

COMPETITION DIVISIONS

DIVISION CRITERIA AND SPECIFIC RULES

YOUTH - Young and upcoming Taxidermist ages 18 and under. Judging emphasizes teaching and learning. May qualify for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place ribbons, and sponsored awards if available. This division is judged by the Novice Judges, who are qualified MTA members.

*Parental assistance will be allowed in the skinning and preparation of the specimens. Guidance will be allowed during the mounting and finish work of the specimen but must be kept to hands off level. Child must do the actual mounting and finish work themselves (unless entered in the parent/child category).

*A \$5.00 registration fee per child is applied regardless of the number of mounts entered. Mount fees are waived for this division as long as the child's parent/guardian/mentor is registered in the competition.

* It is not mandatory that a child enter the youth division (Ex. He/She may enter Novice or Professional divisions if so desires).

*A child may not enter youth division and any other division in the same category.

*The Youth Division shall be divided up into 4 age groups, 5-7 year olds, 8-12 year olds, 13-15 year olds and 16-18 year olds and Parent & Child.

*Youth division is to be judged by the respective Novice Division Judges

*The Novice Judges shall collectively choose the Judge's choice award for each age group.

*The Horizon Award will only be awarded once in the lifetime of the youth participant. After a youth competitor wins this award they are no longer eligible to receive it in future competitions.

* A participation certificate will be awarded to all youth that participate in the youth division

*No points will be awarded towards the Award of Excellence

* ***Scoresheet given***

NOVICE- For the newer Taxidermist to get a feel for the taxidermy competition. Judging emphasizes teaching and learning. May qualify for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place ribbons, and sponsored awards if available. This division is judged from a 6-foot distance with no hands-on judging by the Novice Judges who are qualified MTA members. Hands on critiques may be available but are not guaranteed

* ***Novice Division winners of 2 first place ribbons in a particular category must move up to the Professional division in future MTA competitions in the same category unless that competitor is under the age of 18.***

*No points will be awarded towards the Award of Excellence

****Scoresheet given***

COMMERCIAL- This is a Judge's interpretation division- open to all species. It will be judged for aesthetics, not mechanics. May qualify for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place ribbons, and sponsored awards if available. Mounts are not eligible for any other awards. Competitors should strive to present life-like entries. Judging will be completed by the Novice Judges from a 6-foot distance with no hands-on judging. Hands on critiques may be available but are not guaranteed

*Limited to the following categories:

- Birds • Fish • Reptile • Life-size Mammals • Deer and Game heads

*Limited to two (2) entries per registered member.

*No points will be awarded towards the Award of Excellence

* ***No score sheets given***

PROFESSIONAL- This is our largest division, for the Taxidermist advancing in their art!

Hands on judging will be done by World Class Taxidermists.

May qualify for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place ribbons, as well as Professional Division Best of Category Awards, and other special awards.

Points toward your Award of Excellence begin in this division.

You MUST receive a blue ribbon to be eligible for a Best Of Category.

****Professional Division winners of 2 Best in Category Awards in a particular category must move up to the Masters Division in future MTA competitions in the same category.***

***Best all around- Professional: Competitor must enter 1 mount from any 4 categories (limit 1 from each): deer or game head, bird, fish, life size mammal or I.R.A. The winner must have attained a score of at least 80 points on each of the 4 mounts. A score of 79 or less on any one mount will eliminate any chance of winning. The mounts may also be entered into the regular competition in their respective categories. Individual mounts may still be eligible for additional awards if they qualify. The 4 mounts being entered must be chosen at time of registration and can NOT be changed once judging has started. You will be required to pay each individual mount fee AND the Best All around fee.**

MASTERS- The Masters Division is to show your skills above the Professional Division. You will be competing against the best of the best.

May qualify for 1 st, 2nd, and 3rd place ribbons, as well as Masters Division Best of Category Awards, Best of Show Award, and other special awards.

You MUST receive a blue ribbon to be eligible for a Best Of Category. State Champions are then selected from Best of Category Winners. State Champion Titles are ONLY awarded in the Master's Division.

