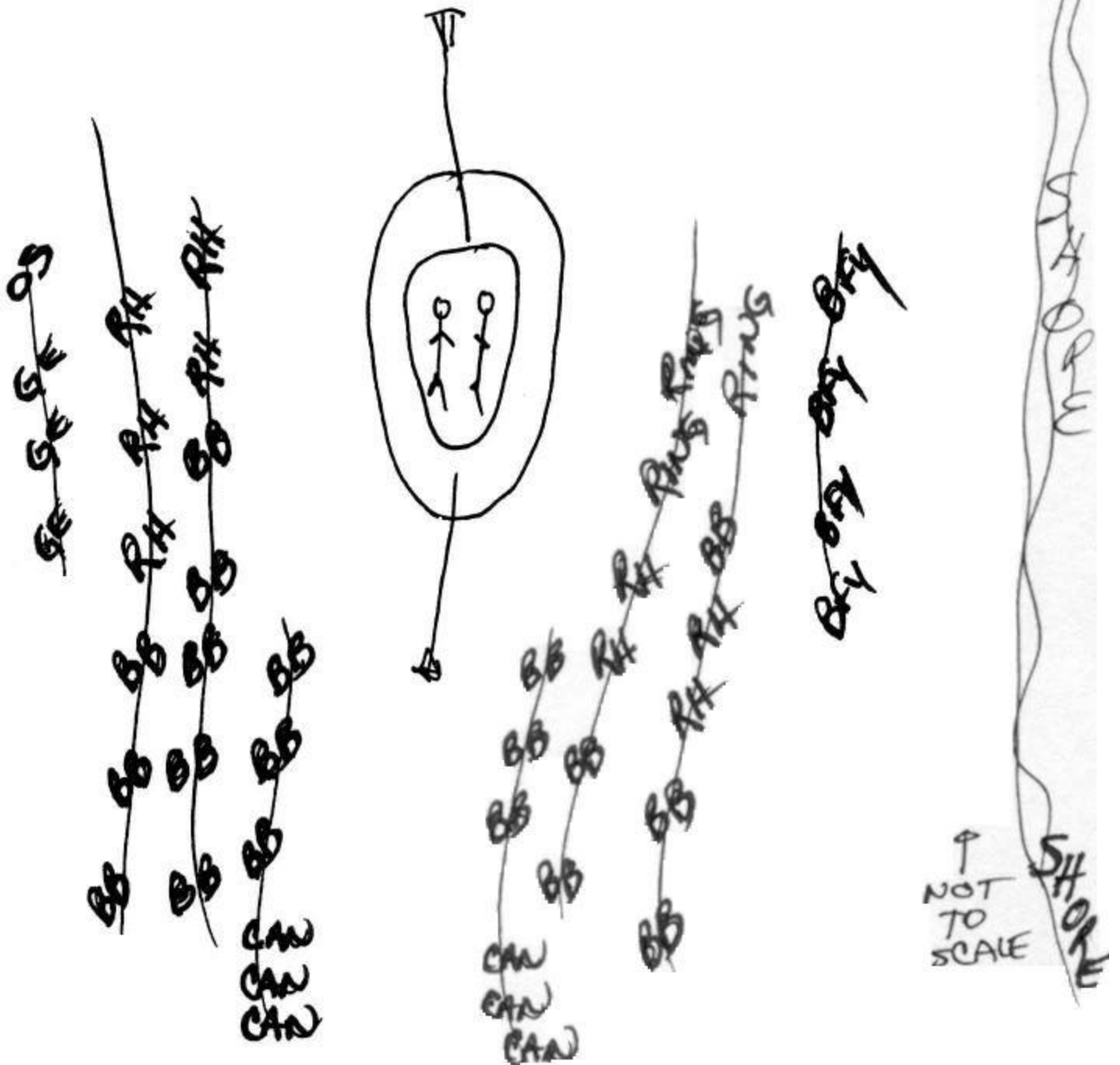


DIAGRAM-LAYOUT SETUP

WIND WIND
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~~SCOTER~~ SCOTER ELDER



Layout-Set ups & Rigging

Here's the set up we use. There are a few things to note:

