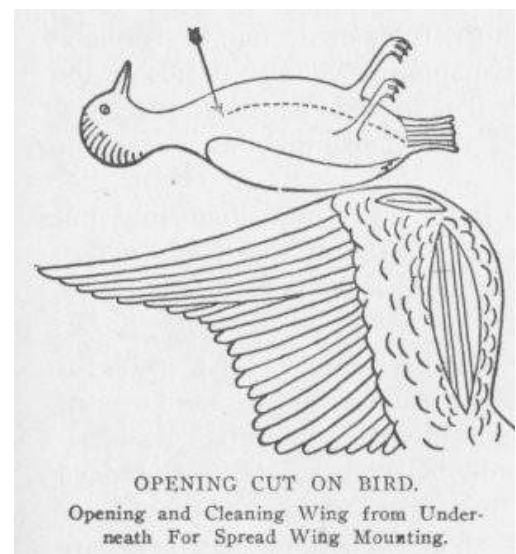
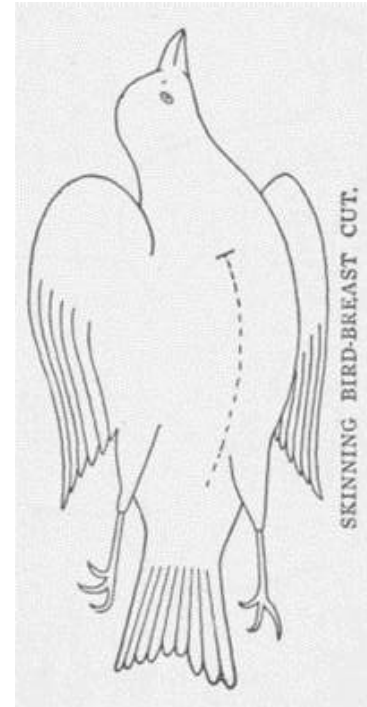


TAXIDERMY A BIRD

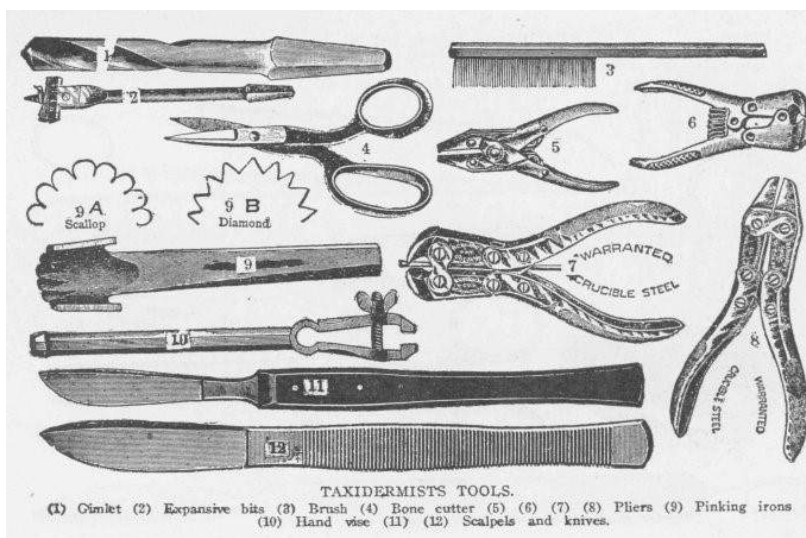
STEP 1: SKINNING

- Lay the specimen flat on its back with the neck stretched long.
- Find an area on its chest where there are few feathers (there is a naturally occurring line for laying on and warming eggs)
- Make a shallow incision from top of breast plate to the lower abdomen (do not slice anal vent)
- Push open skin like opening a book. Use borax to work skin down the chest and legs. If keeping leg bones, pop legs out of their sockets and separate from carcass with a scalpel.
- For the tail cut around the anal vent to preserve it. Separate tail bone from carcass.
- Treat wings like legs. Pop them out of their sockets (should be able to get finger around joint). Cut wing bone off carcass.
- Use borax to work neck skin up and over flesh (pull like taking off a sock)
- Once at the head, gently work skin over the skull. Make incision to release ear and eye holes. Ears will be low - almost near jaw hinge. Stop at beak.
- Separate head from carcass
- Freeze the carcass for later reference. You will use the carcass to determine the exact size of the form for your taxidermy piece.



