

# **MICHIGAN TAXIDERMIST ASSOCIATION**

## **Annual State Fish Carving Competition & Convention**

March 18 - 22, 2020

*Devos Place, Grand Rapids, Michigan*



# MTA 2020 Fish Carving State Competition

## Michigan Taxidermist Association Fish Carving Guide

### Levels of Competition - DIVISIONS

#### Four Competitive Divisions

The MTA Fish Carving Competition is based upon the coming together of fish carvers from all over, each having varied levels of knowledge, experience, and abilities. For the sake of managing a competition having entrants with such varied carving abilities, four levels are used to provide groups of carvers having similar capabilities. The levels are described below.

The level at which the individual carver chooses to compete in should be based on the extent to which they believe they have progressed in mastering carving concepts, techniques, and methods, and their level of skills and craftsmanship development.

The general competition process is designed so first-time carving competitors can start at the novice level of a division of their choice and work up to higher levels as their abilities and skills increase. However, it is **not** required that a carver begin competing by entering at lower levels. Carvers may choose any level to enter a carving in for the competition. Once a carver wins an award at a certain level they may not compete in a lower level within the same division.

**1. Open Level: oriented to carvers with great experience, knowledge, and advanced ability to successfully conduct a wide range of carving techniques and methods resulting in the creation of varied, high quality, and unique and artful carvings.**

All carvers may compete at the open level and anyone who has won two MTA first place awards in the Intermediate level of a division **must** advance to the open level of the same division.

**2. Intermediate Level: oriented to carvers who have advanced beyond the novice level through more hands-on experience and practice of mastering most basic carving methods and techniques. Such carvers are likely to spend more effort in studying and learning new more advanced carving methods and techniques that they can or have started applying to their basic carvings in order to refine and improve their carving products.**

The intermediate level is open to carvers who have **not** previously won two MTA first place awards in the intermediate level or any MTA awards in the open level and do not wish to compete at other levels.

**3. Novice Level: oriented to entry level carvers having minimal carving experience and are in the process of learning and starting to apply a few of the very basic methods and techniques for carving. Carvers at this level of accomplishment may not have even completed their first carving or only one of two at this stage.**

The novice level is open to carvers who have **not** previously won any MTA awards in the novice or higher competition levels.

**4. Junior Level: oriented to the age group of carvers from 17 years or under**

The junior level is open to carvers 17 years of age or under and who have **not** previously won any MTA awards in the Junior or higher competition levels.

# CATEGORIES

## **Decorative Life-size Realistic (painted) Competition Criteria (for all levels)**

- A. Judging evaluations of the carving entries will use the criteria given in the "Judging Criteria" listed below along with any other specific qualification criteria of this guide.
- B. Entries will be judged using the live fish as a model with strong emphasis to anatomical detail and correctness.
- C. Any fish that may be too large to carve may be carved at a reduced scale. For example, a 12-foot, 600-pound marlin or a 6-foot, 80-pound Chinook salmon would be carved at an appropriate reduced scale so that the minimum size is 18 inches with no maximum size. The reduced scale carvings compete as life-size and reflect the mature anatomy of the life-sized fish.
- D. A single-entry presentation can contain a single or multiple fish carvings. If the carver has multiple fish and desires each carved fish to be individually judged and evaluated for a potential award, then each fish must be entered as a separate competitive entry of the same presentation.
- E. All carvings must support the total wood carving concept of "all components are of a wood media only". Those entry presentations composed solely of wood, or those that contain as little non-wood materials as possible, will have an advantage over those entries that contain authorized substitute materials listed below. A statement for the judge by the competitor explaining their efforts to meet the total wood concept can be submitted with the entry form.
- F. Water effects by using non-wood media (resins, plastics, etc.) other than paint/finishes are not acceptable.
- G. The use of resins, silicones, or plastics in any form is limited to the construction of artificial teeth, eye sculpturing, joint construction, and inserting fins and tail only.
- H. Specific non-wood items accepted for use include: artificial eyes, fishing line, fish hooks, and metal for strength and support.
- I. Non-wood items not allowed as any part of the carving being displayed for effect include: plastic, silk, manufactured plants, and cast objects such as rocks, wood, bugs, plants, fins, and gills; real rocks, sand, or manufactured lures. Gravel made with non-carving methods such as wood plumber's putty is allowed up through the intermediate level.
- J. Commercial non-wood blanks and rough-outs are allowed in the novice and junior levels.
- K. Judging evaluations will be heavily weighted/favored when all elements are carved. However, the following use of found/driftwood is allowed: (a) in the junior and novice levels, found/driftwood may be used without being carved. (b) In the intermediate and Open levels found/driftwood may be used if the surface and shape have been reworked to some degree. It is important to know that the judging will consider greater value to greater amount of rework carving done to any used found/driftwood for an entry's final evaluation. To make sure the judge gives full consideration to the extent of rework conducted, the competitor will need to submit explanatory notes for the judge as part of the entry registration.
- L. All components used to create the environment/habitat for decorative entries must be made by the carver from wood (or metal where allowed when required for strength and support.)
- M. Carved habitat may be coated with paint, pigmented finishes, or paint additives for texturing.

