U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

OMB Control No. 1018-0172

2026-2027 School Year - Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program and Art Contest

Connecting Youth with Nature through Science and Art

Best of Show Art Winner
Nina Liang, 17, TX
Blue-winged Teal, Oil

"The future of wildlife reflects our care - give ducks a place to land."

Conservation Message Winner: Iris Lovett, 13, Wisconsin

https://www.fws.gov/media/junior-duck-stamp-program-coordinators-and-receiving-sites-contact-list

Connecting Youth with Nature through Science and Art

The Junior Duck Stamp Program is a dynamic arts and science curriculum designed to teach youth about waterfowl and their habitat needs. It works with today's youth to build a lifelong appreciation for wildlife and explore wildlife conservation needs. Using scientific and wildlife observation principles, the Program encourages students in kindergarten through high school to observe, understand, and ultimately share what they have learned about waterfowl conservation. By creating a unique art entry for their state's Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest, a student's learning progression can be assessed.

Greater Awareness and Appreciation for Natural Resources

On June 30, 1993, during the First Day of Issue Ceremony for the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Federal Duck Stamp), judges selected the national first, second,and third place Junior Duck Stamp artwork. The first Federal Junior Duck Stamp design winner was Jason Parsons from Canton, Illinois. His design, featuring a redhead, was used to create the first Junior Duck Stamp. Since that year, with each national contest, a new design has been selected.

1993-94 The First Junior Duck Stamp
USFWS / Jason Parsons

Proceeds from the sale of the $5 stamp are invested into the Junior Duck Stamp Program to support conservation education and provide recognition for contest participants and winners. Your support of the Program can be demonstrated by purchasing and collecting these colorful pieces of artwork. See <www.fws.gov/service/buy-junior-duck-stamp> for more information on supporting young artists and conservationists.

More than a Contest

The Program crosses cultural, ethnic, social, and geographic boundaries to teach greater awareness of, and increase respect and appreciation for, natural resources. The non-traditional pairing of science and visual art strives to initiate curiosity in both subjects. Students are provided an opportunity to artistically express their knowledge of the diversity, interdependence, and beauty of wildlife. Program activities often include a visit to a wildlife area. National wildlife refuges become a prime destination, not only for observing wildlife, but also for the hands-on educational experiences available at many visitor centers. Hands-on learning techniques help students learn fundamental principles of waterfowl anatomy and environmental science concepts while preparing their art entry.

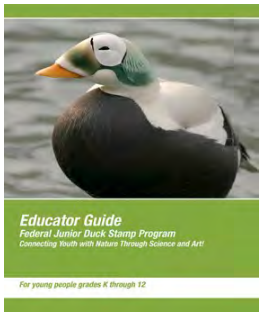
Curriculum Guides

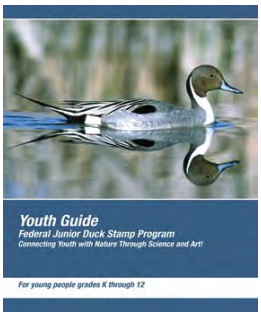
The Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program seeks to provide a conservation education experience that will engage and inspire youth. The Program is designed to spark interest in habitat conservation through science, art, math, and technology. To achieve this, the curriculum guides have been modernized to make it more relevant to students and educators in today's world. Written, field-tested, and evaluated by classroom and homeschool teachers, environmental educators, and biologists, the new guides include elements such as using the Internet as a conservation tool and provides new scientific information about today's conservation challenges such as climate change and its impact on wetland habitat.

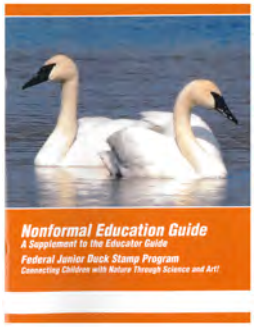
The foundational Youth and Educator guides provide lesson plans and exercises focusing on scientific principles and our changing natural world. Targeted at students in grades 5-8, the guides are relevant acrosscultures and encourage students to engage with their natural world to develop a deeper appreciation of natural resources. Activities stress wildlife observation, nature journaling, enjoying and exploring the outside world, and investigating the treasures of the National Wildlife Refuge System. Activities also incorporate information to stimulate students' interest in careers in natural resources.

