

Wyoming Association of Taxidermy Artists Competition Rules

To be eligible, competitors must be WATA members in good standing and registered for the convention to compete.

The WATA Board will resolve any questions arising from the WATA competition, and their decision will be **final**.

Anything judged “Fatal Flaw” will be given a score sheet, but no ribbons or awards will be given. Any mounts with offensive odors will be removed from the competition area and not judged. The WATA Board reserves the right to refuse any entry that does not comply with WATA Competition Rules or is deemed inappropriate or detrimental to the image of taxidermy.

Any infraction of WATA competition rules will result in disqualification of the entry and forfeiture of any awards won by that entry. Registration and entry fees will not be refunded.

Any conduct by the competitor deemed unsportsmanlike could result in disqualification and forfeiture of any and all WATA awards. Unruly or disruptive behavior towards judges or show officials will not be tolerated, and the individual will be asked to leave without a refund and will be barred from future competitions.

There will be no Competitor Score Sheet, PROTESTS, or CHALLENGES.

The WATA Board will be responsible for resolving problems related to the competition and judging. Any such action taken by the WATA Board shall be publicly disclosed and fully explained to the competitor.

Touching or moving of any mount without the express permission of the competitor by anyone other than a Judge and/or the WATA Board is expressly forbidden and grounds for disqualification and removal from the WATA Convention.

All competitors must sign a form releasing the WATA from any liability for mounts entered in the competition. While the WATA will provide security; everyone knows that accidents are possible and that competitors should purchase insurance on their competition entries through their local insurance agent. The WATA, its Officers, or Directors shall not be responsible for any mounts entered in competition under any circumstances.

Multiple ribbons are awarded in most categories. Any entry receiving 90% of a perfect score is awarded first place, 80% of a perfect score is second place, and 70% of a perfect score is third place. There is no honorable mention.

If any entry contains more than one specimen (For example, a pair of wood ducks), an entry fee must be paid for each mount that will be judged. When judging a piece with multiple entries, each individual mount may win its own award. If only one entry fee is paid, the competitor must designate which of the individual mounts they wish to have judged. This rule does not apply to entries in the Collective Artists or Art Divisions, where an entry containing multiple specimens may be entered as a single piece and judged in its entirety.

Entries in the name of a company are not allowed except in the Collective Artist Division.

Protected species need proper permits to place with their entry. In some cases, special permits are also required to cross into the U.S. or to cross state lines. The competitor is responsible for knowing and following all such laws pertaining to protected species.

Entries in cases must have removable top and sides for judging and must be removed by competitors before judging begins.

Competitors can bring their own reference material for the judges to determine their scores correctly.

Photographs may be placed in an envelope next to the mount and marked "For Judges Reference." The mount number should also be written on the envelope.

Any names or logos revealing the competitor's identity must be omitted or covered securely.

Entries may be made only at the posted times, and NO entries will be removed from the competition area before Sunday at the posted times. Any entry not picked up by the posted deadline will be left unsecured and unattended.

The number of entries per category is unlimited.

If a competitor has won two "Best of Category" awards in a single category, competitors must move up in division in that category.

No mount that has previously been in a WATA Competition can be entered in an WATA Competition again.

Aside from the WATA Competition, any mount entered in other competitions must be entered in the same division or higher. (i.e., A mount entered in Master Division at another competition must be entered in Master Division at the WATA Competition. A mount entered

in Collective Artist Division at another competition must be entered in Collective Artist Division at the WATA Competition. A mount entered in the Professional, Adult Novice, or Youth Novice at another competition may be entered into a higher division at the WATA Competition.)

Any entry may be ineligible if, in the opinion of the Board, too many of the judging criteria are hidden from view or are not included in the mount, and it is not in conjunction with another mount that is judgeable.

Example: Single wood duck head coming out of a hole in a tree.

There will be one WATA judge for each category. Their decision is final, and they alone decide upon the score an entry receives. Each judge will score each entry separately on an approved WATA score sheet. All scores will be recorded on the WATA Competition Computer, with the paper copy going to the participant. An electronic record of scores will remain with the WATA for one year.

Half-life size entries will be assigned and compete in the Gamehead category. Any young or partially grown species, coyote size or smaller entries, will be judged in the small mammal category.

All seminars are included with paid WATA membership.

The WATA Board will resolve any question concerning the category assignment. Their decision will be final.

The above rules are a general overview of the competition rules. The WATA reserves the right to review and amend these rules at any time deemed necessary.

2026 CATEGORIES:

Fish Skin

Fish Reproduction

Reptile Skin

Reptile Reproduction

Upland Game Bird

Waterfowl

Small Lifesize

Large Lifesize

Gamehead

Original Art

Skull/Skeleton

MASTER DIVISION

ELIGIBILITY- Open to all WATA members that are registered for the convention.

