

# 2007 Federal Duck Stamp Contest Reporters' Tip Sheet



**Unless noted, for more information, contact:**

Joshua Winchell: 202/219 7499

Tom MacKenzie: 404/679 7291

**The Federal Duck Stamp Contest**

**America's longest-running reality show.** The Federal Duck Stamp contest is America's original reality show: contestants vie for a prestigious honor... a panel of judges decides who stays and who goes... the field gets narrowed... the tension builds... and finally a winner is chosen. The contest was instituted in 1948, and since then hundreds of talented and ambitious waterfowl artists have competed for wildlife art's highest honor: having their design chosen as the Federal Duck Stamp.

**Being Simon Cowell (of wildlife art).** Each year, five judges and one alternate are selected who can critically judge each Duck Stamp Contest entry based on the artistry and composition, biological accuracy of the species and habitat depicted, and suitability of the image to be reproduced as a stamp. Interview a former Duck Stamp contest judge and find out how tough it really is to choose one winner from among hundreds of high-quality art entries.

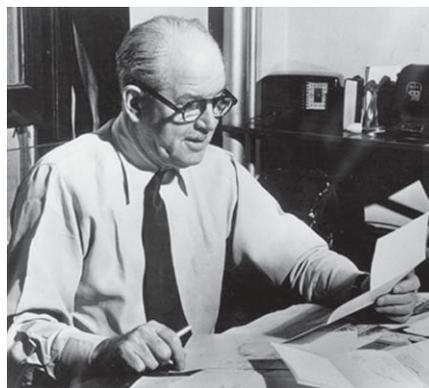
**How a star is born.** Interview Duck Stamp contest winners from previous years who can tell you just how long it takes to create that winning art and how it feels to get "the call" telling them they've won. Federal Duck Stamp Contest winners receive no prize for their work other than a pane of Duck Stamps carrying their design. However, winning artists may reap thousands of dollars by selling prints of their designs, which are sought after by hunters, conservationists and art collectors. Winning the contest launches an artist's career into a whole new dimension. See every Duck Stamp since 1934, as well as the names of the winning artists at <http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/federal/stamps/fedimages.htm>.

**Developing the winners of tomorrow.** You've heard of the Federal Duck Stamp, but what about the Junior Duck Stamp? Kids in Kindergarten through twelfth grade have an art contest all their own—and on the way to creating their painting of a duck or goose, they learn about wetlands, wildlife and conservation. Learn more about this extraordinary program that sees some 30,000 entrants each year and interview past Junior Duck Stamp winners.

**Federal Duck Stamp History**

**Journalist changes the course of wildlife conservation.**

Just who was "Ding" Darling? A Pulitzer Prize-winning editorial cartoonist, Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling was also the father of the Federal Duck Stamp and the director of the Bureau of Biological Survey (the forerunner to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). Explore his art, his passion for conservation and his leadership in "saving ducks." Start with the "Ding" Darling Foundation, <http://www.dingdarling.org/index.html>, to see some of "Ding" Darling's editorial cartoons and find out more about him. Interview Kip Koss, "Ding" Darling's grandson and author of a compilation of his conservation-related cartoons, about his grandfather's lasting legacy.



Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, credit: "Ding" Darling Foundation

**One stamp. More than 5 million acres. More than \$700 million.** Since 1934, sales of Federal Duck Stamps have raised

more than \$700 million to acquire habitat for national wildlife refuges in all 50 states. Find out which refuges near you have been purchased in part with Duck Stamp dollars at <http://www.fws.gov/duckstamps/Conservation/conservation.html>. Then go visit, meet the refuge manager and explore the refuge to see the spectacles of wildlife that Duck Stamp dollars have helped protect.

**Be green: Buy a Duck Stamp.** Hybrid cars, carbon-neutral travel, compact fluorescent light bulbs... there are hundreds of ways to "be green" and be kind to the planet. One of the simplest and most cost-effective ways is to buy a Federal Duck Stamp. Ninety-eight percent of the \$15 you spend on a Duck Stamp goes directly to saving the planet by purchasing wetland habitat for our national wildlife refuge system. Protecting wetlands benefits birds and a host of other wildlife – but people benefit too, since wetlands help to filter our drinking water. Who knew it was so easy being green?