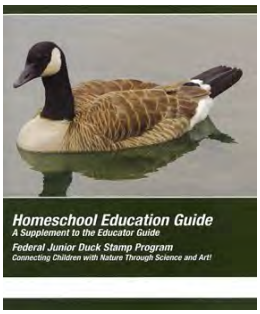
In addition, we now offer conservation education tools designed for use in homeschool settings and community after school programs and other youth activities. The Homeschool and Nonformal supplements contain activities that are appropriate for field trips, suggestions on development of service projects, thoughts on how to work with partners, and ways to use the Educator and Youth guides in non-classroom forums.

The revised guides and activities meet National Science Education Standards, North American Association for Environmental Education standards, and National Visual Arts education standards for students in grades K-12.









All guides may be downloaded free of charge from the Junior Duck Stamp website at <www.fws.gov/program/junior-duck-stamp/junior-duck-stamp-conservation-education-curriculum> or you may request a copy from your state coordinator (see list of state coordinators on website).
https://www.fws.gov/media/junior-duck-stamp-program-coordinators-and-receiving-sites-contact-list

Here's How the Competition Works

The Junior Duck Stamp Program curriculum can be used throughout the year and across many different grade levels and disciplines. We suggest that educators and students use the curriculm guides to direct their exploration and investigation of waterfowl, wetlands, and natural resource conservation throughout different seasons. As an assessment of what students have learned, the Junior Duck Stamp Art Competition provides an outline for a "final project" and culminates their learning for each academic year.

The actual art competition begins when students submit their artwork to their state or territory contest. At this level, students are judged in four groups according to grade level: K-3, 4-6, 7-9 and 10-12. Three first, three second, and three third place entries, along with 16 honorable mentions, are selected from each age group. Contest judges select one "Best of Show" from the 12 first place winners. Each state or territory "Best of Show" is then entered in the National Junior Duck Stamp Contest which occurs in April.

To further the interdisciplinary goals of the Program, students are encouraged to include an original conservation message along with their artwork. The message should explain something about what the student has learned about wetlands, conservation, or waterfowl and wildlife. It may also be a statement encouraging others to learn about and participate in conservation.

In some states, the conservation messages are judged separately to determine a winner, which is submitted to the national contest. Otherwise, at the national level, the conservation messages accompanying each Best of Show art entry are judged and a winner chosen.

Special Information for Supervising Adults

Please read the following carefully. Adults, please explain and discuss with your students the rules of this competition (and how they may differ from those of other contests and art projects), the criteria upon which their artwork will be judged, and the ethics of art.

Their entry into the art contest can be treated as a final assessment of what your student has learned about waterfowl, their habitat needs, wildlife conservation, and principles of visual art design.

Although your students may have learned and further perfected their skills in different art technique by copying a well known drawing or someone else's photograph, this is not allowed in this contest. Students should express what they have learned about waterfowl and wetlands by developing their own ideas. We want them to portray what they have learned about their chosen species by creating their own visual conservation message.

Preparing for the Art Contest

As a participant in the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program Art Contest, students will create their vision of the colorful, winged waterfowl that grace wetlands across North America. To do this, they should study these beautiful creatures – reading about them, reviewing pictures and other images, and even watching videos of their behavior. Hopefully, students will have opportunities to observe wildlife in their natural habitat at a national wildlife refuge, a park in their community, or even their own backyard.

Students will visually express what they have learned about the species they have chosen to depict. Students will show what they have discovered about the species' anatomy and unique characteristics, demonstrated that they have observed waterfowl behavior, explored waterfowl habitats, and investigated conservation challenges facing ducks, geese, and swans.

Scenes should depict North American waterfowl in their natural habitat. Students are encouraged to illustrate aquatic vegetation, trees, and plants appropriate for the depicted species' natural habitat. For example, sea ducks could be shown in ocean areas; mallards may be depicted with cattails or similar pond vegetation. Feather colors should be appropriate to the time of the year demonstrated by the environment in the painting.

Decoratively designed birds receive equal consideration as realistic depictions, as long as they are identifiable as one of the eligible species.

Aesthetic Criteria

Use the following questions to help students understand the meaning of aesthetic criteria and how to apply the criteria when developing thier own illustrations:

Form: For realistic portrayals, is the waterfowl anatomically accurate? For other art styles, does the form highlight the species' characteristics in an appropriate way?

