

Quad-City country is home to award-winning wildlife artists

There are more than just a few accomplished wildlife artists in the Quad-Cities — there's a veritable flock.

Dozens of folks who paint, draw and carve wildlife scenes. And here are some glances — portraits, that is — of just a few of these talented folks:

John Bald: Owner of the John Bald Wildlife Gallery, 2127 E. 12th St., Davenport.

Bald, born and reared in the Quad-Cities, sells his art all over the United States.

He did a lot of drawing as a child, but says he didn't become a good painter until he was out of school and had some experience with



Bald

sign painting and silkscreen printing.

"I create an environment I could put a person in, but I prefer the wildlife. With animals, you have no politics or insincerity."

Bald has won numerous honors and recognition for his work, including the 1977 Iowa trout stamp competition. His watercolor of a leaping trout appeared on each of the 20,000 stamps issued that year.

Pat Costello, Maquoketa, Iowa, owner of The Old Mill.

"I have zeroed in on original art of eastern Iowa, and of the unique environmental things and species involved," Costello says.

He began his career as a commercial artist in 1957, and also worked at the *Quad-City Times*.

"To be really good at this business, I wish I had almost two



Costello

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lifetimes to devote to it, to do the research you need to do," he said.

Costello's honors include the Iowa habitat stamp, which he won in 1979.

He enjoys painting Iowa's farm buildings, and pheasants.

"I jump all over the board. I just don't think I want to get so comfortable with any one thing that I don't challenge myself."

Costello says he has about 10,000 slides on file. "When you need a background, they're worth their weight in gold."

Theresa Politowicz, of Bettendorf, always knew she wanted to be an artist. "I think from kindergarten up, and before that."

She taught industrial art and woodworking, then got a start as an artist at an art show at Northpark in 1978.

She spent a lot of time with her family on outdoor vacations, "and that taught me to appreciate and almost revere wildlife."

Now the mother of two small children, she paints at home, with songbirds as a dominant theme. Many of her paintings bear a unique touch — an additional bird or animal at the bottom of the major work.

"It's a companion piece, a double image," she says. It has become her trademark, but it began with an accident when she left the children alone in the room with a nearly finished piece.

"They had left me a handprint in the corner of the painting. It was a commissioned piece, and I racked my brain with a way to cover up the mistake.

"So I put some nestlings in

the corner. It went over so well; people loved it."

Craig Carlson, Davenport, enjoys painting predator birds.

He too was a commercial artist, and works in administrative services at Litton, in sort of an in-house printing plant.

Carlson has done about 20 paintings. His inspiration was his childhood: He grew up on a farm and used to hunt.

Carlson has received many awards, including the best of show in Clinton's Art in the Park in 1987, and second place in 1988 in the Iowa Habitat Stamp Contest.

He has been most successful with a bald eagle print that portrays the bird of prey sitting on the tip of Credit Island with the Quad-City skyline in the background.

He's just finished a wild turkey painting for a Ducks Unlimited contest, and is working on a red-tailed hawk.

Carlson also takes a lot of photos, but gets many of his subjects from "captive" subjects in Coal Valley's Niabi Zoo.

Mike Dunbar, Davenport, is taking off fast with a fledgling career.

Dunbar won the 1990 Iowa trout and the habitat stamps, and has sold many of his prints.

He drew and painted for several years in school. When he decided to continue his art, he found that his hobbies of fishing and hunting provided him with inspiration — he says he designed the trout painting because he wanted to...



Carlson



Politowicz



Dunbar