STEP 2: CLEANING & FLESHING

- The skin of the bird is now inside out and gory looking - time to clean it!
- Scrape away all meat from the leg and wing bones using a scalpel. Get down to the "meat window" on wings.
- On tail bone, hold feathers and push up bone like a push-pop, working skin down further. Remove flesh and extra bones. Locate oil glands near anal vent and remove completely.
- Remove eye balls and brain from skull (make incision in back of skull). Remove soft palate tissue and tongue.
- Using borax and a nylon or metal brush begin scrubbing fat away from the skin. Use hard surface to direct tension and avoid tears. Try to get skin almost white/ translucent - feather butts should be visible.
- First wash - using Dawn liquid soap wash out your skin. Wring out bird to dry. Avoid excessively hot or excessively cold water (will shock skin and cause feathers to fall out)
- Continue to flesh any areas missed in first fleshing.
- Rinse with dish soap again to degrease the skin.
- Once sufficiently fleshed and degreased, soak the skin in laundry detergent solution for 15 - 20 minutes.



STEP 3: CONSTRUCT FORM

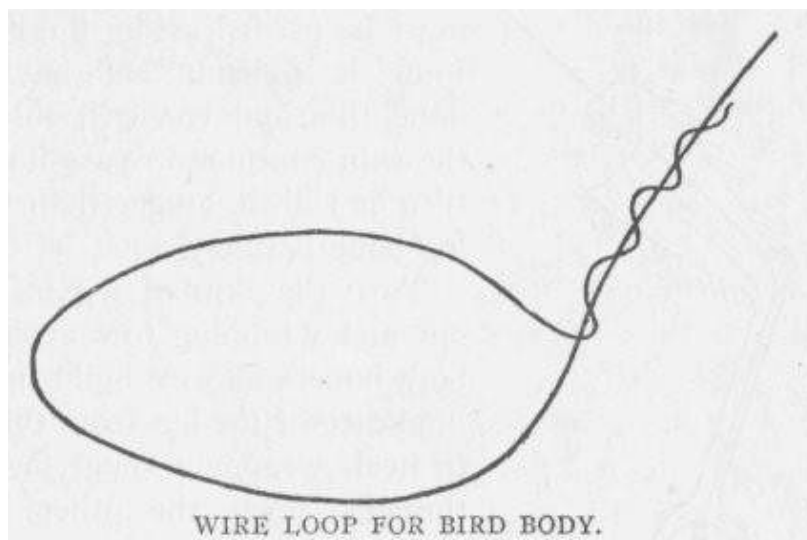
- Cut thick wire the length of birds body and fully stretched neck. Have excess wire at both ends for posing (2-3 inches). Use the carcass for reference.
- Using packed wood wool and thread, construct a heart-shaped body around the wire form. Attach `body` with glue, thread, and string.
- Use thicker rope to create the neck. Wrap around wire and keep rope and consistent (bumps will visibly alter your mount). Affix rope with hot glue.

STEP 4: DRYING

- Rinse skin until all downy residue is gone. Wring out excess water.

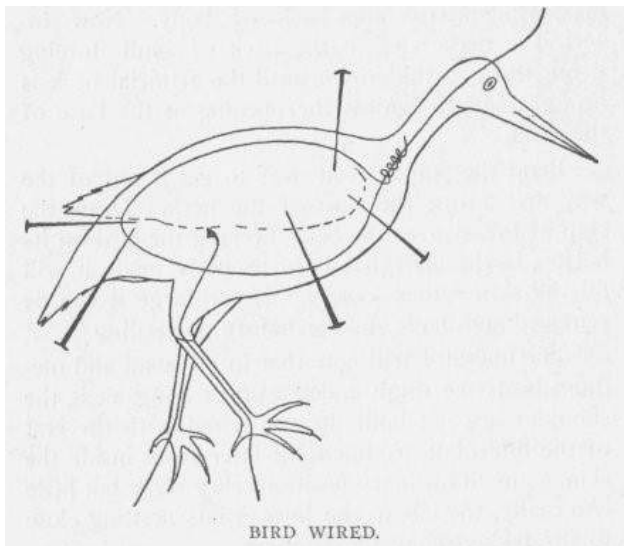
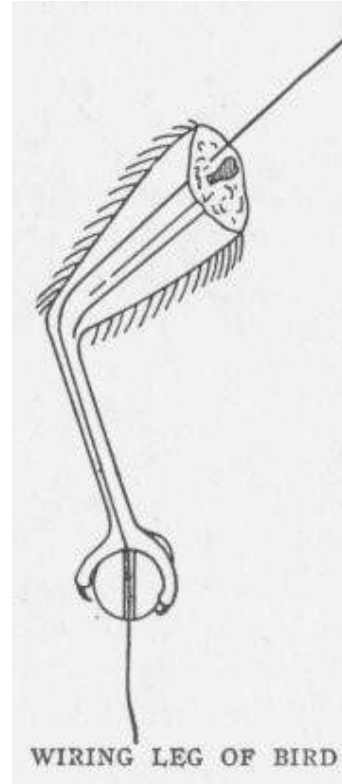
STEP 5: CREATING MOUNT

- Turn neck and head inside out again. Pack the skull with clay. Apply borax to interior of neck and head.
- Turn neck and head back out.
- Sprinkle a layer of borax on interior of the skin.
- Using the form, push extra wire on neck end up through the throat and skull until wire protrudes from mouth (must get through skull to give head posing more control)
- Situate form into body cavity as you would like and trim excess wire from body. Loop wire into form to make it sturdy and add control.
- Use cotton batting to fill out any hollow areas.