- N. Any carving found to contain non-accepted materials defined by the effective guide/rules will not be eligible for ribbons or awards.
- O. Any method used to emboss, burn, engrave, or carve scales in wood is permitted.
- P. Glass cases or domes must be removed for judging.
- Q. The carving must contain the carver's name and date marked on the carving. (The name will be covered with tape at registration.)

#### **Decorative Stylized Painted Competition Criteria (all levels)**

- A. This division shares the same criteria as listed above for the Decorative Life-size.
- B. The difference lies in the degree of realistic detail, preciseness, and definition of replicating a live specimen. The stylized concept allows the carver to be less exact in replicating a complete fish and the complete details of a live specimen. It allows the incorporation of artistic expression and interpretation into the fish specimen being carved.
- C. The incorporation of artistic concepts and interpretive aspects into the competitor's carving will be a major factor in the judge's evaluation of the entry for award(s) assignment.

#### **Natural Finish Realistic (natural wood unpainted) Competition Criteria (for all levels)**

- A. Judging evaluations of the carving entries will use the criteria given in the "Judging Criteria" listed below along with any other specific qualification criteria of this guide.
- B. Entries will be judged using the live fish as a model with strong emphasis to anatomical detail and correctness.
- C. If the carver has multiple fish in a single entry presentation and desires each carved fish to be individually judged and evaluated for potential award, then each fish **must** be a separate competitive entry of the same presentation. The carver may use separate pieces of wood for fins, grass, etc. but all finishes of the fish(es) being competed must be natural.
- D. Only transparent stains and clear finishes may be used.
- E. No opaque paints will be allowed with the exception of eyes, where opaque paints may be used in place of glass eyes.
- F. The wood grain of the whole fish must be visible through the finish.
- G. Carved eyes are preferred, however, glass eyes will be allowed in junior, novice and intermediate levels only.
- H. Natural finish fish carvings are to be created, composed, and presented to best emphasize and enhance the natural beauty and character of the wood being used.
- I. Bases, habitat, and other presentation components except for the completed fish, may be painted or stained.

#### **Natural Finish Stylized (natural wood unpainted) Competition Criteria (for all levels)**

- A. This division shares the same criteria as given above for the Natural Finish Realistic Fish Division.
- B. The division difference lies in the degree of realistic preciseness, accuracy, and definition of replicating a live specimen. The stylized concept allows the carver to be less exact and accurate in replicating a complete fish and the complete details of a live specimen. It allows for the incorporation of artistic expression and interpretation into the fish being carved.
- C. The incorporation of artistic concepts and interpretive aspects into the competitor's carving will be a major factor in the judge's evaluation of the entry for award(s) assignment.

## Judging Criteria

The following criteria will be used for all levels of competition and, unless specifically restricted elsewhere, in both divisions, decorative life-size and natural finish. All criteria are important because they overlap and build on each other. In order for an entry to reach its fullest potential, it must succeed in all four areas simultaneously.

- **Craftsmanship** refers to the technical skills involved in carving: sculpting, painting, and finishing techniques. The execution of craftsmanship will be looked for in the subject, any habitat, accessories, and the base itself, if there should be one. Good craftsmanship should be consistent throughout the entire entry.
- **Accuracy** involves the correctness of a piece from a scientific perspective and in the decorative life size division is heavily weighted in the judging evaluation. Size, shape, color, pattern, location, number, are important concepts to apply to the development of the entry. Anything accompanying the subject must be given the same scrutiny. Accuracy involves the natural history of the whole piece, all of its components, and the appropriateness of those components together.
- **Essence of the Species** involves capturing the “jizz” or “gestalt” of a species. It involves a thorough knowledge of one’s subject and the ability to capture an attitude in wood. Capturing the essence of your subject and giving it the spark that brings it alive.
- **Artistry** of a piece refers to its design and composition. This is where presentation, innovation, and creativity all come into play. There should be beauty in the concept apart from the beauty of the carving itself. Line, form, content, color, mass, and movement should all be working together to create an integrated whole that is interesting, intriguing and impacting.