*Entries in the Master's division reproduction category must be originally done by the competitor and cannot be purchased from a supplier

*Back sides of wall mounted fish must be 100% finished in the Masters Division (see rule #22)

****Masters Division winners of 1st place ribbons in a particular category may not move down to the professional division in future MTA competitions in that same category.***

***Best all around- Masters: Competitor must enter 1 mount from any 4 categories (limit 1 from each): deer or game head, bird, fish, life size mammal or I.R.A. The winner must have attained a score of at least 80 points on each of the 4 mounts. A score of 79 or less on any one mount will eliminate any chance of winning. The mounts may also be entered into the regular competition in their respective categories. Individual mounts may still be eligible for additional awards if they qualify. The 4 mounts being entered must be chosen at time of registration and can NOT be changed once judging has started. You will be required to pay each individual mount fee AND the Best All around fee.**

MASTERS OF MASTERS (AOE Required)- This division is the most prestigious one in the M.T.A. It is mandatory that all body work, bird bill casts and parts be done by the participant. Nothing should be bought except eyes. See page ## for details about earning your AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

See competition rules for more information. Judging in this division will be very demanding. Mounts must be technically correct as well as artistically oriented and creative. May qualify for 1 st, 2nd, and 3rd place ribbons. The Judges will choose the best first place entry and the winner will receive a trophy as well as a \$500.00 cash prize. The winner's name will also be placed on the traveling trophy.

NEW! OPEN

****Explanation of the Open Division:** The best way to describe open division is it's a place to put categories that shouldn't have state champion AND do not accrue points towards your award of excellence. This makes it so only general competition categories get the special sculpted medallions for state champ. Those looking to earn their AOE's and compete for the MOM award can easily see what categories may be entered to do so. This also gives us a place to add new categories as taxidermy evolves and changes... like articulation....and interpretive! Each Open Division category would still have an award for best overall in the category (similar to a BOC)

Mounts may be entered in Open Division Categories that do not adhere to other "division categories/rules". Entries must abide by General Competition Rules. Pieces may qualify for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place ribbons and are selected collectively by the judges for the Best Overall Awards. Any mount entered into an "open division category" is ineligible for best of show, best all around, or any Competitors award.

Hands on judging will be done by World Class Taxidermists. Each category will be judged by the respectable Masters/Professional Judge. (EX: A Bobcat manikin will be judged by the mammal judge. While a Freeze dried baby duck will be judged by the bird judge) Open Division categories are not eligible for best of show.

Habitat: Habitat Category Requirements-The habitat entry fee must be paid in order to be eligible for the Habitat category. Eligibility for entry also requires the habitat to be part of a regular specimen entry for the current year competition. Score sheets will be used by the individual Judges for each entry as a basis for evaluation. Habitats must consist of a minimum of three separate mediums. Mediums may consist of dirt, rock, grasses, trees and bushes, water, ice, snow, moss, etc. Habitats may not be purchased in a completed state from another individual or company and used to compete. Individual materials may be purchased to use in construction of the competitor's original finished habitat.

Manikin: The sculpture must be an original, clay sculpture prepared using traditional sculpting methods. No sculptures in this division can be completed with any mechanical reproduction processes. It should be prepared to hang on a backboard for display, or it can be on a pedestal or table. There are no limitations in regard to having antlers set or glass eyes in place, but this will have no bearing on the judging criteria. Judging will be based on anatomical accuracy, creativity, workmanship, and essence or spirit of the species.

Skeletal Articulations: Skulls and full skeletons may be entered. All bones must be 100% free of any meat, connective tissue and grease. There should be no odors, staining, use of paint for flaking of the bone itself. Wires should be as hidden as possible depending on pose. Respective judge of the animal will judge the skeleton. Example: Fox skeleton would be judged by the mammal judge. Mounts will be judged on cleanliness, anatomic accuracy and presentation. All cleaning and construction must be done by the competitor.

Collective Artist: Two or more taxidermists may compete as a team by entering one piece collectively. Each taxidermist must be a member and registered for the show. A single category mount fee AND a single collective artist entry fee is required. Each artist receives a ribbon if the mount places. If a trophy is won, duplicates may be Requested by the individual competitors (only 1 will be awarded at the show) Collective Artist entries are eligible for any non divisional awards except best of show.

Freeze Dry: Freeze-Dry Entries may be bird, fish, or mammal freeze-dried pieces that have their carcasses intact. Mounts with only parts (head, feet, etc.) freeze-dried do not qualify. You cannot purchase a freeze-dried specimen from a commercial vendor or private individual and enter it into competition. The freeze dry entry fee must be paid to enter.

Interpretive: Some of the technical burdens of conventional competition are lifted because the display will not be scrutinized with the use of a flashlight and/or finger-probing. This does not mean the quality of the work can be substandard, yet it does give the competitor the artistic license to use an animal or part of an animal to create art in any way he/she sees fit. The goal should be to convey the essence of the species.