Texture: Are the textures visually and physically appropriate to the species of waterfowl chosen?

Line: Are the details necessary, correct, and effective?

Colors: Are the colors appropriate for the selected species and surrounding habitat? Does the illustration accurately or creatively depict the species of waterfowl in plumage, habitat, and season, in a realistic or decorative depiction of the bird or birds?

Scale: Is the visual statement appropriate for a 1½" × 2" stamp or will details in the illustration be lost when reduced in size?

Shape: Is the design suited to a horizontal, rectangular stamp shape?

Clarity of Visual Symbolism: Does the illustration communicate the purpose of the stamp and can the elements of the illustration be easily identified?

Spatial Divisions: Are there negative and positive areas within the illustration and do they work together?

Original Student Design and Artwork

Educators and parents should not approve any student's work if they have any doubt as to its authenticity or originality. Copyright infringement is a serious issue and you are responsible for helping your student avoid plagiarism. By signing the entry form the student, parent, and supervising educator are all stating that the entry is the student's own original creation and idea and does not violate another person's property rights.

Students in all grade groups should review the original design requirements .

Contest Deadlines

Artwork with entry and reference forms must be postmarked by midnight of your state's deadline. See deadlines under your state coordinator's contact information on website.

Send entries and forms to your state's Junior Duck Stamp State Coordinator (see website for contact information). https://www.fws.gov/media/junior-duck-stamp-program-coordinators-and-receiving-sites-contact-list

Students should send their artwork to their state of legal residence (if different from the state of their school.) For students attending school abroad, send the entry to the coordinator in the state of the student's legal residence.

DO NOT send any entries to the Federal Duck Stamp Office. Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest entry and reference forms are available for download from the Junior Duck Stamp website at <www.fws.gov/program/junior-duck-stamp/junior-duck-stamp-contest-information>.

Who May Participate?

All K-12 students attending public, private, tribal, or home schools, or non-formal education groups and after school groups in the United States and U.S. Territories are eligible to enter.

U.S. citizens attending schools abroad may enter through their legal state of residence.

Students must be U.S. citizens, resident aliens, or nationals to receive prizes.

A valid Social Security number or Visa number is required for the award of monetary prizes. (see "Proof of U.S. Residency" section).

In the case of foreign exchange students, their artwork may be judged at the state level, but if awarded State Best of Show, the entry will not be forwarded for entry into the national contest.

A student who won first place in the national Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest the preceding year may not submit an entry in the current year's contest.

Only one entry per student.

Art Contest Rules

Original Artwork Requirement and Artistic Integrity

Students, you may not reproduce another artist's visual images and present them as your own creative artwork.

Only work that is your unique creation should be entered into competition.

Do not submit work that has been directly or indirectly copied from any source. Your entry must be your own creation and idea.

Do not copy or trace any part of someone else's photo or artwork – whether published or unpublished -- onto your drawing.

This is important for this contest as any copied, traced, or plagiarized paintings **WILL BE DISQUALIFIED.**

You may rely on others' images as guides when developing your work. This can be helpful especially if multiple references are used to develop a more complete understanding of the species represented in your entry. However, others' images may be used for reference only.

Change enough of the elements so that you cannot easily identify which images you used as references when you look at your creation.

For this contest, "copying the masters" or anyone else's photograph or painting, is not permitted. If judges or program officials can identify the reference materials upon which your entry is based, it will be disqualified if it is too similar to the original.

If the student has taken their own photographs to use as reference materials these may be used by that student as long as they have not been published or used by others. A student's personal photos must be listed on their Reference Form. Students must use their discretion as to how best to incorporate their personal reference photos into their final composition.

All reference images must be recorded on the Reference Form. Although only students in grades 7-12 are required to submit the Reference Form, all students are encouraged to document the reference images they use as they may be requested and checked by the state or national coordinator prior to competition.

Educators and parents should not approve any student's work if they have any doubt as to its authenticity or originality. By signing the entry form the student, parent, and supervising educator are stating that entry is the student's own original creation and idea.

