

Fish Taxidermy

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Introduction:

Taxidermy is a way of preparing, stuffing and mounting an animal for study of display, as its portrait life like state. The first known taxidermist were the ancient Egyptians. Taxidermy as art was discovered in early 19th century John Hancock, father of modern taxidermist, presented a collection of stuffed birds in 1851 in London then in late 19th century anthropogenic taxidermy has evolved when means people dressed the mounted animal to display.



In the 20th century, taxidermist developed an accurate figure of fishes in artistically interesting poses with realistic settings. The main objective of taxidermy is to create specimen that is life like representation of live animal. The role and importance are preservation of endangered and near extinct species. It also acts as key for studying in future generations.

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Types of taxidermy:

- Traditional skin mount
- Reproduction mount
- Recreation mount

Traditional Skin Mount:

The method starts with the skinning of animal, depending on the type of skin, preserving chemicals are applied or the skin is tanned. It is then either mounted on a mannequin made from wood, wool and wire, or a polyurethane form. Clay is used to



install glass eyes and can also be used for facial features like cheekbones and a prominent brow bone.

Reproduction Mount:

This method does not involve preserving the actual body of the animals. Instead, detailed photos and measurements are taken of the animal, so a taxidermist can create an exact replica in resin or fiberglass that can be displayed in place of the real animal.



Recreation Mount:

Recreation mount are accurate life size representations of either endangered or extinct species that are created using materials not found on the animal being rendered. A recreation may use natural parts, provided the parts are not from the species being portrayed, they utilize the fur, feathers, and skin of other species of animals.

Material and Methods:

- Set of scissors
- Scalpel
- Fish skinning knife
- Scraper tool
- Paints
- Thermocol / cotton
- Needle and suture
- Silicon glue
- T-pins
- Denatured alcohol



The first step includes measuring the fish which includes measure the girth(diameter) of the fattest part of fish body and measure the eye size in millimetre in order to prepare artificial eyeballs then start removal of fish skin and head together in such a way as to preserve the skin. This step should be carefully done without any damage to the skin. After skinning the fish, the removal of meat and viscera from body and head carefully such that the inner part of fish should be without flesh which determines its shelf life.

Another most important step is the preservation of skinned fish which starts with disinfection with denatured alcohol for about 24-48 hours, then after disinfection applying of preservative chemicals like insecticide powder. Now start stuffing the fish with cotton or thermocol or clay as per the fish girth requirements, then stitch the fish with needle and sutures and apply the silicone gel and to the fins by spreading it properly to get leathery finish, and paint the fish according to its colour chart and allow it to paint dry. Finally, the insertion of glass eyes and fish finishing is done by spraying enamel coating.

**Advantages:**

- Taxidermy mounts are highly useful for scientific and educational purposes.
- Taxidermy is a popular art for displaying mounts in museums, homes and businesses.
- Taxidermy creates a lasting recreation of a trophy animal.
- Taxidermy is a celebration of life and allows us to uniquely appreciate the natural worlds beauty.
- It serves as a meaningful tribute to the animals we admire and encourage us to explore this fascinating art form.

Conclusion:

Taxidermy in fisheries hold historical and cultural significance in the preservation and display of fish specimens. Taxidermy showcases the evolution of preserving vertebrate skins through stuffing or mounting over artificial armatures, leading to the creation of extraordinary specimens in the 18th and 19th centuries. These practices not only serve scientific and educational purposes but also contribute to the cultural heritage.

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