

Name: _____

Date: _____

Teacher Sheet: Birds, Plants, and People of the Klamath Basin

✓Fledglings

Making Tule or Cattail Duck Decoys



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Tule



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Tule Seeds



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Cattails

1. Create your own duck decoy by bending soaked tule or cattail and wrapping with string into the shape of a duck.
2. You can use the diagram on the next page as a guide, or you can invent your own unique duck decoy.
3. Sketch your duck decoy in the space below.
4. Allow a few days for your decoy to dry.
5. Paint or decorate your decoy with feathers.

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Tule Duck Decoy Suggested Instructions

A. Begin with a prepared 2 foot, 2-3" diameter bundle.

B. Divide one side of the bundle into three segments— the first segment using half of the tules, the second segment using use 2/3 of what remains, and the 3rd segment uses what's left. About 3" from the center, wrap a piece of strong string over the first segment, under the second, over the third, then back under the third, over the second and under the first. (This method of binding together by over-under wrapping is called twining.)

C. Bend the bundle in the middle and continue on across to the other side, twining 3 segments together, going from smallest to largest.

D. Repeat the twining process another 3" down on the duck's body . Then sculpt the body to shape, making sure the base is open and wide. Tightly wrap string or twine around the end of the tules to form the tail. Cut off the excess tail at an angle.

E. Use tule to make the basic head shape, with each coil of tule passing through the top of the body. Make sure the neck sticks up only about 2".

F. Then wrap with a piece of split, scraped tule, inside facing out, until the desired shape is achieved.

G. Finish by running the end of the wrapper into the body and tying it off.

H. Allow the duck to dry overnight. Add paint and feathers as desired.

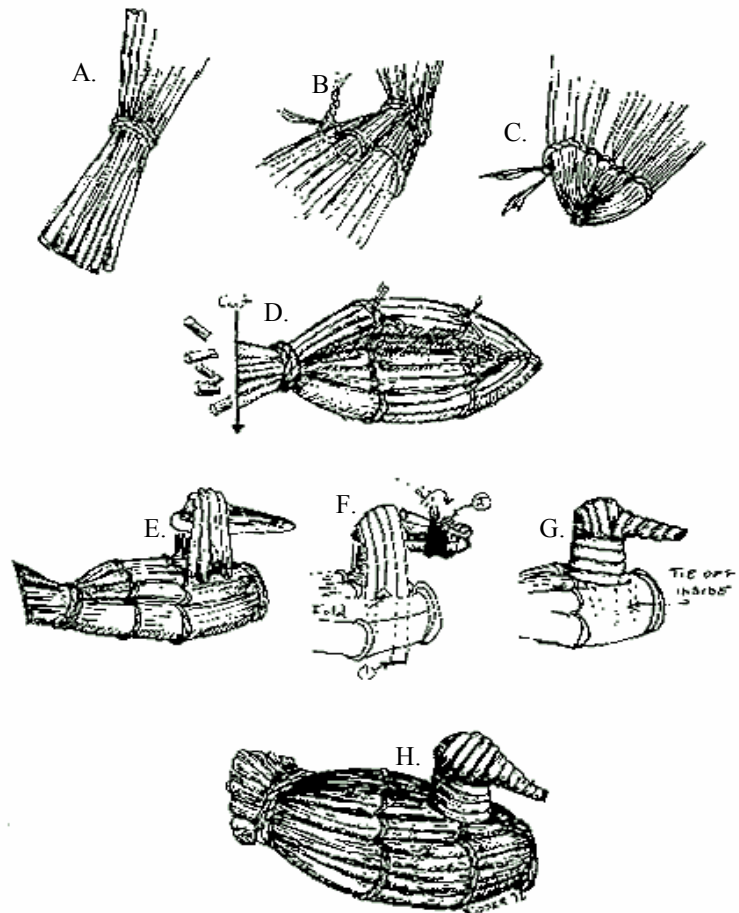


Diagram courtesy Norm Kidder
www.primitiveways.com

Adapted from Norm Kidder's instructions
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A Modoc woman with baskets made from tule and other local plants



A canoe made from tule

After your experience making a duck decoy, answer the following questions:

1. How did duck decoys help the Modocs of Lava Beds?

They were helpful because they helped the Modoc to catch birds which they used for food and for clothing.

2. In which ways are traditional tule duck decoys similar to modern decoys and which ways are they different?

They are similar because they are both used to lure in waterbirds so they can be captured or hunted. They are different because modern decoys are usually made of wood or plastic.

3. How is tule important for birds?

Tule provides habitat for many birds including snow geese, white-fronted geese, Canada geese, canvasback, ruddy ducks, American widgeon, lesser scaup, and eared and western grebes.

4. How has tule been important for people in the Klamath Basin?

Tule has been used in making nets, clothing, sandals, arrows, houses, baskets, mats, and more. It was one of the most useful plants for the Modoc.