STEP 6: CREATING MOUNT

- Turn head inside out again. Fill skull with clay. Apply borax to interior of neck and head.
- Turn back out.
- Sprinkle a layer of borax on interior of skin.
- Using form, push extra wire on neck end up through the throat and skull until wire protrudes from mouth (must get through skull to give head posing more control)
- Situate form into body cavity as you would like and trim excess wire from body. Loop wire into form to make it sturdy and add control.
- Use cotton batting to fill out any hollow areas.



LEGS

- Remove tendons from legs. Make incision in sole of foot, locate tendons, pull them out and cut them away.
- Using thick wire (about 4 inches longer than the length of your bird's legs) insert through sole of foot and up the back of the leg into the body cavity. Affix wire to bones with thread. Insert excess wire into body form and loop to create stability. Clip away excess wire. Repeat for second leg.

WINGS

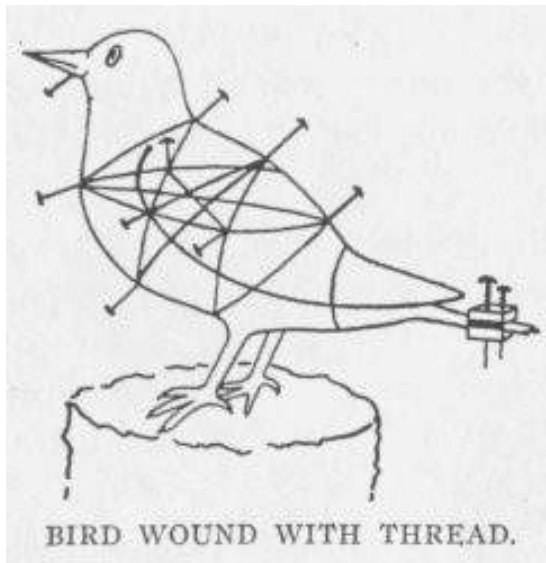
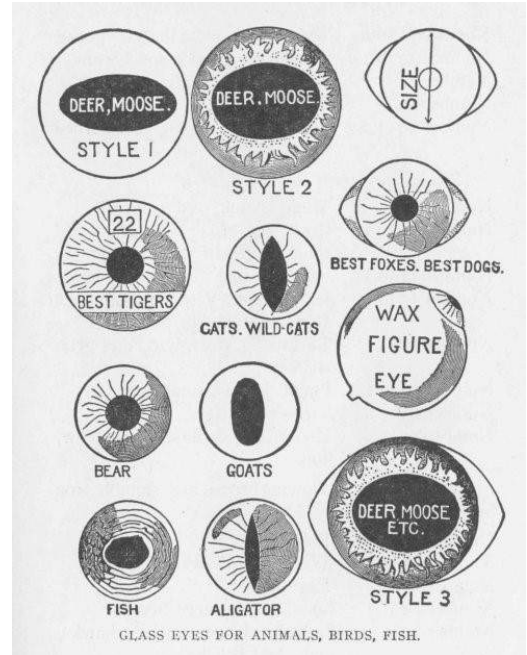
- Using thinner wire (about the length of the wing + 4 inches) insert along the wing bone and exit at second wing joint. Insert wire into form and loop for control. Repeat on second wing.

SEW

- Once you are happy with the form the mount can be sewn up. Line up feather patterns so that they match. Use taxidermy thread to close cavity. Any holes in the skin can also be stitched up now, prior to closing the cavity. Use a simple stitch from the underside of the skin.

EYES

- Use commercial taxidermy eyes (or whatever) and insert them into the clay in the eye socket. Use natural skin around the eye to frame the glass eyeball.



STEP 7: POSE MOUNT

- Using pictures and the carcass for reference begin to pose bird. Use excess wires on wings to hold pose in place (remove after two days). Use wire in beak to pose head (remove once done).

STEP 8: GROOM

- Check feathers; fluff out, place and arrange as desired. Bird will be fully dry in around two days - keep up maintenance.
- Paint feet and touch up eye sockets as they dry out