



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release SUNDAY, AUGUST 21, 1949.

#### NEW \$2 DUCK STAMP TO AID CONSERVATION

"Duck stamps" required by law to be used by migratory waterfowl hunters over 16 years of age, will cost \$2 this year under the terms of the Johnson-Thompson Duck Stamp Bill which was passed in the 81st Congress. The "duck stamp" has been sold for \$1 since the law was first passed in 1934.

The Department of the Interior's Fish and Wildlife Service anticipates that the sale of stamps will exceed 2,000,000, last year's record figure. The Service urges duck hunters to buy stamps at local post offices as soon as they are put on sale. No definite date for the issuance of the stamps has been set, but it is expected that they will go on sale in three weeks or a month.

The additional money obtained from the increased price will go to offset rising costs encountered by the Fish and Wildlife Service in its efforts to expand the important work on the conservation of waterfowl. Ten per cent of the money secured from the sale of the stamps will be used principally for enforcement, the most important phase of waterfowl conservation. This limitation continues budgetary restrictions on game law enforcement, which have been in effect for some time. Rising costs of equipment, such as boats, automobiles and sidearms, necessary in the conservation program, will limit the number of new enforcement agents that can be assigned to field work. A few land negotiators and engineers will be added to the present staff.

Additional revenues, however, will permit the Service to complete development work on existing refuges and to acquire critical areas along the important flyways. Rehabilitation work on refuge structures, in many cases delayed by the war, will be the first step in the program. Improvements of areas already under government ownership will provide additional food and protection for ducks and geese. Development work is only partially completed on many existing refuges and on recently acquired areas, work has not been started.

Purchase and development work to close gaps in the chain of refuges along flyways will be also undertaken. At present there are no Federal refuges in Indiana, Ohio, Kansas, Wyoming or Colorado.

Waterfowl refuges are an advantage to the hunter as well as to the birds. The good feeding conditions and places to rest not only are essential to the welfare of the waterfowl, but hold the flocks in the vicinity longer so that shooting is improved over a longer period. Furthermore, the birds are benefited by being held over as it prevents their concentration too soon in southern feeding areas.

The new amendment to the duck stamp bill will permit the opening of not more than 25 percent of the newly acquired areas to hunting--at the discretion of the Secretary of the Interior--when duck populations are at favorable levels.

The purchase and development of these refuge areas will be costly. It will take several years of duck stamp revenues to be able to do it. The areas to be improved have already been tentatively selected, but state conservation departments will be consulted, and public hearings held, before purchases of lands are made.

x x x