

A Collector's Guide to Value and Restoration

A Mason decoy's value is determined by its rarity weighed against its degree of originality. While collectors should strive to purchase decoys in the best original condition they can afford, remember that they were tools designed to lure waterfowl to hunters, and thus suffered wear and damage and were frequently repainted (Fig. 6).

Masons in the best original condition have proven the best values.

A Mason that has been repainted is worth significantly less than one with its original paint, even if worn.

Mason Premiers are usually worth a bit more than Challenges, while Challenges are worth more than Standard Grades. Within Standards, Glasseyes are worth more than Tackeyes and Tackeyes more than Painted Eyes. However, a scarcity of certain Painted Eyes can make them worth more than comparable Tackeyes and Glasseyes.

Some professional restoration is acceptable and perhaps preferable to most collectors as long as the seller has made it known prior to purchase. A decoy with a tail chip or missing neck filler, but in otherwise original condition, can be restored to its original appearance by competent professionals. Most of today's collectors prefer this approach.