville, Virginia brought the top price for a contemporary lot, tripling its high estimate at \$5400. Others of note include a pair of hollow-carved pintails by Bob White of Tullytown, Pennsylvania over estimate at \$2280 and a pair of standing canvasbacks by Bill Gibian of Onancock, Virginia at \$2160.

A canvasback by Dick Janson of Sonoma Creek, California was the top West Coast bird, selling to the phone at its high estimate \$4200. A pair of mallard bookends by Enoch Reindahl of Stoughton, Wisconsin made estimate at \$4500.

As is often the case at Copley’s auctions, the top 25 lots in the auction accounted for over 70% of the total proceeds (this report does not include the paintings and flat art sold in the auction). While only 28 lots failed to sell, the low estimate of those lots totaled \$220,920 – over 20% of the presale estimate.

In summary, of 278 lots offered 28 failed to sell, leaving 250 lots that sold for \$817,170 for an average of \$3269 per lot and were 2.2% over their total low estimate after deducting the low estimate of the unsold lots. The top 25 lots (10% of those sold) accounted for \$575,220 (70.4% of the gross) and were 7.4% below their total average estimate. All prices include a 20% buyer’s premium. Peter J. Coccoluto served as the auctioneer. 



Hollow-carved lowhead broadbill by John English of Florence, New Jersey (est. \$12,000/14,400) sold to a phone bidder for \$11,400.



Red knot by Harry V. Shourds of Tuckerton, New Jersey (est. \$13,200/16,800) brought \$9600.



Pair of feeding yellowlegs by Mark McNair of Craddockville, Virginia (est. \$1200/1800) sold for \$5400.