



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release March 4, 1988

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CHANGES IN DUCK STAMP CONTEST REGULATIONS PROPOSED Open for Public Comment

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service recently proposed several significant changes in the regulations governing the Duck Stamp art contest. The contest is held to select a design depicting North American waterfowl for the following year's Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp. Revisions include moving the contest deadline to an earlier date, from October 1 to September 15; establishing a procedure for judging tie votes; and limiting the number of eligible species to five.

The Duck Stamp is the longest running annual stamp series in the United States. The yearly contest to select the stamp's design is highly competitive, attracting as many as 1,000 paintings, many from the Nation's most skilled waterfowl artists. Consequently, Duck Stamps are known for their beautiful and accurate portrayals of North American waterfowl.

Almost two million Duck Stamps are sold each year to waterfowl hunters, other conservationists, and stamp collectors. Money from the sale of the stamps is deposited into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, and used to acquire wetlands for the National Wildlife Refuge System. Duck Stamp revenue has purchased close to 4 million acres of prime wetland habitat for waterfowl and other species since the program began in 1934.

Contest Deadline

Although the Duck Stamp Contest officially opens July 1 of each year, about 90 percent of the entries are received during the last week of the contest.

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Moving the final deadline date from October 1 to September 15 will allow contest officials a reasonable amount of time to process these last-minute entries. Total entries in 1987 numbered more than 800.

Tie Votes

Current contest regulations establish procedures for judging a tie vote for first place only. The proposed regulation would simply extend the established procedure for breaking a tie vote to include second and third place winners.

Eligible Species

Currently, each entry can feature any species of North American waterfowl which has not been a winner for the past 5 years. Under the new proposal, the Service will identify five species each year which artists can depict. This will assist judges in preparing themselves for evaluation of the anatomical accuracy of species rendered in each entry. Anatomical accuracy is one of the criteria for a winning design.

Additionally, this change will allow for greater representation of species of North American waterfowl which have never before appeared on a Duck Stamp. It is hoped that by limiting the number of eligible species each year, all species of North American waterfowl eventually will be represented in the Duck Stamp series. The five eligible species for the 1988 contest will be announced if and when this proposed regulation becomes final.

Public Comment

A complete text of the proposed contest regulations can be found in the March 3, 1988 Federal Register, or obtained from the Federal Duck Stamp Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 18th and C Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20240.

Public comments concerning the revised regulations should be addressed to Norma Opgrand, Duck Stamp Coordinator, and sent to the above address. All comments should be received by April 4, 1988.