Permitted Species

Art entries should feature one of the native North American species listed below. Contact your State Coordinator with questions regarding this permitted species list. **Note: Mute swans and Mandarin ducks are not permitted species.**
https://www.fws.gov/media/junior-duck-stamp-program-coordinators-and-receiving-sites-contact-list

Whistling-Ducks
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*)
Fulvous Whistling-Duck (*Dendrocygna bicolor*)

Geese
Emperor Goose (*Anser canagicus*)
Snow Goose, including blue phase (*Anser caerulescens*)
Ross's Goose (*Anser rossii*)
Greater White-fronted Goose (*Anser albifrons*)
Brant (*Branta bernicla*)
Cackling Goose (*Branta hutchinsii*)
Canada Goose (*Branta canadensis*)

Swans
Trumpeter Swan (*Cygnus buccinator*)
Tundra Swan (*Cygnus columbianus*)

Dabbling Ducks
Wood Duck (*Aix sponsa*)
Blue-winged Teal (*Spatula discors*)
Cinnamon Teal (*Spatula cyanoptera*)
Northern Shoveler (*Spatula clypeata*)
Gadwall (*Mareca strepera*)
American Wigeon (*Mareca americana*)
Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*)
American Black Duck (*Anas rubripes*)
Mottled Duck (*Anas fulvigula*)
Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*)
Green-winged Teal (*Anas crecca*)

Diving Ducks
Canvasback (*Aythya valisineria*)
Redhead (*Aythya americana*)
Ring-necked Duck (*Aythya collaris*)
Greater Scaup (*Aytha marila*)
Lesser Scaup (*Aythya affinis*)

Sea Ducks
Steller's Eider (*Polysticta stelleri*)
Spectacled Eider (*Somateria fischeri*)
King Eider (*Somateria spectabilis*)
Common Eider (*Somateria mollissima*)
Harlequin Duck (*Histrionicus histrionicus*)
Surf Scoter (*Melanitta perspicillata*)
White-winged Scoter (*Melanitta fusca*)
Black Scoter (*Melanitta americana*)
Long-tailed Duck (*Clangula hyemalis*)
Bufflehead (*Bucephala albeola*)
Common Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*)
Barrow's Goldeneye (*Bucephala islandica*)

Mergansers
Hooded Merganser (*Lophodytes cucullatus*)
Common Merganser (*Mergus merganser*)
Red-breasted Merganser (*Mergus serrator*)

Stiff-tailed Ducks
Ruddy Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*)

Pacific and Caribbean Island Species
Hawaiian Goose or Nene (*Branta sandvicensis*)
Laysan Duck (*Anas laysanensis)*
Hawaiian Duck or Koloa (*Anas wyvilliana*)
White-cheeked Pintail (*Anas bahamensis*)
Masked Duck (*Oxyura dominica*)

Technical Requirements for Design and Submission of an Entry

Please read and follow the rules below. Failure to follow these and other rules will lead to disqualification of artwork.

The physical size of submitted artwork must be 9" x 12".

Entries must be less than ¼" thick.

Image layout must be horizontal.

Image must be a live portrayal of a native North American duck, swan, or goose (refer to eligible species list

An entry may be multi-color, black and white, or a single color; it may be rendered in ink, paint, pastel, crayon, or pencil. Techniques may include scratch-board, airbrush, linoleum printing, paper collage, dry brush, crosshatch, pointillism, etc. Most styles of artwork are encouraged, however, no photography or computer generated or printed art is accepted.

Design entries must be the contestant's **original, hand-illustrated creation** and may not be traced or copied from photographs or other artists' works. (See tips for using references.)

Photographs taken by the student may be used as references in the development of their design. (See tips for using references.)

No lettering, words, signatures, or initials may appear on the front of the artwork as they may influence judges and can interfere with the final stamp design.

Entries may not be matted or framed.

There should be no border around the image.

Before mailing, please remember to attach (tape the signed entry form to the back of entry. Include completed Reference Form with entry.

Proof of U.S. Residency

All students are permitted to participate in the program and encouraged to enter the contest. However, students hoping to place in the contest must be citizens of the United States or U.S. Territories, or have an official Immigration Visa or green card as proof of legal residency. A valid Social Security number or Visa number is required for the award of monetary prizes. Teachers, parents, and guardians should check to make sure all students who enter are U.S. citizens or legal residents in this country if they wish to place. Students may be required to provide their Social Security or Visa number prior to judging in the state or national contest.

