Innovative Products

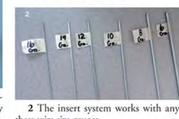
BY Larry Blomquist

THE NEXT PRODUCT WAS ONE I originally learned of at the 2011 World Taxidermy Championships® in the WASCO booth, but because I had an extremely busy schedule I never got to see the demonstration. Early this fall, taxidermist Ray Murphy called me about possibly doing an article to introduce this new attachment system he had developed. This is a classic example of a taxidermist coming up with "a better way." Ray drove over from his home in Mobile, Alabama, to our office here in Hammond, Louisiana, to show me how his attachment system works because describing the idea and technique so that I could envision it was very difficult. Once he demonstrated it, another classic phrase came to mind: "What a great idea!"

Being in Louisiana, my studio always did a large volume of ducks and most were mounted flying. When Ray showed me why he originally came up with this idea, it immediately hit home with me. It is a better way to do the wire attachment for extending a flying bird away from the wall. It allows a quick attachment of the extension wire after completing the entire mounting of the bird! No more wire sticking out of the bird as you sew, and no hindrance in the arrangement of the skin!

Before showing the steps of how to use this system, you must determine beforehand the position, direction, and attitude the flying bird will have before positioning the insert system into the urethane bird body. In other words, the position of the insert must work for the composition of the bird. Here are the steps necessary to use it.

1 The insert measures 1¾ inch in length and the tube portion is compressed. This allows a taxidermist to open it to the dimension needed for the wire size of the suspension wire being used. The width of the insert works perfectly with a ⅜-inch spade bit.



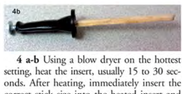
2 The insert system works with any of these wire size gauges.

3 The first thing to do is hold open the tube portion of the insert to accommodate the wire size being used. Ray quickly found this was easy to do by using Popsicle sticks (craft sticks) to form the opening. One stick works for 18- to 14-gauge wire, two sticks glued together work for 12- to 8-gauge wire, and three sticks glued together work for 8- to 6-gauge wire. Screw a drywall screw into the insert, just enough to use as a handle.

5 Use the stick as a handle and use 60-grit sandpaper or a stout ruffer to apply a rough surface to the insert for good adhesion.

6 Use a ⅜-inch paddle bit to make a hole for the insert in the bird form. Mark the length of the insert on the paddle bit so you will know what depth to drill to.

added strength when it is glued in place. Place the wire in a drill and use slow burts of speed to make the pockets. Only 3 or 4 pockets are all that is needed. The small screw in the end of the insert also gives added strength for holding the insert in the urethane body.



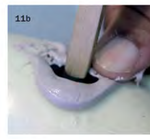
4 a-b Using a blow dryer on the hottest setting, heat the insert, usually 15 to 30 seconds. After hearing, immediately insert the correct stick size into the heated insert and leave it until the insert cools.

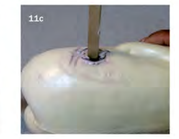
7a-b Ray uses a 12-gauge wire with a short "L" bent on the end to cut pockets into the sides of the hole in the form to give

8 This photo of a piece of urethane sliced open is an example of how the pockets should look when cut into the side of the hole.

9 a-b Ray recommends anchoring the insert system into the urethane body with Bondo. He said hot glue will work, but he prefers the Bondo. On each side of the inserts openclips in halves. These are used in the lip holes to help anchor the insert during this part of the technique.

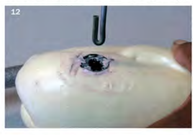
10 a-b Put the craft stick back into the insert to use as a handle. Do not mix the Bondo too hot so you will have time to work, especially if you are putting inserts into several bodies at one time. Apply the Bondo into the hole and on the insert.





11 a-b-c

Place the insert partially into the hole and put the U-pins in place. Push the insert in, including the U-pins. As soon as the Bondo cures, use a knife to trim around the edges for a smooth, flush fit. Leave the craft stick in the insert until the Bondo cures and cools. This is especially important if you use hot glue rather than Bondo so the size of the insert opening does not change from the heat of the hot glue.



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This photo shows Ray Murphys Original Attachment System in place with a suspension wire prepared as an example of how the insert and suspension wire will be used after the mounting process is completed.

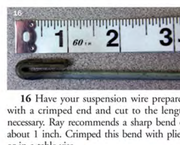
After the Mounting is Complete

Mount the bird in your usual manner, minus the suspension wire in place on the body. Make your skin adjustments on the form before attaching the suspension wire.

13 Once you have the skin adjustments made, locate the insert with your fingers, feeling through the feathers.

14 Use a sharp blade and make a small cut in the skin to expose the insert.

15 You can use a couple of small t-pins temporarily to hold the feathers back and expose the insert.



16 Have your suspension wire prepared with a crimped end and cut to the length necessary. Ray recommends a sharp bend of about 1 inch. Crimped this bend with pliers or in a table vise.

17 Five-minute epoxy is used to anchor the wire in place.

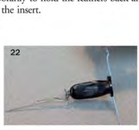
18 Using a small mixing cup, mix the epoxy and pour it into the insert hole until half full.

19 Push in the looped wire and add more epoxy if needed.

20 Use a wire to work the skin around the insert and let the epoxy cure.

Wrapped Body

21 a-b Ray also noted that if you use wrapped bird bodies, which he often does, the system works great with those type bodies also. He simply pushes the "nose" of a large pair of needle-nose pliers into the body to make an insertion hole.



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He prepares the insert a little differently for a wrapped body by adding longer wires on both sides and to the screw at the end, as shown in this photo

23

Put some hot glue into the hole and put in the insert system. Turn the ends of the wire on each side and embed into the wrapped body.

24

Thread is wrapped over the exposed wire to give a strong attachment into the wrapped body.

25 a-b-c Other Uses

Since Ray developed his insert system, he and other taxidermists using his inserts have come up with many other ways to use them. Some of these uses are shown in these photos.

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