

Taxidermy of Birds

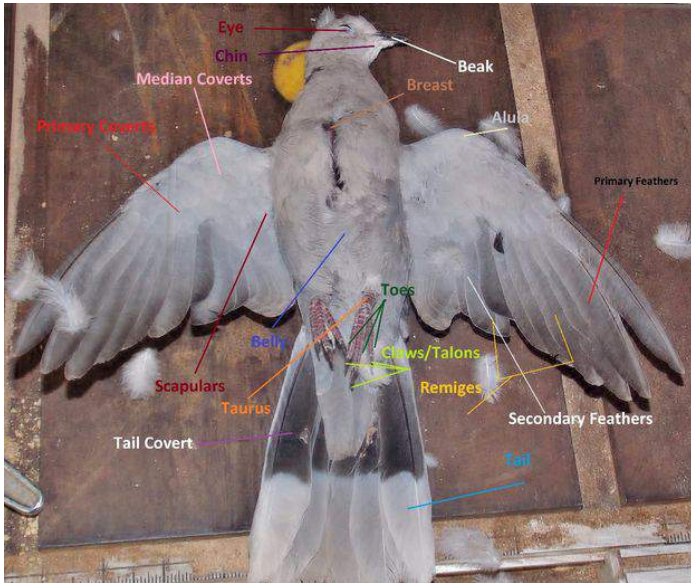
by **foxycrush** on September 27, 2015

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Intro: Taxidermy of Birds

WARNING: GRAPHIC, DOES INCLUDE SKINNING AND PRESERVATION AS WELL AS THE DEAD. HIGHLY NON-RECOMMEND IF YOU ARE SENSITIVE TO BLOOD AND/OR GUTS, MAY BE OFFENSIVE TO SOME VIEWERS. YOU HAVE BEEN WARNED.



Step 1: Getting Supplies or Being Prepared

Supplies:

- Borax/cornmeal/non-iodized salt mix
- Thick wire (**hard** to bend)
- thin wire (**easier** to bend)
- wire cutters
- Knife of any kind
- Needle
- STRONG thread
- **Fresh** Dead Bird
- Scissors
- Tweezers
- Cotton balls
- Eyes for the bird
- **HIGHLY SUGGEST** some anatomy of the bird

Go to the intro for some anatomy



Image Notes

1. Fresh Dead Bird in Excellent condition

Step 2: Preparing for incision

On the back just before the head starts, get the feathers to part with your fingers

Start making an incision from the base of the tail all the way up to the head a knife.

WARNING: try not to cut through the feathers, and try to keep the feathers as dry as possible, when they get wet, they get sticky

Step 3: Removing Skin

Separate the skin by peeling on each side towards the wing, should automatically begin to peel away from lower membranes . Remove insides being cautious not to get feathers wet.

WARNING: if the body sat for a while then it will be much more difficult to peel .

NOTE: Keep the innards and skin damp, just add water to the innards making sure none of the feathers get wet, if possible.

Step 4: Skinning the Head

Separate the skin from the rest of the bird, grab the neck making sure to only be holding the skin of the bird (with feathers) and snip the neck, make sure **not** to cut the skin.

Cut off whats' left of the neck that is hanging, then you insert tweezers carefully into the head and pull out the brains bit by bit. Make sure the eyes are out as well, fake eyes can be easily bought or be made.

NOTE: a hole means the inner membrane tore try to avoid this, lipid (fat) resides between the inner membrane and skin, keep it attached to the inner membrane best you can.

NOTE: older birds will have more lipid than younger ones do.

Step 5: Skinning the Rest

Peel away the skin around the legs, break the bones that are attached to the thigh. Keep the bones in the legs but having the leg skin still attached to the rest of the skin. (This works as wire for positioning the bird, makes it easier). Make sure there is the least meat possible.

Step 6: Wings

For the wings, do the same thing done with the legs, just snip/break them off and leave them with the skin to dry.

Step 7: Peeling the skin off

Start at the neck and **GENTLY** peel down the back be **CAREFUL**, (there are tendons around the spinal cord) this is where sometimes a hole tears in the skin, if a hole tears it is ok, it will need to be sown but really **try not to tear**, its hard to sew it and give a lifelike appearance. The problem occurs when the body sits for an hour or so before the skinning takes part.

Step 8: Tail

snip off the tail (trying to keep meat at a minimal) still attached to the skin.

Step 9: Preservation

lay the skin out, make sure that excess meat is scraped off. Sprinkle the borax/cornstarch/salt mixture inside body (in mouth if you want the tongue still) to ensure absorbency and disinfect the inside and out of body. Let sit for at minimum 72 hours with mixture in a place that does not get moisture, "pets" or children can't reach. KEEP flesh side up. After it is dry, make the feathers look pretty, fluff them up if you want.

