



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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INCREASE IN COST OF DUCK STAMP TO BE EFFECTIVE JULY 1, 1987

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is reminding waterfowl hunters and other conservationists that the price of the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, better known as the "Duck Stamp," will rise from \$7.50 to \$10.00 this summer. All proceeds from the sale of these revenue stamps are used by the Service to acquire vital wetland habitat for addition to the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The authorization for the Duck Stamp price increase was a major provision contained in the Emergency Wetlands Resources Act of 1986, passed by Congress in an attempt to stem the continuing wetlands loss. The Act also calls for raising the Duck Stamp's price to \$12.50 in 1989-90 and to \$15.00 in 1991 and subsequent years.

The increase to \$10.00 will go into effect on July 1, 1987, with issuance of the 1987-88 stamp featuring a trio of redhead ducks flying low over a backwater marsh. This is the first price increase for the stamp since 1979, when it rose from \$5.00 to \$7.50 in order to keep up with inflation and escalating land acquisition costs.

According to William Horn, Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, "The Duck Stamp is a vital part of our Nation's efforts to ensure the future of our waterfowl populations through the acquisition of prime wetland habitat across the country. The increased revenues from the Duck Stamp will help the Fish and Wildlife Service accelerate these efforts."

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Current estimates indicate nearly half a million acres of wetlands are being lost each year in the U.S. These areas are considered the single most productive habitat type for wildlife, especially migratory waterfowl. In addition, they provide critical spawning areas for fish and other aquatic species. Wetlands also serve an important role in providing a natural form of flood control, filtering impurities from water resources, and replenishing groundwater supplies.

During a special ceremony held today at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing, the first sheet of Duck Stamps rolled off the press. The artist who painted the winning design in last year's annual Duck Stamp contest, Arthur G. Anderson of Onalaska, Wisconsin, was on hand to sign it, along with members of Congress, officials of the Department of the Interior, and other dignitaries. The autographed sheet was then donated to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC.

All waterfowl hunters 16 years of age and over are required to purchase a Duck Stamp each year. However, more and more people interested in conservation and the out-of-doors are purchasing the stamps as a means of supporting wetlands conservation through the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. The proceeds from Duck Stamp sales are deposited in this fund and, since the program began in 1934, over \$300 million has been used to purchase more than 3.5 million acres of vital wetland habitat.

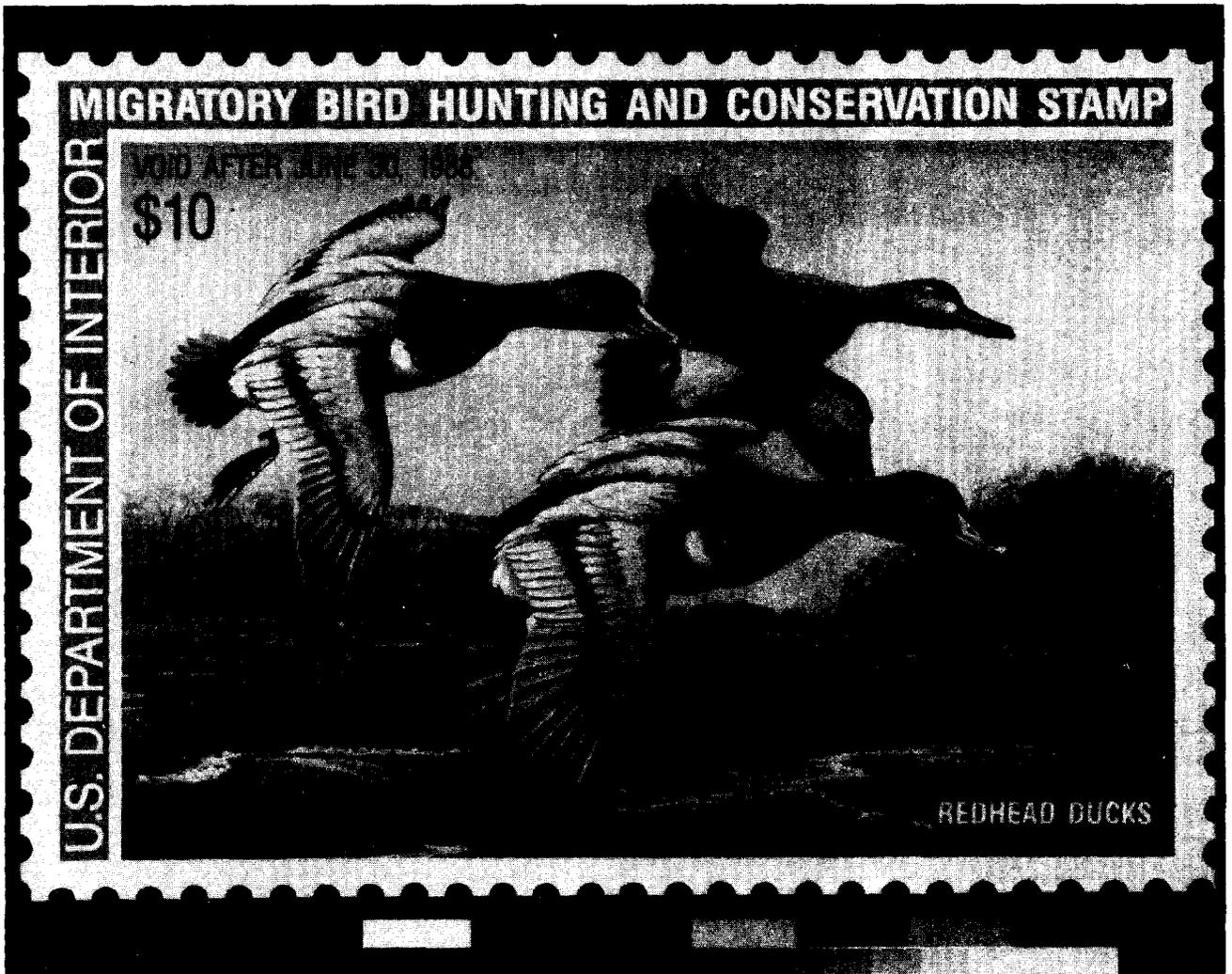
Preservation of waterfowl habitat through the Duck Stamp program is also part of the United States' effort to implement the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, signed in 1986 by Secretary of the Interior Don Hodel and Canada's Environment Minister, Thomas McMillan. Under this far-reaching agreement, the United States and Canada have identified habitat conservation goals and other actions needed through the year 2000 to rebuild declining waterfowl populations.

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Duck Stamp sales have averaged about 1.8 million in recent years. Based on past experience when the Duck Stamp price increased, the Service is anticipating a slight, temporary drop in FY 1988 sales. About 1.65 million stamps are expected to be sold in FY 1988, providing a total of \$16 million for the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund.

This year's Duck Stamp will be available for purchase beginning July 1 at most Post Offices and many National Wildlife Refuges.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: A limited supply of black-and-white photos and color transparencies of the new \$10 Duck Stamp is available on free loan from the Audio-Visual Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of the Interior, Washington, DC 20240, 202-343-4895. Please be advised that color reproductions of the Duck Stamp must conform to certain size requirements which will be sent along with the requested transparency.