



# **The Illinois Taxidermist Association**

proudly presents the

**46th annual**

## **ITA Convention & Taxidermy Competition**

**March 13-16, 2025**

**Northfield Inn & Suites**

3280 Northfield Drive.  
Springfield, IL 62702

For Reservations call: (217) 523-7900 Hotel reservations must be made by phone to receive the ITA nightly rate of \$112.  
Deadline Feb. 16th

## **2025 Competition Judges**

Clint Rickey - Whitetails

Jimmy Lawrence - Fish & Reptiles

Brandon Zahn - Birds

Brian Olson - Mammals

## **Vendors**

Big Bear Rug Service

Bob Fatheree Mounting Stands

ITA Merch Table - Shirts, Hoodies, Koozies, ect...

Larry Dablemont - Driftwood available Fri & Sat

M&R Furs

Rhonda's Ruggery ...and more!

Please support our vendors as they kindly support us. If your business is interested in being a vendor... Please contact Bob Hammerich 309-453-2112 Vendor spaces are free to set up with a donation item to include in the ITA fundraiser auction.

## **Registration Fees**

Entitle you and your family to all seminars, the general membership meeting and free access to the Competition Viewing Area & Vendor Room.

## **One-Day Pass**

A one-day pass will be offered to those who are unable to attend the convention for the entire weekend. The day pass shall be issued to an I.T.A. member with current dues paid for a fee of \$25.00 per day, registration fees shall not be charged. This pass shall entitle you to only attend the seminars scheduled for the day the pass is issued.

## **Membership Dues**

Dues are payable at this time (membership year is from March 1st to February 28th). Dues alone do not entitle you to attend seminars, entry to the display area or access to vendor area.

## **Competition Fees**

Competition fees are separate from the dues and registration fees. These fees are payable with registration or on site at the Convention.

## **Hotel Reservations & Banquets**

The host hotel has given the I.T.A. reasonable room rates. We encourage you to stay at the "Host" hotel. There will be a special award dinner Saturday night. Children's meals will be \$5.00. Your decision to stay at the hotel and partake in the evening dinner is important to the ITA.

Facility charges are based on room reservations and meal attendance. We hope that you keep this in mind when you make your hotel reservations and plan your evening dining.

## Mount Registration Guidelines

- All entries must be the sole work of a current member and Registered Competitor. Artificial parts, original or purchased are acceptable. If reasonable proof of a violation is established, the person in question may forfeit rights to compete in current competitions and may endanger the possibility of competing in future I.T.A. competitions.
- Any mount or previously judged parts (example: cast heads, parts, etc) entered into the I.T.A. competition cannot have been entered into any past I.T.A. show or be a past Best in World, N.A. Champion or National Champion winning mount.
- Protected species must be accompanied by the permits throughout the show.
- Distasteful entries will not be allowed, subject to the discretion of the Judges Committee.
- Mounts entered into the show are done at the owner's risk. Display area will be locked when not attended by the I.T.A. members.
- Removable covers will be allowed. Covers are to be removed by the owner before judging but will be able to be added back to the piece before any major awards are voted on. This means that the owner will be responsible for putting the covers back on.
- Reference material may be submitted with any entry to substantiate pose, color, etc. All notes and references cannot identify the competitor.
- Mounts must be finished at time of entry. This means completely dry, free of pins, carding, etc.
- A final grooming area will be available. Final grooming must be done prior to placing the mount in the competition room. A member of the Competition Committee will then place the mount in the competition showroom.
- Only the Competition Committee members can be in the judging room with the judges while the judging is in progress.
- Any concerns regarding judging will be brought to the attention of the Competition Committee, NOT the judges. The judges' decision is final.
- After judging has been completed, business cards may be displayed next to each entry.
- There will be no early release of mounts. Special permission will only be granted by the consensus of the Competition Committee in emergencies only.
- Any members found violating a competition rule will be subject to the loss of any and all awards and will not be allowed to participate in the next year's competition. No refunds of any kind will be made.
- All first place ribbon winners will receive their score sheets after the Awards Banquet.
- A competitor may not enter the same category in 2 divisions. For example, (1) whitetail in professional and (1) whitetail in advanced.

## **COMPETITION DIVISIONS**

**PROFESSIONAL** - Open to any ITA member who is eligible to enter competition and registered for the convention, except individuals who are required to compete in the Advanced Division.

**MASTERS** - Open to any ITA member who is eligible to enter competition and is registered for the convention, wishing to compete in the Masters Division. However, any individual who has previously received three or more blue ribbons and at least one Best of Category Award in a single category at prior ITA competitions is required thereafter to compete in the Masters Division for all mounts entered in that particular category.