Left to right: the first Federal Duck Stamp in 1934; and subsequent Duck Stamps: 1960, 1980 and 2001

### A rite of passage, a family tradition.

For many families, waterfowl hunting has been a tradition for generations. During the Dust Bowl era, wetlands and waterfowl populations were declining, and waterfowl hunters supported the creation of a revenue stamp to essentially “tax themselves” to raise funds for habitat conservation. Since

then, every waterfowl hunter age 16 or older has been required to purchase a Federal Duck Stamp each year. Interview waterfowl hunters in your area, such as members of a local Ducks Unlimited or Delta Waterfowl chapter, and ask them about when they bought their first Duck Stamp and what it means to invest in the conservation of our nation’s natural resources.

**It’s not just for ducks.** It’s known as the Federal Duck Stamp, but millions of birds, mammals, fish, insects and plants can thank the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp for the habitat they dwell on. Duck Stamp dollars are used to acquire wetland habitat that is home to a variety of wildlife. That’s why more and more birdwatchers, hikers and others who simply enjoy nature are buying duck stamps. Talk to your local Audubon Society or birdwatching group to find out why they are enthusiastically encouraging their members to buy Duck Stamps.

### Buy a Duck Stamp so your kids can connect with nature.

Children today suffer from what one author and researcher has dubbed “nature-deficit disorder”—a disconnect from the natural world that can be linked to the rise in obesity, attention disorders and even depression. Research shows that direct exposure to nature can affect the physical and emotional health of both children and adults. In order to make that connection with nature, people need natural places to go. Ninety-eight percent of the proceeds from the \$15 Federal Duck Stamp go directly to purchasing habitat for our national wildlife refuge system—creating places where wildlife thrive and where people can forge that important bond with their natural world.

### Travel

For all travel stories, contact: Nancy Hamilton, (NHamilton@leegov.com), 239/338 3500, [www.leevcb.com](http://www.leevcb.com)

J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge comprises more than half of the 10,730-acre Sanibel Island, making its residents and visitors extraordinarily aware of **wildlife and its habitat**. Wildlife tours, birding walks and narrated hikes are big business on Sanibel Island and sister Captiva Island. Galleries favor wildlife watercolors and photography. Local



*FWS Deputy Director Marshall Jones calls Richard Clifton to tell him his entry has won the 2006 contest. Clifton’s artwork appeared on 2007-2008 Federal Duck Stamp.*

hoteliers and retailers are now working with the refuge to promote the judging for the 75th Federal Duck Stamp.

One lone **saltwater crocodile** calls J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge home, and adamantly so. Several years ago, she was relocated to the Everglades, where more of her kind live. A couple of years later, she returned to live among the refuge’s more predominant **alligator** population.

*Canoe & Kayak* has named the waterways in and around J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge among the nation’s 10 top places to **paddle**. Tours and rentals are available through the refuge’s concession, Tarpon Bay Explorers, which also conducts nature tours by electric pontoon boat. The refuge’s waterways are part of the 100-mile Great Calusa Blueway paddling trail.

*Birder’s World Magazine* voted J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge as the number three **birding** spot in the nation. Birders have logged nearly 300 species at the refuge, most famously its roseate spoonbills and mangrove cuckoo.

A popular **family** destination, Sanibel Island boasts year-round beaches and extensive opportunity for children to learn about the environment as they play outdoors. The “Ding” Darling Education Center at J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge offers programs and exhibits designed especially for youngsters.

**Seashell** collectors count Sanibel Island among the world’s top destinations. The island’s Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum and annual Sanibel Shell Fair pay homage to its reputation as a seashell Mecca.

Besides shells, Sanibel Island’s beaches are known for its nesting **loggerhead turtles**, which are listed as a threatened species by the federal government. Hatchlings emerge late summer through early fall.

J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge is part of a “conservation alley” that runs through the center of Sanibel Island. Other **nature attractions** along the way include Bailey-Matthews Shell Museum, Sanibel-Captiva Conservation Foundation’s Nature Center and trails, and the Clinic for the Rehabilitation of Wildlife (CROW).

J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge is **user-friendly**. Visitors can drive, bike, hike or paddle their way through the refuge. Volunteer “Rovers” along its Wildlife Drive answer questions and identify species. An observation tower overlooks waters where birds flock to feed.

“Ding” Darling Wildlife Society, the friends group for J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge, built its state-of-the-art **Education Center** in 1999, complete with habitat vignettes and interactive exhibits. (<http://www.dingdarlingsociety.org>)

Each fall, **“Ding” Darling Days** celebrates the birthday of J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s namesake. In its 18th year, it will run from October 8-14, 2007, in conjunction with the 2007 Federal Duck Stamp Contest. It culminates Sunday, October 14, with a free Family Fun Day at the refuge. (<http://www.dingdarlingdays.com>)