This division is open to all registrants. Entries in this division can also be entered in other divisions as long as they fall under the rules of those divisions. The interpretive entry fee must be paid to enter....(Continued)

*The rules are quite simple and unrestrictive. Interpretive Taxidermy entries will be judged on craftsmanship, artistry, and whether the essence of the species is conveyed. An entry should emphasize form and content rather than realistic duplication of the entire animal. It should be presented in a style that provokes thought and wonder. Any species of bird, mammal, fish, or reptile can be entered in part or in its entirety. This is an exploration of taxidermy as art.

*Must abide by all other competition rules

*The work will be judged from a normal viewing distance by our judges and there will be an open discussion about the composition, design, and uniqueness of the entries. Score sheets are not used to judge this division. This is a single-ribbon division. If there is a tie the judges will be asked to cast a second vote to break the tie.

Interactive Group: The intent for this category is to create entries that interact with each other whether same or different species.

*Mounts entered into this category may also be entered singularity in their respective category.

*The Interactive Group entry fee must be paid to enter. If also entering mounts in separate categories, those entry fees must also be paid.

REMINDER THAT YOU CAN NOT ENTER THE SAME CATEGORY IN TWO DIVISIONS!

EXAMPLE: YOU CAN **NOT** ENTER A MULE DEER (GAME HEAD) IN MASTERS AND AND IMPALA (GAME HEAD) IN PROFESSIONAL. ALL ENTRIES OF A SINGLE CATEGORY MUST BE ENTERED IN THE SAME DIVISION!
EXCEPTIONS ARE COMMERCIAL AND MASTERS OF MASTERS. SEE RULES FOR MORE INFORMATION

General Competition Rules

1. Mounts must remain for the duration of the show (**11:00am** Sunday) NO EXCEPTIONS!
2. Mounts entered at owner's risk. Every precaution will be made to secure the entries. The MTA will not assume responsibility for loss due to damage, theft, fire and/or natural causes.
3. All nameplates indicating the taxidermist name and/or business name must be covered by the competitor before mount is entered. No pictures showing the taxidermist and/or the business shall be allowed in the judging area until judging is complete. No names or pictures are allowed on the originality sheets. Absolutely NO signs advertising guide services will be allowed in the show at ANY time. Failure to comply may result in disqualification of mount.
4. No business cards are to be placed on or around competition pieces on the convention floor at any time during the show with the exception of the commercial division. This ensures the safety of all competitors' mounts from being damaged or stolen by ensuring the general public is not encouraged to reach across the security barriers that are in place.
5. Permits must accompany any protected species.
6. The MTA will not accept any mounts depicting man-inflicted injuries such as a trap on leg, gunshot wounds, arrows in flesh, or any mount done in poor taste. The competition chairman has the right to remove any such mount from the show.
7. There will be multiple ribbons in all divisions.
8. Reproduction parts are acceptable (i.e. duck heads, feet, fish heads).
9. Freeze-dried will be a separate **open** category. Exception – you may use a freeze-dried turkey head only on a Turkey mount in the other categories. Any other freeze dry method must be entered in the freeze dry category. Competition chairman will have final say in any disputes.
10. **NO ONE** will be allowed in the judging area until judging is complete. ONLY people designated by competition chairman will be allowed in the judging area during judging.
11. Spotted fawns and juvenile/immature species may be entered **into their ADULT category ONLY** (questionable out of season specimens must have a breeder's authority). Juvenile/immature entries must have a sign for display with explanation of origin or death.
12. Domestic dogs and cats may NOT be entered
- 13: ***Any mount that has won a world title can not compete in the general competition.(we may create a special invitational for these mounts in the future)***
14. Extra credit MAY be given for doing your own Reproduction parts; forms, etc. provided they are done well and in accordance with the score sheets. Please indicate so on your originality sheet.
15. No novelty mounts allowed (i.e. mounts depicting animals in a human or unnatural setting. The competition chairman will remove any mount as such brought to the show).
16. The Judges must break all ties for trophies or major awards before the judging is completed.
17. You may NOT enter a single category in two different divisions (Example – you may not enter a deer head in both the Professional and Masters divisions. ***Commercial Division and Masters of Masters are the ONLY EXCEPTIONS to this rule! When entering Masters of Masters (Example- You enter a deer or game head into MOM and you can also enter another mount(s) in masters in a deer or game head category) This is so we do not inhibit the ability for AOE holders to compete. You could also add a deer mount into the commercial division.*** You may enter different divisions in different categories (Example – you may enter a deer head in Novice division and a fish in Professional division, etc.)
18. You MUST have received a blue ribbon to be eligible to receive Best of Category Award. Best of Category Awards are ONLY awarded in the Professional Division and Masters Divisions.
19. ***A competitor may have items entered into the show by an authorized proxy. The Competitor must be pre registered and all necessary paperwork completed. You must designate your proxy on your registration form.***

20. After the judging is complete, the Judges ARE NOT allowed to change any ribbons. Do not ask them to do so. If you have a problem, please contact the competition chairperson. He/she will use their discretion to settle any disputes and their ruling is final!

