



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

### Fish and Wildlife Service

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#### FORMER FOOTBALL STAR TEAMS UP WITH FEDERAL DUCK STAMP PROGRAM FOR 1994 ART CONTEST

He may not be facing a 290-pound offensive guard, but former Washington Redskin Dave Butz may find tackling the annual loss of 290,000 acres of wetlands equally formidable. Butz will lend his weight to the wetlands conservation cause by participating in the 1994 Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest sponsored by the Interior Department's U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service October 30-November 2, 1994, in Washington, DC.

The former defensive tackle is to serve as an official contest judge for the event held annually to select the design for the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (commonly called the Duck Stamp). Federal Duck Stamps, which cost \$15, are a required annual purchase for waterfowl hunters 16 years of age and older. They are also popular among stamp collectors, wildlife artists, and others who wish to contribute to wildlife and habitat conservation.

Duck Stamps have raised nearly half a billion dollars to date, which has been used for the acquisition of 4.2 million acres of wetlands for the National Wildlife Refuge System. These areas are important habitat for waterfowl, other migratory birds, and hundreds of other plants and animals, including nearly half the Nation's endangered species. Ninety-eight cents of every Duck Stamp dollar is used to acquire wetlands habitat.

"Part of the Duck Stamp program's success is due to its broad appeal," said Service Director Mollie Beattie. "While waterfowl hunters have been a major pillar of support for the program, many other Americans buy Duck Stamps as a way to directly contribute to wildlife conservation."

Duck Stamps can be purchased at most U.S. Post Offices, national wildlife refuges, and some sporting goods stores.

Created during the Dust Bowl days of the 1930s when waterfowl populations were plummeting, the Duck Stamp established the first permanent source of revenue to be used for habitat acquisition for the refuge system.

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More than half of the wetland areas in the conterminous United States have been lost since Colonial times, and it is estimated that nearly 290,000 acres continue to be lost each year. About 400 species of Federally protected migratory birds depend on or frequent wetland areas. Wetlands also benefit people by recharging groundwater reservoirs, improving water quality through filtering, controlling erosion, and serving as a natural form of flood control.

Five people from the wildlife art and/or conservation community are chosen each year to serve as judges for the contest. Besides his legendary role as a Redskin, Butz participates in numerous conservation efforts and currently hosts Suzuki's Great Outdoors on ESPN. "As an avid outdoorsman and duck decoy carver, I am proud to be a part of this great effort to conserve waterfowl and wetlands," said Butz.

Other contest judges include **Geneva Barry**, a philatelist and member of both the Louisiana and Alabama Ornithological Societies and the American Birding Association; **Timothy Eisele**, a respected outdoor writer and photographer with a strong background in ecology and waterfowl hunting, as well as a lifelong collector of Duck Stamps; **Eugene German**, a member of the New York Stock Exchange who has amassed a world-class Duck Stamp and art collection, and a charter life member and vice president of the National Duck Stamp Collectors Society; and **Mark LaBarbara**, an award-winning writer and photographer, chairman of the board of the Great Lakes Outdoor Writers Association, senior vice president of the North American Outdoor Group, and an avid collector of wildlife art.

The Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest is free and open to the public. This year, 585 designs have been entered and will be on display for viewing and judging. In addition, Duck Stamp licensed products, including posters, T-shirts, mugs, calendars, caps, and other items featuring Duck Stamp designs, will be available for sale in the Interior Department lobby. Part of the proceeds from the sale of these products also are used for wetlands acquisition.

Minnesota is the state with the largest number of entrants (45). California has the second largest number with 38, and 37 designs were entered by Wisconsin artists.

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# FISH & WILDLIFE SERVICE

# Facts

U.S. Department of the Interior

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## WETLANDS ARE WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT

The Federal Duck Stamp Program has come a long way in preserving wetlands since its inception 60 years ago, when a concern for ducks and wetlands was raised by conservationists, particularly J.N. "Ding" Darling, who then served as chief of the U.S. Biological Survey, the predecessor agency of the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Darling and many of his contemporaries were concerned over plummeting waterfowl populations, caused primarily by an extended drought which took place during the 1920s. In 1929, Congress passed the Migratory Bird Conservation Act, thus providing the mechanism for land acquisition for the fledgling National Wildlife Refuge System. The law did not, however, provide a continuous funding source for purchase of suitable lands. But Darling had a solution for that.

He set out to create the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp, a required purchase of all waterfowl hunters age 16 and older, to ensure a source of revenue. This idea was embodied in legislation known as the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, passed by Congress in 1934. A well-known political cartoonist, Darling took it upon himself to design the first stamp, featuring a pair of mallards.

Later, to acknowledge that stamp funds benefit many other species as well as waterfowl, the stamp was renamed the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, and today is considered one of the world's most successful conservation efforts. It currently costs \$15.

The Fish and Wildlife Service commissioned artists to design the Duck Stamp until 1949. That year, the Service began to hold the annual contests in which wildlife artists would compete to have their design featured on the stamp.

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Today, even though the winner of the Federal Duck Stamp Contest receives no cash award from the Federal Government, winning the contest is a highly coveted honor because it can boost the reputation of even a previously unknown artist to the top of his or her profession. Winning artists stand to make millions of dollars from the sale of limited edition prints of their Duck Stamp design, as well as realize increased value in their other paintings.

The stamp is also prized by collectors. A person who purchased each stamp the year it was issued through 1992 would have paid a total of \$242, an investment now worth more than \$4,000. Stamps issued before 1941 are exceedingly rare since the law originally specified that unsold stamps were to be destroyed the following year. Duck Stamps are now sold for 3 years and excess stamps are then destroyed.

In 1989, a unique conservation education curriculum called the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program was developed to combine scientific and wildlife management principles with the visual arts. The program is designed to teach youngsters about waterfowl and wetlands conservation, and includes an art competition modeled after the Federal Duck Stamp Contest. This year, 49 states and the District of Columbia are participating in the "Junior Duck."

In addition, through the Duck Stamp Licensing Program, private companies may form agreements with the Federal Duck Stamp Program allowing them to feature Duck Stamp art on a variety of products such as T-shirts, mugs, calendars, tote bags, and note cards. Some of the proceeds collected from the sale of these products go directly into a fund used to acquire migratory bird habitat for the refuge system.

Duck Stamps can also be used as entrance passes to national wildlife refuges requiring fees, and can be purchased at most U.S. post offices, refuges, some sporting goods stores, and through the Federal Duck Stamp Office, 1849 C Street, NW., Room 2058, Washington, DC, 20240.

Contest guidelines issued each year designate five species of North American waterfowl as eligible for portrayal so that all of them will eventually appear on a Duck Stamp. This year's designs depict the Canada goose, greater scaup, mallard, green-winged teal, and northern pintail. They will be exhibited at the Interior Department auditorium, 1849 C Street, NW., Washington, DC, 20240, at the following times:

Sunday, October 30:	1:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.	Viewing
Monday, October 31:	10:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.	Viewing
Tuesday, November 1:	10:15 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Judging/Viewing
Wednesday, November 2:	8:45 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.	Judging/Viewing

The winner will be announced November 2 at approximately 12:30 p.m. This year's winning design will be featured on the 1995-96 Federal Duck Stamp, which will go on sale nationwide July 1, 1995.

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