## Awards

1. Judging will not result in the assignment of a numerical number for a score as in the taxidermy portion of the overall competition event. Instead, each division will be awarded a First, a Second, and a Third place for the best three carvings in each respective level of competition having entries.
2. Each competition level will have single ribbon awards rather than multiple ribbon awards.
3. The first, second, and third single ribbon awards will be assigned by the judge(s) based upon how entries meet a minimum required criteria determined appropriate by the judge(s) for each placing. If there are no entries meeting the minimum award criteria for the applicable placing, that placing award will not be assigned.
- 4.. The "Best of Show" fish carving will be selected from first place award winners in the open levels of the decorative life-size and the natural finish divisions.
5. Ed Waliki Memorial Award (MTA Members Choice)
6. The Fish Carving Best of Show award will be chosen by the judge(s). The eligible entries will be the first-place entries from all levels of competition within the four competitive divisions.

## GENERAL COMPETITION RULES – Fish Carvers

1. Carvings must remain for the duration of the show (5 p.m. Sunday) NO EXCEPTIONS!
2. Carvings 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 name plates indicating the carver's name and/or business name must be covered by the competitor before carving is entered.
4. No pictures showing the carver's and/or the business shall be allowed in the judging area until judging is complete.
5. No names or pictures are allowed on the originality sheets.
6. Absolutely NO signs advertising guide services will be allowed in the show at ANY time. Failure to comply may result in disqualification of mount.
7. No business cards are to be placed on or around competition pieces on the convention floor at any time during the show. 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.
8. Two blue ribbons in Novice division in any category or combination of categories bump you up to Intermediate division the following year.
9. You must show your I.D. receipt tag upon leaving the show at 5 p.m. Sunday with your mount. DO NOT LOSE THIS RECEIPT!
10. NO ONE will be allowed in the judging area until judging is complete. ONLY people designated by competition chairman will be allowed in judging area during judging.
11. The judges must break all ties for trophies or major awards before the judging is completed.
12. You may NOT enter a single category in two different divisions (Example – you may not enter a carving in both the Novice and Intermediate divisions or Intermediate and Open etc.
13. You MUST have received a blue ribbon to be eligible to receive a Fish Carving Best of Show.
14. 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!
15. 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.

# Michigan Taxidermist Association Fish Carving Registration Form 2020

Please fill out and mail this form by **March 1, 2020** (postmarked).

**\*Show Registration fee is \$50.00 if you are attending any seminars or entering the Suppliers area you must be registered for the show.**

**\*Membership to the MTA also includes admission to the Sports Show.**

Make check payable to: **Michigan Taxidermist Association**

Send to: **Kathy Proctor, 11784 Winfield Rd., Jonesville, Michigan 49250**

[kathy@jpriverbendtaxidermy.com](mailto:kathy@jpriverbendtaxidermy.com)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City, State & Zip \_\_\_\_\_

I certify that I have carved and finished my entries unassisted, and I agree to enter all pieces at my own risk. Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

## **\*\*ALL ENTRIES MUST BE CHECKED IN AT REGISTRATION BY 9:00 P.M. WED\*\***

**Decorative Life-Size Realistic Category** \$15.00 each piece (after March 1 \$25.00 each) \$5.00-Juniors

Circle One: Juniors Novice Intermediate Open

Species/category \_\_\_\_\_

# of entries in Category: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15.00 (\$5.00 for Juniors)

**Decorative Stylized Category** \$15.00 each piece (after March 1 \$25.00 each piece) \$5.00-Juniors

Circle One: Juniors Novice Intermediate Open

Species/category \_\_\_\_\_

# of entries in Category: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15.00 (\$5.00 for Juniors)

**Natural Finish Stylized Category** \$15.00 each piece (after March 1 \$25.00 each piece) \$5.00-Juniors

Circle One: Juniors Novice Intermediate Open

Species/category \_\_\_\_\_

# of entries in Category: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15.00 (\$5.00 for Juniors)

**Natural Finish Realistic Fish Category** \$15.00 each piece (after March 1 \$25.00 each piece) \$5.00-Juniors

Circle One: Juniors Novice Intermediate Open

Species/category \_\_\_\_\_

# of entries in Category: \_\_\_\_\_ x \$15.00 (\$5.00 for Juniors)

**Membership and registration must be paid in order to attend convention seminars.**

**\*\*You must be signed up by March 1st, 2020** for the banquet dinner and/or Friday Night Buffett. No exceptions. **\*\*There will not be any dinner tickets available at registration OR the night of either event!**

### **TOTAL COSTS DUE**

Show Registration Fee.....\$50.00..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Entry Fees due ..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### **Banquet Dinner Tickets:**

Number of Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ x \$30.00..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Youth Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ x \$10.00 for 12 & Under..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### **Friday Night Buffet Tickets:**

Number of Adult Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ x \$25.00..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Youth Tickets \_\_\_\_\_ \$10.00 for 12 & Under..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Dues (if not already renewed) \$45.00..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Total Amount Enclosed**..... \$ \_\_\_\_\_