**YOUTH** - Open to any ITA member who is eligible to enter competition and is registered for the convention and is sixteen years of age or younger. There is no entry fee for mounts entered in the Youth Division.

**COMMERCIAL** - Open to any ITA member who is eligible to enter competition and is registered for the convention.

**COMBINED ARTIST** - Open to any ITA member who is eligible to enter competition and is registered for the convention.

**FREEZE DRIED** - Open to any ITA member who is eligible to enter competition and is registered for the convention.

**SKULL MOUNT** - Open to any ITA member who is eligible to enter competition and is registered for the convention.

**LIVE MOUNTING** - Open to any ITA member who is eligible to enter competition and is registered for the convention. Show off your skills in this 3 hour timed event/seminar.

## COMPETITION CATEGORIES

**Single Fish - Warm Water:** Bass, Bluegill, etc. **Cold Water:** Trout, Salmon, ect.

### **Single Mammal Lifesize**

**Small:** Fox squirrel and 16.5" or smaller, nose to base of tail, including infants.

**Medium:** Coyote and smaller (beaver, raccoon, fox, etc.) 16.5" to 44" nose to base of the tail, including infants

**Large:** Larger than coyote (bear, deer, etc.) 44" or greater, including infants. Nose to base of tail measurements are given mainly as a guide for categorizing infants for a given species. For example, a fawn with a nose to tail measurement between 16 1/2 " and 44" would be a medium mammal.

Exceptionally large specimens of a given species with a nose to tail measurement of 17" would remain in the small mammal category where the adults would traditionally be. Borderline or close call measurement shall be evaluated and categorized by the judging committee and their decision shall be final.

**Single Bird - Waterfowl:** Ducks and geese **Turkey:** Any turkey **Upland:** Pheasant, quail and grouse  
**Other:** Any non-game species

**SINGLE GAMEHEAD - Whitetail:** Any whitetail game head, 1/2 life size **Whitetail Open Mouth:** any parting of the lips. **Horned/Antlered:** Mule deer, elk, sheep, etc, 1/2 life size. **Other:** Bear, coyote, boar, etc., 1/2 life size. (Half- life size is considered any mount from the front of the hind quarters forward. Any mount showing the hind quarter will be classified as life size)

**SINGLE REPTILE** - Any reptile: Turtle, snake, etc.

**MIXED/ MULTIPLES** - Any combination of two or more of the same or different specimen, done by a single competitor.

**REPRODUCTION** - Any reproduction of reptiles or fish. Any other reproductions will be placed in reproduction. Must be whole animals. Reproduction Antlers and any other parts of an animal. Other ORIGINAL ART Any artwork, 3-D or flat.

**COMMERCIAL** - Any specimen(s) produced for a customer, commercial work only. Specimen(s) entered are not eligible for ANY major awards.

**COMBINED ARTISTS** - Entries that include the combined effort of 2 or more artists will be entered in this category ONLY. This category will include all species and will only be eligible for a Best of Category, First, Second, and Third place awards, as well as special awards. Entries in this category however will not be eligible for any major awards. This is a single division (Masters and Professional combined) therefore entries will be judged at the Masters level.

**FREEZE-DRIED** - Any species freeze dried as whole/skeletal intact. Parts are exempt (turkey heads, nose, tongue, etc). All species will compete against each other; for example, a freeze-dried fish will compete against a freeze dried bird or mammal.

**SKULL** - Any species cleaned/processed by competitor. Any artwork will be put into the Original Art category. Judged at masters level only.

**ORIGINAL ART** - Any artwork, 3-D or flat.

## **MAJOR AWARDS**

**BEST OF SHOW** - Award shall be selected by the judges from the Best of Category winners – Masters Division.

**BEST PROFESSIONAL ENTRY** - Award shall be selected by the judges from the Best of Category winners – Professional Division

**COMPETITOR'S CHOICE** - Award shall go to the entry receiving the most votes by those competing in the Competition. Voting takes place Friday immediately following the general Membership Meeting.

**PEOPLE'S CHOICE** - Award shall go to the entry receiving the most votes on Saturday cast by non competing members and the visitors viewing the mounts on display.

**BEST ALL-AROUND TAXIDERMIST** - Award shall go to the Illinois Taxidermist whose four entries accumulate the highest number of BAAT points. BAAT points are assigned on the basis of the competition division and ribbons award as follows:

Ribbon Color, Professional Division, Masters Division

First Place 3 points 4 points, Second Place 2 points 3 points, Third Place 1 point 2 points

**COMPETITORS AWARD** - Award shall go to the taxidermist whose four entries accumulate the highest point total using the BAAT point system. Entries may be either in the Professional and/or the Masters Division.

