

The Federal Duck Stamp Story

Including the Junior Duck Stamp Story





Bob Stratton, USFWS

“There are some who can live without wild things and some who cannot. Like winds and sunset, wild things were taken for granted until progress began to do away with them.”

– Aldo Leopold

When the explorers first set foot upon the continent of North America, the skies, marshes and lands teemed with an astonishing variety of wildlife. Native Americans had been wise stewards of these precious natural resources. Unfortunately, it took the explorers and the settlers who followed only a few decades to decimate these resources. Millions of waterfowl were destroyed, some species to the point of extinction, at the hands of market hunters and a handful of overly ambitious sportsmen. Millions of acres of wetlands were drained to feed and house the ever-increasing populations, greatly reducing waterfowl breeding and nesting habitat.

Not to be outdone by man, Mother Nature periodically takes her toll with devastating droughts and floods. During these periods, migration rest areas and wintering grounds are severely impacted. As recent as 1993, record-breaking floods ravaged the fertile midwest, leaving more devastation in their wake. A large part of this catastrophe could have been avoided had many of the natural wetlands of that area not been drained and filled in for farming and housing and industrial development. Many people do not realize that

wetlands help to maintain ground water supplies, act as a filtration system for pollutants, store flood waters, protect shorelines from erosion, and modify climatic changes.

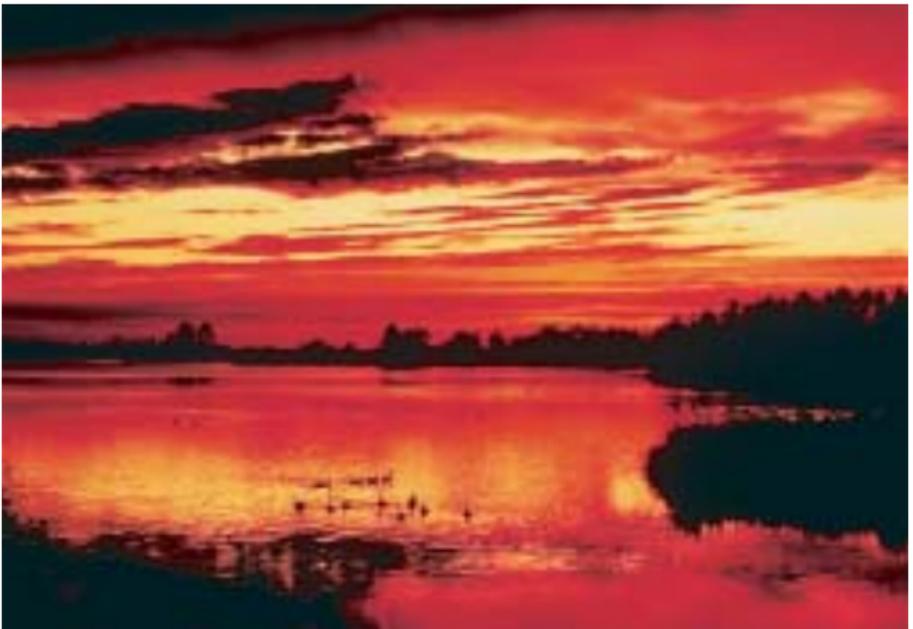


In 1934, with the passage of the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act (Act), an increasingly concerned Nation took firm action to stop the destruction of migratory waterfowl and the wetlands so vital to their survival. Under this Act, all waterfowl hunters 16 years of age and over must annually purchase and carry a Federal Duck Stamp. The very first Federal Duck Stamp was designed by J.N. “Ding” Darling, a political cartoonist from Des Moines, Iowa, who at that time was appointed by Franklin Roosevelt as Director of the Bureau of Biological Survey, the predecessor to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Hunters willingly pay the stamp price to insure the survival of our natural resources.

“We have not inherited the land from our forefathers, we have borrowed it from our children.”

– Kashmiri Proverb

Approximately 98 cents of every duck stamp dollar goes directly into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to purchase wetlands and wildlife habitat for inclusion into the National Wildlife Refuge System—a fact that ensures this land will be protected and available for all generations to



come. Since 1934, better than half a billion dollars has gone into that Fund to purchase more than 5 million acres of habitat. Little wonder the Federal Duck Stamp Program has been called one of the most successful conservation programs ever initiated.



In coming years, with the number of hunters dwindling, three groups of Americans will need to assume an increasing role in filling the gap in the purchase of Federal Duck Stamps—collectors, art enthusiasts and other conservationists.

Collectors and art enthusiasts consider these stamps “miniature pieces of art” and have been great supporters of the program. It is the third group, the other conservationists, which includes the bird watching community, that we hope will take a more active role in purchasing duck stamps. Increasingly, birders are using the National Wildlife Refuges to pursue their hobby and grow their list of “life birds” (numbers of species seen).



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The collection of duck stamps is a growing and constantly evolving phenomenon. A collector who had purchased each of the current stamps, at issue price, would have spent around \$400. This investment today would be worth well over \$5,000. Other conservationists buy the stamps as a way of ensuring that these wild places will be around for all generations. And, possession of the most recent Federal Duck Stamp provides free admission into all National Wildlife Refuges.

The purchase of a Federal Duck Stamp provides an opportunity for every United States citizen to take a stand in the preservation of our natural heritage. All of us, working together, can and have made a difference.



