Jay Norwood “Ding” Darling
American Conservation Hero

Considerable Achievements

- Pulitzer Prize Winner, 1924 and 1942
- Chief, Bureau of Biological Survey (forerunner of U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service), 1934-1935
- Father of the Federal Duck Stamp
- First President, General Wildlife Federation (forerunner of National Wildlife Federation), 1936-1939

He began a long award-winning career with the Des Moines Register and Leader as a cartoonist in 1906. In 1924, “Ding” was honored with a Pulitzer Prize for a cartoon that espoused hard work. He would win this prestigious award again in 1942.

An avid hunter and angler, Darling became alarmed at the loss of wildlife habitat and the possible extinction of many species. As an early pioneer for wildlife conservation, he worked this theme into his cartoons and influenced a nation.

In July 1934, despite Darling’s lack of experience in wildlife management and his lack of support for New Deal programs, President Franklin D. Roosevelt appointed him to run the Bureau of Biological Survey, the forerunner of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In his year and a half tenure, Darling created the Federal Duck Stamp Program. The program was the result of the passage of the Migratory Bird Hunting Act in 1934, requiring all waterfowl hunters 16 years and older to purchase a Federal Duck Stamp.

Proceeds from the sale of stamps were used to purchase wetlands for the protection of wildlife habitat. Darling even designed the first Federal Duck Stamp, which sold for $1. Duck Stamp sales in 1935 raised $635,000. Since Darling’s first stamp, over $700 million have been raised and more than 5.2 million acres of habitat have been purchased for wildlife.

Darling officially resigned from the Des Moines Register in 1949 and stopped drawing cartoons, aside from a few for special conservation purposes. He died in Des Moines, Iowa, on February 12, 1962.

More information about “Ding” Darling
J.N. “Ding” Darling
National Wildlife Refuge
http://www.fws.gov/dingdarling/About/DingDarling.htm

“Ding” Darling Foundation
http://www.dingdarling.org/

Political Cartoons
http://www.dingdarling.org/cartoons.html
http://www.lib.drake.edu/heritage/ding-darling/index.html

National Wildlife Federation, Conservation Hall of Fame
http://www.nwf.org/about/inductees_darling.cfm

Detailed Biographical Information
https://www.lib.uiowa.edu/spec-coll/MSC/ToMsc200/MsC170/MsC170_DarlingDing.html