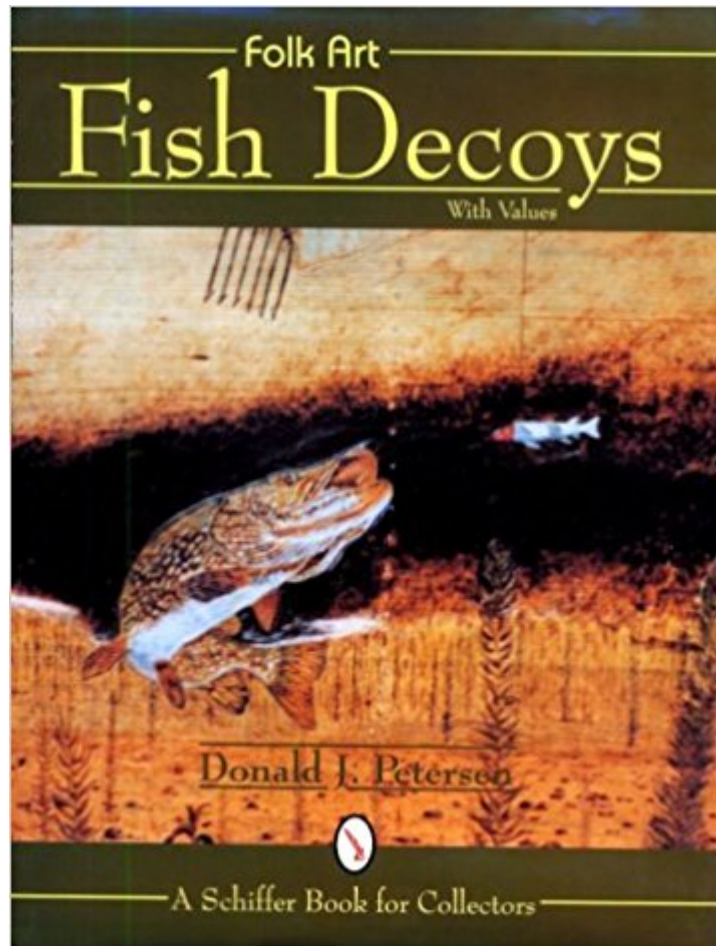




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Folk Art Fish Decoys



Synopsis

With over 500 color photographs, this thorough text introduces the reader to the wide variety of decoys currently available, decoys made earlier in the century by "old time" artists as well as examples of contemporary design. The construction and special attributes of fishing decoys are discussed in detail, information vital to recognising the most collectible decoys. Detailed histories of early twentieth century and contemporary decoy makers of Minnesota and their decoys has been compiled through personal interviews with the makers or their families. Information is also provided on spear makers and the varying designs of their spears, jigging sticks, and decoy boxes. This is a truly valuable reference work.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Fish decoys were an American innovation. While ducks and other birds migrated during cold weather, fish provided a source of food year-round for early immigrants and later for sportsmen. In summer, fish were speared from the shore or canoes; during winter months, fishers used holes cut in lake ice. In either case, decoys were raised and lowered into the water to attract prey within spearing range. Most fish decoys found today were produced in the 1930's Depression when Americans had to struggle to put food on the table. Donald J. Petersen has given us a beautiful book about collectors and collecting, spear fishing, equipment and supplies. Wisely, he ropes in the reader with an extraordinarily exuberant opening essay, "Dark House" that originally appeared in Sigurd F. Olson's *Wilderness Days*, about a father and son ice fishing on the Minnesota-Ontario border country in mid-winter. The son wanted to sit in a dark house with his father and watch the circling decoys and the scene below the ice. He longed for the taste of a fish fresh from the icy

water of the lakes. Father and son used a tiny tarpaper shack a friend had set up with a spear and a wooden decoy. The fishermen were to bring back a fish for the friend. "That meant we had to bring back two." The father describes how he played the decoy, "a six inch model of a sucker minnow replete with fins and tail of shining tin." Whittled from a piece of cedar, its tail was set so that with "each motion of my hand it made wide, beautiful circles all around the hole." The sense of triumph in this essay makes us want to brave the cold and go ice fishing just to exit into "the brilliant dazzle of sunlight on snow...shouting, laughing at our good fortune, pounding each other on the back." Just within the last 20 years, spear fishing decoys have become highly desirable collectibles, achieving the status of folk art. Petersen, through personal lively interviews, introduces the reader to the histories of early twentieth century and contemporary decoy makers of Minnesota, one of six states where spear fishing is permitted. Included is a photo of a typical "Dark House" and detailed floor plans. He devotes a chapter to "Spear Fishing Techniques and the Construction of Spear Fishing Decoys." Schiffer Publishing specializes in great books about decoys, covering many areas of the nation. This one is a treasure. -- From Independent Publisher

Donald J. Petersen is a Professor of Management in the School of Business at Loyola University of Chicago. He has been collecting decoys and data about decoys and their makers for many years.

This is a fine quality reference book, not only on fish decoys, but on fish spears and spearing history as well. It is limited to Minnesota carvers only though, which is by no means, any kind of handicap. I wish Petersen would continue on with a series of these books from adjoining northern states, that also continue on with the spearing tradition and their associated carvers. There are excellent color prints of the different styles and species carved by many different individuals. To try and fill this book with all carvers from different states around the country, would have done a great disservice to this topic. Great coffee table type of book. Anyone who collects, carves, or spears, will be really impressed with this book. Great read!

Excellent resource, great coloured pictures. A list of all the fish carvers and the a history of the sport. Highly recommend this book.

Got this for my brother and he was very impressed. Excellent source of information. Would definitely recommend to anyone interested in decoys.

You will love this book and its' wonderful pictures along with a great historical narrative on fish decoys, their creation and carving.

excellent Reference easy to use. I recommend this book to all.

Vewry good book.

Bought this as a gift. It was a huge hit. The person receiving this book does winter ice spear fishing and he loves the book.

This is really a visual book with supporting text. The book was purchased as a coffee table book for a lakeside residence. The subject matter showcases generations of fish decoys. I enjoy seeing the workmanship of the hobbyists that spent many an evening/weekend in the garage or basement workshop perfecting their craft. It's not really a how to book for building fish decoys. However, I am inspired to grab some scrap wood and create some decoys (albeit of likely lesser quality) of my own with my boys. Who knows, maybe they'll end up as family heirlooms displayed on the mantle sequestering carbon for generations to come.

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