**BEST OF CATEGORY** - Awards shall be available in each category in both professional and masters divisions. An entry must have been awarded a first place ribbon to be eligible for the Best of Category.

**ELIGIBILITY** - Any mount done by competitor(s) may be entered as long as it has not been a past Best in World, N.A. Champion or National Champion winning mount. These mounts are welcome for display only or entered into the Master of Masters category.

**BEST ALL-AROUND TAXIDERMIST** - Best All-Around Taxidermist competition shall be open to any member who is eligible to enter competition and is registered for the convention. Competitors for the B.A.A.T. Award must enter one mount each of a fish, a bird, a mammal and a gamehead. These four mounts must be designated as the competitors B.A.A.T entries at the time of registration and may come from any taxidermy competition category. The award may be given to a single competitor, providing all mounts entered scored at least a third place. Freeze Dry, Reproduction and Art are not eligible.

**COMPETITORS AWARD** - Competitors Award is open to anyone who is eligible to enter competition and is registered for the convention. Competitors must enter four mounts in any of the fish, bird, mammal, gamehead and reproduction fish categories and be in any of the taxidermy competition divisions. Entries must be designated at the time of registration. Freeze Dry, Mixed/Multiple and Art are not eligible.

**MULTIPLE SPECIMENS** - Entries that include any combination of two or more of the same or different species will normally be entered in the MIXED/MULTIPLE category, in which case, each specimen shall be scored individually by the appropriate judge. These individual scores will then be averaged to arrive at an overall score for the entry and be eligible for awards, including Best of Category in the MIXED/MULTIPLE category. A competitor may however, and at his option, elect to have one or more of the specimens entered and scored as an individual entry in the appropriate SINGLE category, in which case specimen so designated would be scored individually, charged a separate entry fee and be eligible for awards, including Best of Category, in the appropriate SINGLE category. Additionally, a competitor may designate one or more of a less dominant specimen as being part of the habitat and not to be individually scored. In such cases, the specimen(s) so designated shall be considered only to the extent that they add or detract from the overall merit of the piece.

**MASTER OF MASTERS** - Who is eligible: Past or present ITA Judges, anyone who has received a score of 90 or above in the Masters Division at any previous competition, National Champions, North American Champions. "Best in World" winners, and previous "Best of Show" winners. How to win: All competitors from the Masters Division and current year ITA Judges are eligible to vote on their choice. 1st, 2nd, And 3rd place winners will be awarded. What can be entered: Any piece of taxidermy that has not previously been awarded ITA Masters of Masters 1st place. Depending on space available at the venue, location of these entries will be determined at the convention. They will be staged together behind a stanchion located in the front common area, the vendor room, or in the showroom. Standard competition entry fees will apply.



## 2025 ITA Convention Schedule

### Thursday, March 13th

5 - 7 PM: Backboard Setup. Pizza after for those who help, bring your screw guns!

7 PM: Pre-Show Board Meeting.

8 - 10 PM: Registrations open.

### Friday, March 14th

7 - 10 AM: Registration. NO MOUNTS ACCEPTED AFTER 10 A.M.

9 AM - 1 PM: Vendor area open.

11 AM: General membership meeting. All members are welcome to attend. After the meeting, the showroom will be open to competitors for Competitor's Choice voting.

12 - 1 PM: LUNCH BREAK!

1 - 4 PM: LIVE MOUNTING COMPETITION

3 - 5 PM : Vendors Open

6 PM - ??? : World Famous ITA Auction, Free Pizza, & Cash Bar!

### Saturday, March 15

8 - 9 AM: Registration open for convention only. No mounts accepted on Saturday!

8AM - 4PM: Competition room open for critiques. Please sign up for a critique time at registration!

9:00-10:30 AM : SEMINAR: **Jimmy Lawrence**: Painting a Largemouth Bass for Illinois Bass Nation

9AM - 1PM: Vendor area open.

10AM - 4PM: Competition room open to the public. Free will donation.

10AM - ??? : Kid's Seminar: (Sign up at registration desk)

10:30-12:00 PM : SEMINAR: **Brian Olson**: Mammals 101

12 - 1PM: LUNCH BREAK!

1:00-2:30 PM : SEMINAR: **Clint Rickey**: Seeing a whitetail through a judge's eye.