NOTE: Disinfecting the body means to wash the skin with soap and water (Wash the nasty ugly stuff out i.e feces, dirt, etc.)

NOTE: The way the tail feathers are is the way they dry. Example: if tail feathers spread out they stay spread out dried.

WARNING: MUST be non-iodized salt otherwise HIGH possibility of rot.



Step 10: Fixing Mistakes

Before stuffing the bird sew any holes closed. Make an amateur with the cotton balls, mashing together cotton balls to get the basic shape of the bird. Size and shape differs depending on bird type but make sure neck is stuffed slim

Step 11: Wiring

take the thick wire (cut wire a few inches longer than the wing), wrap around cotton and thread at the bottom to make an amateur wing, **CAREFULLY** stick through the wings where the wrist is from the inside to the out. Make sure about 2 inches or more is sticking out of the wing and inside the body(this is to make it easier to position wings). Repeat on other side. Now the bones in the legs should be in,

if bone is there here is what what you will do :

Where the top of the bone of the leg is, start wrapping thin wire around it. Make sure it is secure and set aside for now.

if NOT then here is your other option:

Put thick wire through the leg 'til it is sticking out the foot, you can stick thin wire in the toes individually, if you do not want scrunched up toes . Stick the wire in the toe by puncturing right under the talon and going through the whole foot (from front to back) and set aside for now.

Step 12: Making an Amateur

NOW to make the full body amateur. Depending on the size of the body you will **need more or less cotton balls**. Stretch out cotton balls and mash them together to make a big ball however big the bird is. Wrap thread **lightly** around to secure doesn't matter the pattern of wrapping. Take the thick wire again and make a staple shape and stick in the cotton amateur body. Bend (without making a big impression on the shape) the staple shape closed. Before Sticking the cotton amateur in the skin. First Make a wad of thick wire and stick in the head but before sticking it in the head make another wad of wire but this time with cotton, long and skinny for the neck. As soon as done attach the wads and make adjustments to stick in the head and neck. (this will help when the eyes are ready to be put in and help with a neck so it doesn't just flop around). With the wire sticking out on the inside attach the wire **securely and tightly** to the thick wire in the body amateur. Don't have much resistance but some is recommended. **Now sew the body**. Be sure to stitch in the edge of the skin.

Step 13:

Position the bird how you want by using the wire sticking out still. After it is in the desired position then take the wire cutters and cut the wire as close as possible without doing damage. With the feet you can stick the wire in a mount (Drill a hole in the mount first, not a big hole but big enough for wire to go through, then just bend closest to the hole and cut of closest but also where the wire is still secure enough). Fix anything that doesn't look right. Paint a darker feather color under the eyes, the slightly dark feet color but do use the closest color too, and slightly darker color beak, but do use the closest color as well to bring back life (so the colors don't look dull).

REMEMBER shade some too, try lightly shading first and remember practice makes perfect. **LAST** buy some eyes of whatever mm the eyes of your bird is or if you want to be safe buy slightly smaller and buy the right color to make them look real. Just stick the wire part attached to the eye in on both sides, fix the sockets so they aren't just popping out. And your done. Congrats! Hope this Tutorial/Guide helped!

if eyes are too expensive here is a tutorial on a mold as well as a glass eye :<http://www.hidetanning.net/TaxidermyEyes.html>

I buy my eyes from **Van Dyke** When painting- **highly suggest using an airbrush and have some airbrush experience**



Related Instructables



Bird Taxidermy (WARNING:Not for the easily offended, overly squeamish, holier than thou, fuss-bucket.) by Zrcalo



Chaffinch Taxidermy (1st attempt, graphic photos, you've been warned!) by lafink



Survivor's Supper- how to turn an animal into food **WARNING GRAPHIC CONTENT** by amerzdahero



Duck Taxidermy by MerganserMan



(Pier9 AiR) How to make friends and skin things | Part 2: skinning things by steflenk



Duck Mouse by canida

Comments

3 comments

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CrazyK4 says:
Isn't this animal cruelty?

Feb 23, 2016. 11:50 PM [REPLY](#)



JustSlightlyTwisted says:
No, the bird was already dead and what he's doing is preserving the memory and beauty of the bird. :)

Mar 29, 2016. 12:58 PM [REPLY](#)



seamster says:
Excellent info, very nicely done! Thank you for sharing this.

Oct 12, 2015. 7:16 AM [REPLY](#)