

# SHOWSTOPS



## 23rd annual Ocean County Decoy & Gunning Show Tuckerton, New Jersey September 24-25, 2005

When the weather cooperates, the old time Decoy & Gunning Show in Tuckerton, New Jersey, is one of our favorite venues for a decoy show. And this year it bordered on spectacular - just enough breeze to keep it comfortable, plenty of sunshine to make it warm, and not a drop of rain to dampen spirits.

The majority of the vendors set up in Tip Seaman Park along the lake, either in one of two tents or under a canopy of trees. There are additional vendors at the local High School and some decoy dealers assemble at the Tuckerton Seaport, although we hear it's a dwindling number as many have returned to the Park. *Decoy Magazine* takes a spot every year in the big tent.

If you arrive on Saturday by 8 am, the show is already well underway, with eager collectors scouring the Park in search of first picks among the offerings. Most of the old decoys in attendance were of New Jersey origin, but there were also a good number of Chesapeake Bay decoys for sale. One dealer had a whole rig of Wildfowler Point Pleasant decoys, and we noticed the authors of the "Wildfowler Decoys" book picking up a few for inventory.

Two dealers who set up under the trees, Phil Ryser and Bill Doggart, were pleasantly surprised to each sell an Illinois River decoy from their inventory. Turns out a Wisconsin collector made the trip back east and was able to take a few



*Phil and Beverly Ryser, Bill Ethington and John Hanson spent a day in the park at this year's Tuckerton show.*

Midwest birds home with him. We were also pleased to spot a Virginia shorebird on Artie Birdsall's table and couldn't resist taking it home with us.

A good number of contemporary decoy carvers also display their wares at the show, and this year we had the pleasure of meeting two - Jode Hillman of Mullica Hill, New Jersey and Josh Brewer of Delmar, Maryland. Jode, no relation to the famous collector John Hillman, has already established himself as one of the up and coming Jersey carvers and his Delaware River inspired decoys caught the eye of many collectors. Josh is definitely inspired by the carvers of yesteryear, and a pair of Ira Hudson style bluebills on his table captured the flavor of this talented Chinoteague maker.

This two-day show always draws a big crowd, as it's free to the public and has grown into a community event. There are dozens of civic organizations offering all sorts of foods, and nearly every third person brings their dog along, making for

some interesting competitions. There is skeet shooting over the lake, retriever trials, carving and calling competitions and live entertainment. Besides the decoys, there are waterfowl artists, boat builders, call makers and hunting paraphernalia dealers. You can even buy premium pet food. So yes, there's something for everybody.

But for *Decoy Magazine*, it's the decoys, which is the priority for many in attendance. We always sell a handful of new subscriptions and a pile of back issues, many featuring cover stories on coastal New Jersey and Delaware River makers. It warms our heart to see the locals take an interest in their waterfowling heritage.

So if you haven't yet been to the Decoy & Gunning Show in Tuckerton, New Jersey, you might want to mark in on your calendar for next year. Because when the weather cooperates, there's not a better place to kick off the fall decoy show circuit.



**18th annual Duck Fair**  
**Havre de Grace, Maryland**  
**September 10-11, 2005**

Sunny skies and pleasant temperatures greeted the 30 or so decoy vendors who set up on the old Bayou Hotel grounds, overlooking the Susquehanna River, for the 18th annual Duck Fair, sponsored by the Havre de Grace Decoy Museum. Most of the vendors were from the surrounding area, and their tables were primarily filled with Upper Chesapeake Bay decoys. Among the birds on one table was an original paint canvasback by Jim Currier that was priced at \$750, and ironically enough, it was just across the street from Currier's house where the bird was made some 60 or so years ago, where it likely sold first for about \$1.50.

The museum was open throughout the day, and a silent auction ran throughout the morning and afternoon. The crowd started swelling as 2:00 pm approached, the start of the live auction. Good old birds were at a minimum, and those by name makers, with the exception of a few Madison Mitchell decoys, were in repaint condition. One interesting decoy that drew many bidders, and a hammer price of \$320, was an attractive canvasback by Bob McGaw that appeared to be in original Jim Currier paint and was signed and dated by Mitchell. There were a total of 81 lots in all, and the auctioneer moved them in a timely fashion.

By most standards, this is a casual get-together with few choice birds changing hands. But it allows collectors to assemble and encourages informal conversation, and the museum staff and volunteers are to be commended for those accommodations. It's also the first show of the fall season, signaling it's time to dust off those collecting hats and start making plans.

- Jim Trimble



**Long Island Decoy Collectors Association**  
**35TH ANNUAL DECOY**  
**AND SPORTING**  
**COLLECTIBLES SHOW**

March 5, 2006 • 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

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**Reservations: (631) 758-2900**

Directions: L.I. Expressway exit 63 South OR Sunrise Highway Rt. 27 exit 52A to North Ocean Ave. (Co. Rd. 83). Right on West Main St., first left on R.R. Ave.

THIS YEAR'S FEATURED EXHIBIT:

**"Long Island Shorebird Decoys"**

*For information and table reservations contact:*

Timothy R. Sieger  
 (631) 537-0153

Dick LaFountain  
 (631) 725-2034

Mel Phaff  
 (631) 765-5499

Web Site: [www.LIDecoyCollectors.org](http://www.LIDecoyCollectors.org)

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**WANTED TO PURCHASE**

**WARD BROTHERS**

**1936 Goose Decoy**

Manually signed by Lem Ward, Crisfield, MD.

(Printed manually, made in 1936 for

Col. Phillips, Bishopshead Club.

Stamped L.T. Ward & Bros.). (Stamped Barb Johnson Collection.) Part of liquidation of Barb Johnson Estate Auction, was a pair in collection. Looking for other bird.

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