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FIELD CARE OF TROPHY BIRDS

The perfect feathered trophy to memorialize your hunt begins with proper selection and field care. The following tips will better ensure superior results from quality bird taxidermists:

- ❖ Select only mature, adult specimens with bright, vibrant colors. Mature bird plumage will express superior feathering and coloration.
- ❖ Avoid birds with pin feathers (as indicated by blood quills). These feathers are common on waterfowl until mid-December and will fall out during the mounting process. This problem is common early during the season, especially in Canada. On waterfowl, the scapular feather groups (long shoulder feathers) and the side feather groups are usually the last to grow in.
- ❖ Ideally, choose birds that “died of heart attack” as opposed to “full-patterned, dead-centered”. Broken legs and wings, shot holes through feet and bills, bloody or wet feathers are usually fine. Avoid birds with feather loss.
- ❖ Retrieve the birds yourself. There will be plenty more for Fido to bring in.
- ❖ Never carry birds by their necks or place on a strap. This damages the filoplumes, extremely small, delicate feathers located throughout the bird that are responsible for proper feather loft and appearance. Carry your trophies by their bills.
- ❖ Properly wrap the bird in plastic and freeze immediately. Ziplock-type bags are superior. Nylon stockings are neither practical nor necessary.
- ❖ Properly tag all migratory birds to include hunter signature, address, the total number and species of birds, and the date such birds were killed (per 50 CFR § 20.36)
- ❖ Careful: long tail feathers on pheasants and turkeys can snap off when frozen.
- ❖ Birds can stay in the freezer up to one year without being damaged. Freezer burn will result in feather loss and the bird will be permanently damaged.
- ❖ Choose quality taxidermists based on your personal observations of their work. Too often, you get what you pay for. Using these tips, help the artist create your masterpiece by providing the very best material with which to work.