When Submitting Your Artwork

Please ship your entry to your state coordinator with adequate support and cushioning to ensure art is properly protected in transit. https://www.fws.gov/media/junior-duck-stamp-program-coordinators-and-receiving-sites-contact-list

A loose, detachable cover sheet may be laid over the art face to protect it during shipping.

Chalk, pastel, or charcoal entries should be sprayed with a fixative to eliminate possible scuffing and smudging during transfer of artwork.

Make sure that your painting is completely dry prior to submitting it.

Conservation Message

Each student is encouraged, but not required, to write a short conservation message that expresses the spirit of what they have learned through classroom discussions, research, and planning for their Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest entry. Please limit the length of the conservation message to the space provided on the entry form. **These messages must also be the student's own work and may not be someone else's quote.**

Use and Authorizations

By participating in the Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest, each student, supervising adult, and legal guardian acknowledges the following rights and authorities and willingly agrees to each of these conditions.

The Department of the Interior, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service:

Reserves the exclusive right to authorize the reproduction of the national first-place winning design on stamps and various licensed products, and to photograph the winning stamp design without compensation to the student.

Has the right to use the name, artwork, and photographs of the student for promotional purposes without compensation to the student.

May disqualify any entry submitted to the Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest that has the appearance of a plagiarized or copied submission.

Will not insure the entries it receives or be responsible for loss or damage of the entries. In the event of an address change, it is the student's responsibility to inform the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service of this change. Artwork unclaimed after one year from the date of the contest may be destroyed. Students are encouraged to keep their own digital copy for their portfolio.

May send artwork on tour around the United States. Artwork on tour may be handled by a third party.

Requires that the winning artist provide autographs on Junior Duck Stamps and Junior Duck Stamp products without charge to the public or the Federal Government.

Judging

Observation of the judging will be free and open to the general public.

Recognition and prizes will vary from state to state and from year to year; however, all entrants will receive certificates of participation, and winners will receive special recognition. Teachers and supervising adults are encouraged to submit artwork and conservation messages from every participant and to work with their State Coordinator to ensure every participant receives a certificate.

Artwork entries will be judged on the basis of originality, recognizable species-specific characteristics, artistic composition and suitability for reproduction on a 1½" by 2" stamp.

At the state level, judging will allocate first, second, and third place, plus honorable mentions. The standard for each state, district, or territory, is 100 awards: 12 first places, 12 second places, 12 third places, and up to 64 honorable mentions (dependent upon number of state entires in each age group.) One student's design will be selected from the 12 first place winners as "Best of Show." Notification of winners will be made as soon as possible.

One conservation message per state is judged at the national level. States may submit the "Best of Show" art winner's conservation message or have separate judging to choose the winning conservation message. For more information regarding your state's conservation message contest, please contact your State Coordinator.
https://www.fws.gov/media/junior-duck-stamp-program-coordinators-and-receiving-sites-contact-list

National Level Scholarships

National First Place	$1000
National Second Place	$500
National Third Place	$200
National Conservation Message First Place	$200

In acknowledgment of the integral part parents play in education and in the future of our nation's youth, the national winner and one parent or guardian will receive a free trip to participate in the First Day of Issue ceremony for the Federal and Junior duck stamps, held in late June/early July.

Display of Winning Artwork

Each state, district, or territory "Best of Show" entry will be displayed at the Federal Duck Stamp Contest, First Day of Issue Ceremony, waterfowl festivals, wildlife museums, and galleries throughout the United States. The art is returned to the student the following year in May, after the next National Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest. The national art tour schedule is posted on the Federal Duck Stamp Website at <www.fws.gov/service/host-federal-duck-stamp-or-junior-duck-stamp-art-exhibit>. State Coordinators may also choose to tour the top winning state artwork. Please check with State Coordinators for state tour schedule.

Return of Entries

For questions regarding your artwork, please contact your State Coordinator (see website). State Coordinators will attempt to return all entries to the students or schools. In some areas, teachers will be notified to pick up the work at a central location. State non-winning entries will be returned by June 1. In many states, the winning art will go on tour and may be returned up to 1 year after the state contest date.

