

A new lure for folk art collectors

Vintage Folk Art Fishing Lures and Tackle

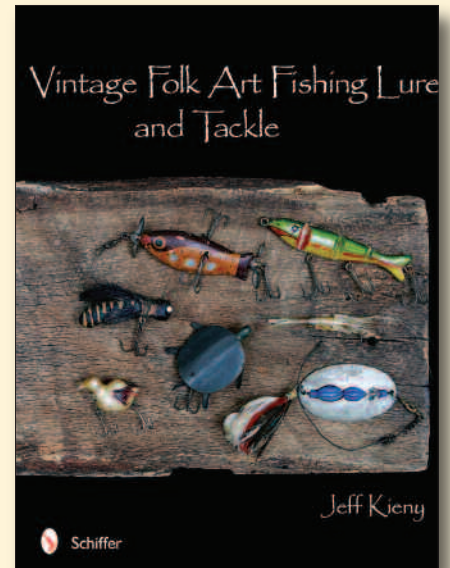
BY JEFF KIERNY

REVIEWED BY DECOY MAGAZINE

Sorting through old tackle boxes might not top your list of interests, but Jeff Kierney's new book, "Vintage Folk Art Fishing Lures and Tackle," might change your mind. Illustrated with over 700 pictures of these "miniature works of art," as the author refers to them, it is the first book to recognize and promote hand-made fishing tackle and lures as legitimate examples of American folk art.

Prior to the 20th century, the majority of fisherman used live bait and hooks to pursue their sport. But with the dawn of the new century, in the midst of America's Industrial Revolution, tackle companies began producing factory-made lures that were sold at local sporting goods and hardware stores. Due to their immediate popularity and demand, these companies were constantly adding new designs and concepts, including a potpourri of critters from a variety of materials and some with mechanical attributes.

Despite this availability of new and better products for fisherman, factory-made lures were not available to the "average guy," who couldn't afford to spend what little money was available on "expensive" fishing tackle. So many sports-



men of the day simply made their own, often using available materials and household supplies and whatever artistic talent they possessed. Most surviving examples are handmade copies of the store-bought commercial lures; others are the inventions of fishermen with creative imaginations.

Most of the lures were made for personal use, so most of the makers remain anonymous. However many fish decoy collectors, who we assume would have an interest in the topic, are familiar with Bud Stewart, one of the few identified makers of handmade fishing tackle featured in the book. Since they weren't making lures under strict commercial standards, all are singularly unique. And the designs are endless, whether they are a "one-of-a-kind creation or an inspired re-interpretation of a classic."

Since the collecting of folk art fishing lures, as the author writes, is "in its infancy," they are still readily available. But interest is growing - and this new book should only add to their allure - so you ought to have a second look the next time you sort through an old tackle box. Even if they don't attract your attention, they're liable to lure another collector into a sale.

"Vintage Folk Art Fishing Tackle and Lures" by Jeff Kierney, published by Schiffer Publishing, Atglen, PA, 240 pages, \$49.99.

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