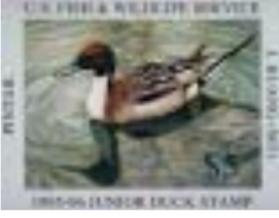
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Each year the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sponsors the only Federally-mandated art competition. Wildlife artists, both professional and amateur, all across the United States vie for the coveted title of Federal Duck Stamp Artist. The wildlife artist who wins this competition knows that his or her career and fortunes will take wing! This winning design graces the next annual Federal Duck Stamp. The Top 20 scored entries from each competition are enthusiastically exhibited around the country at various museums, festivals and expositions during the next year. *Please visit the duck stamp website at duckstamps.fws.gov to download the current year's Information, Entry Form and Regulations.*

In 1984 Congress granted an amendment to the 1934 Act authorizing the Secretary of the Interior to license reproductions of the Federal Duck Stamp on products manufactured and sold by private sector enterprises. Royalties from the sale of these products are also deposited into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund for wetlands acquisition. For a list of Federal Duck Stamp product licensees, visit our website at duckstamps.fws.gov.



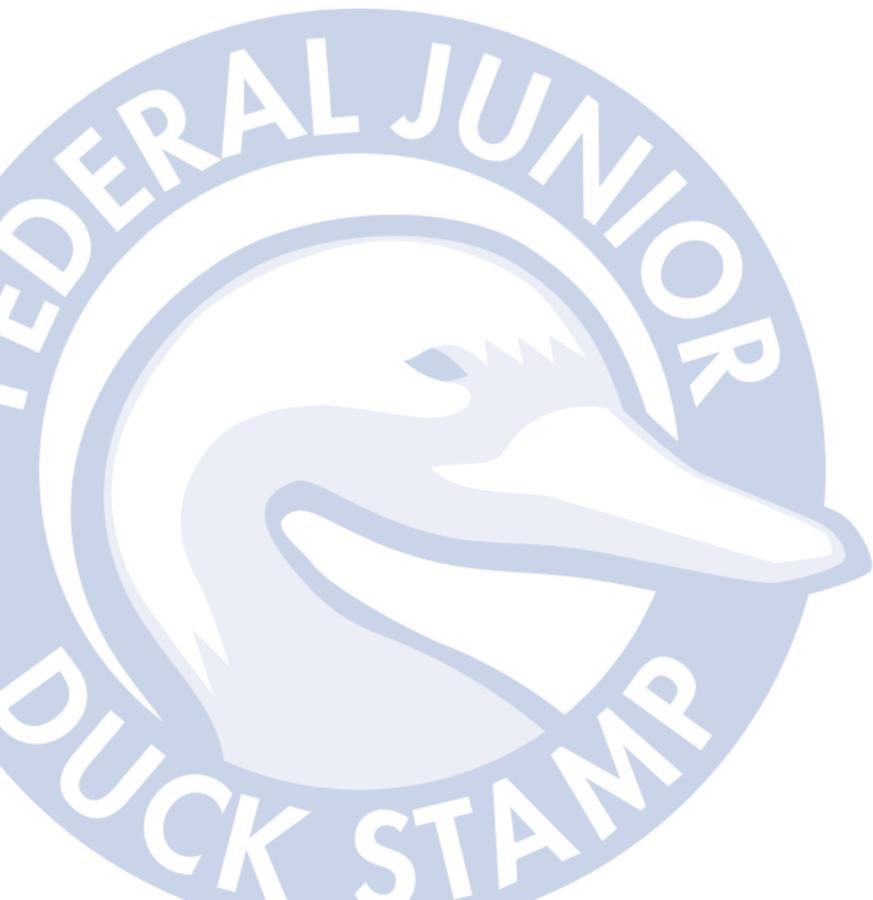
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The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program, begun in 1989 with a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, encourages conservation through the arts. Its goal is to teach the importance of conserving our Nation's wetlands and to expand knowledge of the Federal Duck Stamp as a conservation program. Congress passed *The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Act of 1994* to authorize the U.S.



Fish and Wildlife Service to use revenues from the sale of Junior Duck Stamps to promote conservation education in the form of awards and scholarships to the students, teachers and schools that participate in the program. This Act further allows for corporate and individual contributions to the awards and scholarship program, and it encourages partnerships with state agencies, conservation groups, and local communities.





Students in kindergarten through high school are involved in this innovative, curriculum based program. Through an annual art competition in each state, the children produce a “visual term paper” to give recognition to what they have learned about waterfowl and wetlands. Every state, the District of Columbia and now the U.S. Territories conducts four age-related competitions each year (K-3, 4-6, 7-9, 10-12) to select the Best of Show for the state. The Best of Show winning design from each state is entered into an annual National competition. The Best of Show selected at the National competition becomes the image for the next year’s Junior Duck Stamp.

Following the National Junior Duck Stamp competition, the Best of Show designs from each participating state are exhibited nationwide to encourage young artists to learn about wildlife and to help raise the visibility of waterfowl conservation.

Please visit the Duck Stamp website at duckstamps.fws.gov to download the current year’s competition form and the teachers curriculum guide.

**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
Federal Duck Stamp Office
4401 N. Fairfax Drive
MS 4501-4070
Arlington, VA 22203-1622**

**703/358 2000
Fax: 703/358 2009
<http://duckstamps.fws.gov>**

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How to Purchase Your Federal and Junior Duck Stamps

**U.S. Postal Service
Stamp Fulfillment Unit
P.O. Box 7247
Philadelphia, PA 19101-7097
1 800/STAMP24
<http://www.usps.com>**

or

**AMPLEX Corporation
1100 Fountain Parkway
Grand Prairie, TX 75050-1513
1 800/852 4897**

or

<http://www.duckstamp.com>

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