JUDGING- The WATA Master Division judge's entries on their individual merit against a hypothetical "perfect score" rather than against other entries.

Judges will score Master Division entries exceptionally more challenging than Professional Division.

AWARDS- In each of the 12 major awards categories, the highest score with a first-place ribbon shall earn the title "Wyoming State Champion."

PROFESSIONAL DIVISION

ELIGIBILITY- Open to all WATA members that are registered for the convention.

JUDGING- The WATA Professional Division judge's entries on their individual merit against other entries.

Judges will score Professional Division entries exceptionally more challenging than Adult Novice Division.

AWARDS- In each of the 12 major categories, the Highest Numerical Score with a first-place ribbon shall earn "Best of Categories".

ADULT NOVICE DIVISION

ELIGIBILITY- This division is for beginning taxidermists who feel their skills have not developed enough to compete in the Professional Division.

JUDGING- Judges will be more lenient in this division, primarily emphasizing teaching competitors.

AWARDS- Multiple first, second, and third-place ribbons will be awarded. Persons entering this level should be more interested in learning than winning awards.

YOUTH NOVICE DIVISION

ELIGIBILITY - Limited to children 17 and younger at time of competition. Parent or guardian must be present with competitor.

JUDGING – Judging will be done on an approved WATA score sheet, and consideration will be taken into account for the experience of those entering.

AWARDS – Multiple ribbons are awarded. The entry selected by the judges collectively as the best mount in the Youth Novice Division will earn the title “Best Youth Entry” winner. All entries in this division are eligible for People’s Choice Awards. Since scoring is more lenient, entries in this category are not eligible for other major awards.

CHILDREN'S DIVISION

ELIGIBILITY - Limited to children 12 and younger at time of competition. Parent or guardian must be present with competitor. No entry fee.

JUDGING – Judging will be done on an approved MTA score sheet, and consideration will be taken into account for the experience of those entering.

AWARDS – Multiple ribbons are awarded. Since scoring is more lenient, entries in this category are not eligible for other major awards.

COLLECTIVE ARTISTS DIVISION

ELIGIBILITY - This division is for competition entries worked on by more than one WATA taxidermist; all competitors must be identified at registration and attending the convention. Requires an additional entry fee.

JUDGING - The Collective Artists Division judge’s entries on their merit against other entries.

AWARDS - A maximum of one first, second, and third place ribbon will be awarded to each Collective Artist

Category based upon the highest numerical score in each category.

The Judge's Best of Show, Collective Artist award winner will be selected by the judges collectively from among the first place ribbon winners in each category based on the overall merit of the eligible entries.

Collective Artists Division entries are not eligible for the following titles "Wyoming State Champion."

ORIGINAL ART DIVISION:

ELIGIBILITY - Open to all WATA members that are registered for the convention.

2D ART: Paintings, pencils, pastels, charcoal, etc.- Limited to flat art only.

3D ART: Sculpture, carvings, etc.

JUDGING - Two judges will examine each category.

AWARDS - Judges may award a maximum of one first place, one-second place, and one-third place in each division.

SKULL / SKELETON DIVISION

ELIGIBILITY - Open to all WATA members that are registered for the convention. Limited to osteological specimens and art.

JUDGING - One judge will examine each category.

AWARDS - Judges may award a maximum of one first place, one-second place, and one-third place in each division.

SPECIAL AWARDS WITH PAID ENTRY FEE

The Competitors Award - may be any four mounts from any category—IE 4 birds or two birds, two game heads, any order. To qualify, you must have at least one blue ribbon; the highest score wins . In case of a tie, the judges will decide.

The Best All-Around - Is for mounts from four different categories: IE one fish, one bird, one lifesize, and one game head. You must have at least one blue to qualify. The highest score wins in case of a tie, the judges decide.

To compete in competitors' awards and best all-around, you must enter the mounts in the professional or master division, whatever division you are in for that particular category.

Wyoming Challenge - the animals selected will be native to Wyoming. New species chosen each year. Please note these are individual challenges, you do not need to compete in all 3 to enter. Judges decide winner, each challenge pays half the entry fee pot to the winner.

Habitat Award - Only one blue, one red and one yellow will be given, judges will decide.

Live Mounting Competition - One award, judges will decide.

LIVE MOUNTING COMPETITION RULES

3 hour live mounting competition

- Contestant will bring all supplies needed (including mounting stand)
- Mannikin can be fully prepped with antlers set
- Skin can be prepped
- All clay work will be done during competition; IE setting eyes, ear butts
- Ears; whether liners or bondo will be done during competition

JUDGING - Pieces will be judged from 5-10 feet away. No more than 10 minutes to judge each piece. Each piece will receive a critique from the judge.