- 1.** We use 200-250 decoys but you can typically do a good job getting started with about 4-6 dozen. I'd go with BlueBills & Cans as my first purchase.....along with at least ONE Goldeneye Drake and at least ONE Buffy Drake. One of each is truly "magic".
- 2.** Notice that I've shown the "shore". This is critical if you want Buffy & GE. We did a lot of work for 3 months with the USFWS and this is what we observed 100% of the time. The Buffy were always on the "shore side" of the rig of Bluebills & Redheads and the Goldeneye were always on the "lake side" of the Bluebill & Redhead. Why.....I don't know but I know that's the way they are. Both BFY & GE will come right down the center of the rig and then swing to "their own", giving you a nice coming in shot and a crossing shot.
- 3.** Also, be aware that these divers come in Low to the Deck and will almost always "lift" up and you'll think they are flaring. What they're doing is checking for landing zone. If you let them, they will come in, lift up and then drop right into the rig.
- 4.** Definitely use a call for divers. It will work wonders and it's the only way to draw them in to you if it's foggy.
- 5.** Note that we have open spaces around the boat and behind it. These are passage zones for the tender boat so the tender can come in on either side of the layout and escape whichever way is necessary out the back.
- 6.** We use a "blocker" line of big scoters and eiders. We get these birds into Lake St. Clair so it makes sense to use them but they are also there to "tell" the birds to "drop down". It's kind of the "end of the line".
- 7.** We use 125' mother lines (1/4" Black, New England Line) with heavy duty carabeener clips on the end with the upwind clipped to an 8 lb. mushroom and the downwind clipped to a sash weight. We put 12-14 decoys on a mother line, clipped to loops in the line. We will often clip two lines together. The decoys have a 3' dropper of 1/8" military parachute chord. Tie a bowline to the deke and a bowline to the 5" lobster line clip and the clip goes onto the loop in the mother line. This keeps the mother line about 3' below the surface and away from you prop. Prop caught in a mother line will kill you.
If you are hunting deep water, merely keep "deep extender lines" (Loop on end and carabeener the other end) available to merely clip on when needed.
I never use single dekes. We lost a lot of single rigged dekes in a storm. It was so dark at 1pm in the afternoon that we had to use a spotlight to find the dekes. Mother lines were easy to find but the individual dekes were lost to the storm (all hand painted E. Allens)
- 8.** We put all our decoys (still rigged) into 55 Gal. Plastic Drums with holes drilled in bottom for drainage and 2 fold down, carriage handles (home depot) riveted onto the drum. When retrieving, we set the sash weight into the bottom (still clipped to mother line) and start feeding all the decoys down into the drum. You don't have to worry much about order.....it takes care of itself for the most part. When you get to the end of the line, remove the upwind 8# mushroom anchor, place the anchor in a milk crate with other anchors and clip the carabeener to the handle. Voila.
When setting decoys, unclip the carabeener and clip on the mushroom anchor and drop at the uppermost, upwind end for the set. As you drift down, you can set the dekes. As you remove the dekes from the drum.....do NOT grab the decoys and pull them from the drum. Grab ONLY the mother line...and the decoys will follow and not get tangled. If you lift the decoys out, they will not be in sequence and you will tangle. When you've set the entire rig, hold the sash weight for a bit to stretch the mother line (it will also right any decoys that are upside down) and then drop the weight.
Now, move upwind again to set the next line.....etc.
- 9.** Don't set your rig in the dark. That's a sure way to get tangled in your mother lines and then you're in big trouble.....it can kill you. Divers move all day long. Wait to see where they want to be and then set up there or at least "pre scout" and set up as early as you have light to safely set the rig.
- 10.** Carry a true Ship to Shore radio in every boat and have a backup if necessary. The coast guard doesn't like cell phones though they are better than nothing. A ship to shore radio can be triangulated by the Coast Guard and they can find you in an instant and that matter of minutes can be the difference between life and death.
- 11.** Use a large Danforth anchor for your upwind boat anchor and a mushroom or small navy anchor as your downwind anchor. The Danforth will keep your layout boat in the proper place in the rig. The smaller downwind anchor can be pulled in and reset to adjust to a changing wind.
- 12.** Be safe out there.....most duck hunters (especially layout shooters) don't realize how close to dying we are out there all the time. We're in a harsh environment and at a harsh time of year. Nature is unforgiving.....be safe.