2:30-4:00 PM : SEMINAR: **Brandon Zahn**: Mounting a duck.

3 - 5 PM: Vendor area open.

5 - 6PM : Happy Hour in the banquet hall!

6 - 7:30 PM: Banquet Dinner.

7:30 - ??? : Awards Presentation!

PLEASE GET YOUR PICTURE TAKEN WITH AWARDS AND MOUNT AFTER!

### Sunday, March 16

8 - 10 AM: Board meeting in banquet hall.

8 - 10 AM: SEMINAR: **Brian Olson**: Game Heads

9AM - 1PM: Vendor area open.

9AM - 12PM: Competition room open to the public. Free will donation.

10AM - 12PM: SEMINARS: 10:00-12:00: SEMINAR: **Jimmy Lawrence**: Painting a Smallmouth Bass

12PM - 1PM: LUNCH BREAK!

1 PM: Mount dismissal. No mounts dismissed before 1:00 PM!

**Backboard take-down and door prizes after mounts have been removed!**

**2025 I.T.A MEMBERSHIP & CONVENTION REGISTRATION**

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Spouse \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Business Name \_\_\_\_\_

Names of Family Members Attending \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Plan Membership includes spouse & children 18 & under

\_\_\_ Member-\$50.00 \_\_\_ Supplier-\$50.00 \_\_\_ Board \_\_\_ Charter \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Convention Registration Required to enter seminars and vendors

\_\_\_\_\_ Early Registration (Postmarked by March 1st) -----\$40.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Late Registration-----\$50.00

\_\_\_\_\_ 1-Day Registration-----\$25.00

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Awards Banquet Saturday Evening. Please indicate the number of meals.

\_\_\_\_\_ \$30 Adult \_\_\_\_\_ \$5 Children \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Competition Registration Please indicate number of entries

\_\_\_\_\_ Masters/Professional/Commercial-----\$25.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Live Mounting (Cash to be paid at registration)-----\$50.00

\_\_\_\_\_ Youth Entries-----FREE \_\_\_\_\_ Competitor's Award (4+ entries)  
-----FREE

\_\_\_\_\_ Best All Around Taxidermist (See rules for eligibility)-----FREE

\_\_\_\_\_ Combined Artist Challenge (goes toward Scholarship Fund!)-\$50.00

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total dues, registration, and meal tickets \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please complete and mail or email to: Illinois Taxidermist Association  
23100 E. 20th Rd. Nokomis, IL 62075  
illinoistaxidermist@gmail.com

## **LIVE MOUNTING COMPETITION**

New this year the ITA is introducing its version of a live mounting competition!

Competitors have two open categories to choose from, fur or feathers.

The entry fee is \$50 (to be paid at the show), Best of Category winners take the money pot. Winners will be determined by Judges in a First, Second, And Third Placement.

There will also be a free entry Youth Division following the same rules and guidelines. First, Second, and Third places will receive a plaque.

**Friday March 14th, 2025**

**Three hours: 1-4pm**

**Categories: Fur or Feather**

**\$50 entry fee, Youth is free**

- Lifesize and gamehead may have hide fully prepped, forms can be roughed up, skull cap may be done ahead of time, form alterations may be done ahead of time, cast nose, ear liners and ear butts are allowed. Clay work around the eyes must be done in competition.
- Birds may be cleaned and blow dried, feet injected and painted, heads may be painted, form alterations may be pre done, eyes may be pre set.
- Competitors must bring their own tarp to work over and clean up their area after the event.
- No supplies or tools are provided, competitors must bring everything they need to use.

**Divisions**  
(see Competition Rules in show packet for criteria)

- Freeze Dried
- Combined Artist
- Youth
- LIVE mounting
- Commercial Professional Masters
- Master of Masters
- Skull

**Categories**  
(see Competition Rules in show packet for criteria)

- Turkey
- Upland Bird
- Waterfowl
- Other Bird
- Whitetail Deer - Closed Mouth
- Whitetail Deer - Open Mouth
- Gamehead - Horned/Antlered
- Gamehead - Other
- Reptile
- Mixed/Multiple
- Reproduction
- Reproduction - Other
- Original Art
- Warm Water Fish
- Cold Water Fish
- Small Mammal
- Medium Mammal
- Large Mammal
- Combined Artist

Division	Category	Species/Description	Polytranspar Lifetone or Pro-1?	Parts: Commercial, Altered, or Original	Form: Commercial, Altered, or Original	Indicate 4 mounts to be considered for Competitor's Award

I have read and agree to follow all competition rules and requirements set by the Illinois Taxidermist Association.

X \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_