

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

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"DUCK STAMP" COST RAISED TO \$5

Assistant Secretary of the Interior Nathaniel P. Reed announced today that the cost of the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp, generally known as the "Duck Stamp," will be \$5 for the 1972-73 waterfowl hunting season, an increase of \$2.

All proceeds from sale of duck stamps go into a fund set aside for the acquisition of wetlands and refuges for migratory birds. The costs of those lands have risen dramatically over the last few years.

"Without waterfowl habitat, we will have no waterfowl," Secretary Reed said, "and without more money we cannot preserve sufficient habitat. It's as simple as that."

The duck stamp is required for everyone who hunts migratory waterfowl and has reached his 16th birthday. State hunting licenses are also required for the gunners.

Stamp sales have averaged about 2 million a year over the last five years, but a Fish and Wildlife Service spokesman doubted that the new price increase would bring in an added \$4 million each year. Historically, when stamp prices have gone up sales have gone down. Also, permit sales fluctuate annually with the fall flight forecast, rising when there has been a good breeding season in the north and falling when drought or extended snow cover hamper nesting.

The increase in duck stamp price is the first since 1959, when the cost went from \$2 to \$3. The stamp was first put into effect in 1934, at \$1, and the price was raised to \$2 in 1949. Funds from the sales always have gone into buying waterfowl habitat. Congress authorized a price increase last December.

Total sales for the 1970-71 season, a record high, were 2,420,244. Not all of these represent waterfowlers. Collectors buy an unknown number of these revenue stamps; estimates run 50,000 and above. Early issues now command premium prices among collectors.

Designs for the stamps are selected in annual contests open to all competitors, with the winner selected by art and wildlife judges outside the Department of the Interior. The current winner is Arthur Cook of Bloomington, Minn., whose painting of two emperor geese in Arctic surroundings will decorate the new stamp that goes on sale July 1. There were 213 entries in the contest last December. The winner receives no compensation from Interior.

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