



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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SECRETARY CLARK ANNOUNCES OPENING OF FREE EXHIBIT OF
RARE "DUCK STAMP" ART AND STAMPS

Washington area residents are invited to attend an exhibit of rare wildlife art and stamps that goes on display in Washington June 25, Secretary William Clark announced today.

The exhibit celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, popularly known as the "Duck Stamp." The exhibit is being sponsored by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Ducks Unlimited, Inc., an international conservation agency. It will be on display at the American Forestry Association, 1319 18th Street, N.W., from June 25 through July 10, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. weekdays and 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. Admission is free.

"This collection features works by some of America's finest wildlife artists," Secretary Clark noted. "The beauty of the artwork and of the 'Duck Stamps' will appeal to just about everyone, and certainly they will be of special interest to birdwatchers, waterfowl hunters, stamp collectors, and wildlife artists."

The "Duck Stamp" is a revenue stamp, not a postage stamp. Funds from "Duck Stamp" sales are used by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to buy lands for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The exhibit displays a full "Duck Stamp" collection, including signed, original prints of the artwork for the 50 "Duck Stamp" designs from 1934 through 1983. Framed with each print is a numbered block of the original, mint "Duck Stamps" made from the design, as well as "Duck Stamps" signed by each artist. The collection was donated for the exhibit by Ducks Unlimited to honor the stamp's 50th anniversary.

Also on display are sets of gold, silver, and bronze commemorative medallions of the "Duck Stamps" contributed for the exhibit by Russell A. Fink galleries of Lorton, Virginia, and Wild Wings of Lake City, Minnesota.

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An unusual aspect of the collection is that most of the artwork became "Duck Stamp" designs by winning an art contest held annually here in Washington by the Department of the Interior. Before 1949 the Government commissioned artists to design the stamps, but beginning that year the stamp design was selected through a contest open to the public. Although the contest started small (only eight entries the first year), it is now a major national event in the world of wildlife art: 1,581 artworks were judged in last year's contest. The winning artist receives no monetary prize from the Government, but art dealers are eager to market prints of the winning design, and winning the contest enhances the artist's reputation and may increase the market for his or her other works.

Of special interest locally are the "Duck Stamps" designed by Washington area residents. The 1944-45 stamp of white-fronted geese was designed by the late Walter A. Weber of Oakton, Virginia; artist Bob Hines of Arlington, Virginia, designed the 1946-47 stamp of redheads; and the 1957-58 stamp of common eiders was painted by Jackson Miles Abbott of Alexandria, Virginia. The big area winner is Edward J. Bierly of Lorton, Virginia, who designed the 1956-57 stamp of mergansers; the 1963-64 stamp of brant; and the 1970-71 stamp of Ross' geese. In recent years several area artists have also been runners-up in the tough competition.

The "Duck Stamp" is one of the Nation's most successful wildlife conservation programs. It began in the 1930's, when America's flocks of ducks and geese were severely threatened by drought and the draining of their wetland nesting areas for agriculture. To raise the money needed to save waterfowl habitat, Congress passed a law requiring all waterfowl hunters age 16 and older to buy a "Duck Stamp" annually. Since 1934 more than 89 million "Duck Stamps" have been sold, providing \$285 million for the acquisition of 3.5 million acres of habitat benefiting waterfowl and many other kinds of fish and wildlife. All or parts of nearly 200 national wildlife refuges were acquired with "Duck Stamp" dollars. Most "Duck Stamps" are purchased by waterfowl hunters, but an increasing number of non-hunting conservationists and stamp collectors are also buying them.

In recognition of the "Duck Stamp's" contribution to wildlife conservation, Senator Thad Cochran (R-Mississippi), Senator David Pryor (D-Arkansas), Congressman Silvio Conte (R-Massachusetts), and Congressman John Dingell (D-Michigan), have introduced a joint Congressional resolution designating July 1-8 as "National 'Duck Stamp' Week" and 1984 as "Year of the 'Duck Stamp'." The resolution now has some 200 sponsors and is expected to be passed by Congress soon.

The "Duck Stamp" art exhibit opened in Boston March 17 and then traveled to Durham, North Carolina, before its Washington tour. After Washington, the exhibit will be shown in Houston, Anchorage, Philadelphia, and Denver. Remington Arms and Du Pont Company are contributing the funds for the exhibit's tour.

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"Duck Stamp" Art Exhibit: June 25 - July 10 Monday - Friday 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Saturday - Sunday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., American Forestry Association, 1319 18th Street, N.W. Free.

Note to Editors: Black and white photos of "Duck Stamp" art are available on loan by calling the Office of Audio-Visual, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 343-8770.