21. Sportsmanship-The MTA has gone to great lengths to obtain the most experienced and qualified Judges in the world. All Judge's decisions will be final. Competitors should conduct themselves in a professional manner. Unsportsmanlike conduct could result in disqualification and forfeiture of any and all MTA awards as well as being barred from future competitions.

22. All exposed areas of mounts must be completely finished (pedestal backs, table top mounts, etc. Back sides of wall mounted fish must be 100% finished in the Masters Division. All other divisions are exempt for wall mount fish ONLY

23. Best all around- Masters and Professional, Competitor must enter a deer or game head, bird, fish and life size mammal. The winner must have attained a score of at least 80 points on each of the 4 mounts. A score of 79 or less on any one mount will eliminate any chance of winning. The mounts may also be entered into the regular competition in their respective categories. Individual mounts may still be eligible for additional awards if they qualify. The 4 mounts being entered must be chosen at time of registration and can NOT be changed once judging has started. You will be required to pay each individual mount fee AND the Best All around fee.

24. All wall hanging mounts must have a proper wall hanger which allows your mount to be hung by a standard screw head. The MTA is not liable for damaged mounts because of improper hangers. Mounts with improper hangers will either not be hung or will be screwed into at the discretion of the MTA.

25. The grooming room is for grooming mounts only. Outside the grooming room and to the right of the registration desk is a great area to socialize in!

26. Interpretation of all rules and regulations or anything not specifically provided for in these rules and regulations will be decided by the Competition Chairman. Its decision will be final (just like an umpire in a ball game). Decide to accept its decision as final, or do not enter the competition.

27. Glass cases must be removed for judging or points will be deducted. If your case is delicate or exceptionally large, we require you to remove it, not our competition staff. You will be allowed to replace the case before the competition room opens for viewing.

28. Extra credit can be earned in any category for mounts entered on the competitor's original sculptured mannikin, wrapped, or carved body. Altered commercial forms do not qualify as original sculpture, but will be considered for originality.

29. Any pedestal or floor mount weighing over 50 pounds will be required to have rolling casters or other means to make it portable and moveable.

MICHIGAN TAXIDERMIST ASSOCIATION AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

Point Values Masters Division 1st Place = 5 points 2nd Place = 4 points 3rd Place = 3 points

Professional Division 1st Place = 2 points 2nd Place = 1 point

TOTAL POINTS NEEDED TO ACHIEVE THE AWARD OF EXCELLENCE-30

AWARD OF EXCELLENCE CATEGORIES:

WHITETAIL DEER & GAME HEADS * MAMMALS * BIRDS * FISH * **AMPHIBIANS, REPTILES, & INVERTEBRATES**

*All points must be earned at the Michigan State Competition/Convention. *10 points must come from Masters Division with 2 blue ribbons

*20 points remaining can come from Masters Division or Professional Division or a combination of the two.

** The competition chairman and the president, combined shall use their discretion as to if and where any mount in question shall be applied. Their decision shall be final.

** Collective Artist entries shall not be applied towards the Award of Excellence.

Retroactive Points: From 1983-1985 there were no divisions. They will be counted as Professional Division. 1985 ribbon winners were the introduction of the Masters Division and will be counted as first place Master ribbons. 1986-Present – mounts shall be awarded the appropriate points as per division and ribbons.

2021: Accruals for Amphibians, Reptiles and Invertebrates , start with the addition. No retroactive points.

Earning your award of excellence makes you eligible to compete in the highest level of competition. The Masters of Masters Division.

MASTERS OF MASTERS DIVISION CRITERIA

Once a member has earned their Award of Excellence, they are eligible to compete in the Masters of Masters Division in the category that earned them their Award of Excellence. This division is the most prestigious one in the M.T.A. It is mandatory that all body work, bird bill casts and parts be done by the participant. Nothing should be bought except eyes. Judging in this division will be very demanding. Mounts must be technically correct as well as artistically oriented and creative. Multi Ribbons will be awarded with 1, 2, 3. The judges will choose the best first place entry and the winner will receive a trophy as well as a \$500.00 cash prize. The winner's name will also be placed on the traveling trophy.