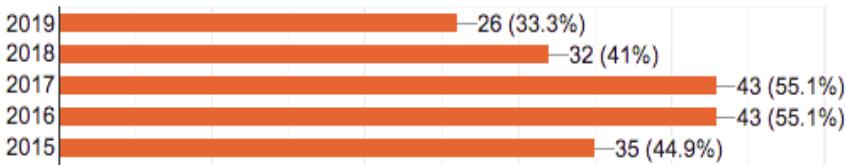


2019 ODCCA Wildfowlers Contest Survey Summary & Action Plan

By Vince Ciola and Ken Stuparyk

Earlier this year the ODCCA published a survey to get input from our Wildfowler Contest Customers about what they like & dislike, what they want & don't want, and to get recommendations & ideas to increase the level of participation now and into the future. What follows is a summary of the input that we received and the actions that we have decided to take as a result of this valuable input.

Responses: 78 people responded to the survey, about 1½ times the annual number of entrants in this contest making this an excellent representative sample. 62% were ODCCA Members. Their participation over past 5 Years:



Respondents told us to:

1. Clear Up and Clearly Communicate of the Rules

- 28% do not feel that the rules are clear nor understandable, 27% experienced a Disqualification (DQ), and of these 17% did not understand the rules.

Comments included: “Rules are too ambiguous with room for interpretation,” (e.g. average Wildfowler) “too many formal changes to the rules and too many informal changes.” Also, “Not ALL of the rules are documented (e.g. fingernail test),” and “not all rules are clear (especially painting).” And “Need visual ‘rules’ of what is and is not okay.”

ACTIONS:

- a) **RULES:** The ODCCA bench-marked three contests and nine decoy show rules, and has documented what we believe to be the most comprehensive comparison of side by side rules. The comparison includes a photo of a drake wigeon from the three contests: IWCA Style, Wildfowlers Single, and the Delta Waterfowl Working Decoy Single contests. This visual comparison will be included in the Fall newsletter and on www.odcca.net.

- b) **FUTURE CHANGES:** Future changes to the rules, if and when they occur, will be published in the Fall Newsletter and on the ODCCA Website, in the calendar year prior to when the new rules will take effect.

2. Be Consistent & Fair in the Application of Rules, Judging & Prejudging

- 40% said they do not feel that the rules have been applied according to the Rules. 40% do not think judging has been fair, 52% do not feel that judging/prejudging has been consistent from year to year, person to person.
- 27% experienced DQ and of these 42% disagreed with the prejudge on the interpretation of the rules and were surprised by the DQ.

Comments included: “too many changes, too many interpreters and too many interpretations,” and “any judges/ pre-judges not aligned to the rules and not creditable.” Also “**the lighting - fix it** so everyone sees the same thing.”

ACTIONS:

- a) **PREJUDGING:** The ODCCA has decided that consistent prejudging following only the written rules for the three Wildfowler contests will be done only by any of the following; Wildfowlers Contest Chair, and/or ODCCA Carving President, and/or ODCCA Carving Vice President. Prejudging for the Wildfowlers contests will occur during registration and before entry fees are paid.

- b) **JUDGE SELECTION:** Judging will be done by a three-person panel and the judges will be made up of a mix of;
 - Experienced waterfowl hunters who have hunted over hand-carved decoys.
 - Experienced and credible carvers who have been competing in decoy contests.
 - Skilled individuals who can give helpful critiques to carvers of all levels to further the advancement of the art.

The ODCCA will make strong efforts to find judges that meet all three criteria. While each individual judge may not meet all of the criteria, we will assure that the panel of judges meets them all. A proposed list of judges and alternates will be recommended by the Pool Contest Chairman and will be approved by the ODCCA board in the February meeting with the understanding that last minute changes may need to be made. In that event, the Pool Contest Chairman and ODCCA Carving President will be responsible to fill the position.

- c) **LIGHTING:** The ODCCA is actively looking for a sponsor to help offset the cost of purchasing battery operated LED lights that can be used during the pool contest judging.

3. Small groups want some rule changes, however, there is not universal agreement among this group to ALL of the possible changes.

- **Raised Primaries** – 29% want Raised Primaries, 49% do not
- **Feather Splits** – 21% want Splits, 58% do not want splits
- **Unlimited Paint** – 9% want this
- **Bill Detail** – 17% want no limitation on Bill Detail and 73% want no change (ex for Mergansers)
- **Self-Righting** – 17% want to eliminate this, 75% want to retain self-righting
- **Purchase Award** - 33% want a Purchase award (\$200 - \$400 range), 33% do not and & 33% are indifferent
- **Number of Rig Birds** – 50% want a 3 Bird Rig, 50% want a 6 Bird Rig

ACTIONS:

a. MORE THAN ONE CONTEST: It is clear from this survey and especially from this question that it is not possible to meet everyone's needs with a single contest. As a result the ODCCA is including another option for carvers by **formally adding the Delta Waterfowl Working Decoy Singles Contest** in addition to the existing Wildfowlers Single, IWCA Style and IWCA Decorative contests. The Delta Waterfowl Working Decoy Singles is a contest that will be judged in the tank for the time being, and allows raised primaries with simplistic paint schemes and has a purchase award for the Best in Show. As a result of this additional contest, ALL of the items above are included in at least ONE of the ODCCA contests.

The ODCCA will continually look to add new and interesting contests that appeal to carvers' diverse and changing interests. An example might be a "stylized" decoy (such as Schmiedlin, Joiner, Sutton style). Doing so would depend on both the interest level as well as getting additional volunteers to chair and execute new contests.

b. Six-BIRD RIG: The Wildfowlers Rig contest will remain a Six-bird rig contest with the same rules as the Wildfowlers Singles contest.

4. Restore The Prestige of Pool, Pride and Prizes

- 83% want ribbons, 62% want Plaques and 56% want a cash award.
- 43% want to restore the Plunge, 32% do not and 26 % are indifferent.
- 57% want the Replacement Rule restored. to ensure the best 3 birds win the Top 3.

Comments included: “Make the Pool birds more visible through the weekend, not just Sunday.” Also make the “Prizes for the pool consistent with other ODCCA contests.”

ACTIONS

a. REGISTRATION: The ODCCA has looked at Friday/Saturday Registration and Ballroom display of the Waterfowlers entries. In response to your comments, we will try the following changes for the 2020 show.

Registration for Wildfowler entries will be held at the same time and same place as the other contests: Friday, March 13, 2020, 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. in the Ballroom; and Saturday March 14, 2020, 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. in the Ballroom. This will enable the entries to be on view for all of Saturday. But, we need volunteers to assist in moving the entries from the Ballroom to the Pool area.

b. PRIZES: Prizes for the Wildfowlers Contest, singles and rig, will include ribbons for top 3 in specie, top 3 in category and top 3 in show. **Best of Show will also get a plaque and \$250.** This is not a Purchase Award.

c. REPLACEMENT RULE: The replacement rule will be applied in the Wildfowlers Singles Contest at the Best in Category (diver, puddler, confidence) level as well as the Best in Show level

e. THE PLUNGE: While it is our hope that winners would chose to uphold the tradition of Taking the Plunge, it is up to the individual.

IN CLOSING:

Executing an annual Carving and Collecting Show takes a tremendous amount of effort and a large number of volunteers. To maintain our show at its current level requires more volunteers than we currently have. To expand it by adding contests and do things like early entry and decoy relocation of pool entries requires many more volunteers. Anyone interested in helping out in the setup, execution and teardown of the event should forward their names to either Vince Ciola (vciola@icloud.com) or Brad Falkinburg (bradfalkinburg@yahoo.com).