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News Release

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Decoy carving an art and a pleasure

The 2007 Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival to be held Nov. 6-11 on the Outer Banks of North Carolina has a wide array of programs with "something for almost everyone. One of the programs quickly drawing attention of Wings Over Water participants is decoy-carving to be taught by expert carver Chandler Sawyer of the Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education in Corolla. During this half-day class, participants will see examples of antique decoys from the region while learning the importance of their functionality and style. Participants also will learn basic decoy-carving techniques and carve the body of a decoy which is their's to keep. The program is limited to five participants and will taught at the Outer Banks Center for Wildlife Education in Currituck Heritage Park.

Once a primarily utilitarian craft used by hunters, decoys have become a staple in home decorating and wildlife photographers use them to lure birds closer for great photos. Once sold for just a few dollars, many antique decoys now fetch prices in the hundreds of thousands of dollars. Native Americans used decoys to lure prey within range. They shared the art of this hunting method with early European settlers who began carving on their own.

But decoys haven't always been carved out of wood. Straw decoys enhanced with feathers, dating back to about 2000 years ago, have been found at Native American sites in the southwest. And in Europe, live ducks and geese were used as decoys or "coys."

This class is just one of dozens enjoyed each year by attendees who enjoy birding, paddling and natural history programs.

The Wings Over Water Wildlife Festival is sponsored by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce, Carolina Bird Club, the Coastal Wildlife Refuge Society, Roanoke Island Festival Park and the Outer Banks Sentinel.

For more information about programs and registration, visit www.wingsoverwater.org; or call the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce at 252-441-8144.