In the event that a student moves, it is their responsibility to contact their State Coordinator as soon as possible. If artwork is unclaimed, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service or host station will not be obligated to trace the location of the artist to return the artwork. All unclaimed entries may be destroyed 1 year from the date of the contest. Every effort will be made to safely return artwork to the students, however, artwork cannot be insured against theft, loss or damage by the host station or the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Tips on the Use of References

Student, as a participant in the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Contest, you will create your vision of the colorful, winged waterfowl that grace wetlands across North America. To do this, you will study these beautiful creatures, reviewing pictures, images, or video. Perhaps you will even have the opportunity to observe wildlife in their natural habitat at a national wildlife refuge, a park in your community, or your own backyard.

Some Tips on How to Avoid Copying and Plagiarism

Do not copy or trace any part of someone else's photo or artwork – whether published or unpublished -- onto your drawing. Copied, traced or plagiarized paintings **WILL BE DISQUALIFIED**. This is a very important rule and the tips below will help you to avoid being disqualified.

What do we mean by plagiarism and copying? Plagiarism is when you deliberately take someone else's work, don't acknowledge the source, and claim it as your own. Copying is when you imitate or reproduce someone else's work and make an exact or almost exact duplicate of it. If you duplicate someone else's work, you have copied them and, in this contest, we do not want you to do that.

Why are copying and plagiarism against the rules? Plagiarism is dishonest because you are not giving credit to somebody else's creation. Copying is stealing someone else's artwork and it limits you as an artist. You would not be allowed to copy someone else on a term paper; artwork has the same rules - we want to see YOUR creation, not someone else's.

We provide the Reference Form and require (if you are in Grades 7-12 (Groups III or IV)) or encourage (if you are younger) you to use it in order to help you follow this rule. Citing your references is a good habit to learn, and it makes it easier to show where you found your ideas or learned a specific technique. You may be asked to show or provide these reference before your artwork can be judged.

By properly filling out the Reference Form and reporting all the reference materials that you used to create your artwork, you acknowledge where your ideas come from. You can find more tips to fill out the Reference Form in this document.

You may not copy someone else's photograph or artwork - even if you don't think it is copyrighted or published or even if you have permission to use it. You must develop your own creation. Often it is difficult to come up with ideas, so where should you start?

There are many different ideas and viewpoints on what makes a student's work original and authentic. The following are suggestions for you to follow that may help you be more creative and develop your unique masterpiece for this contest. Do not stop at your current level of skill - challenge yourself to try a different method, use a different media, or try a different subject.

Go outside and observe waterfowl around your backyard, your neighborhood, a national wildlife refuge, or park. Investigate and explore their habitat, behavior, and anatomy. Take your own photographs and draw your own sketches based on what you observe.

How will you incorporate visual art elements (color, texture, shape, etc.)? How will you express what you know about the principles of design and composition (balance, pattern, unity, etc.)? What visual effects (such as motion and depth) can you use to make an impression on the viewer?

Although many of us may have learned to draw by copying a well known drawing or someone else's photograph, this is **not allowed in this Art Contest** - we want you to express what YOU have learned about waterfowl and wetlands. We want you to be creative in developing your ideas and take what you have learned and create your own visual waterfowl message. While technical skill is important, we are very interested in your creativity.

You may find a picture that inspires you and you want to try to imitate that picture. However, you may not copy someone else's picture when creating your own design. Even if the picture belongs to someone who gives you permission to use it, do not copy it.

You may also look at past duck stamps for ideas and inspiration - but again, do not copy them.

You may also look at photos from books, magazines, or the internet, or photos taken by someone else to study the coloring, feathers, or anatomy of different species of ducks, geese and swans.

Consider how photographers and other artists compose their masterpieces. Do you like the species of waterfowl or its setting? Is the animal displaying some interesting behavior? What inspires you about their artwork that you would like to share in your creation?

If using a reference source, change it to fit your style and ideas. If you see a painting of a scene of ducks on a log, go find your own log and your own duck reference, change the species and setting, make it your own idea based on the work of another that inspired you.

Extensively change the "attitude" of the duck for your creation. For example, if the duck's head is upright, draw it facing down as if it is drinking water, or turn the angle of the duck's head. If the duck in the photo is in profile, draw the bird as if it is turning its body at a different angle. If the photo of the duck is in overall sunlight, change and paint the bird with a "sidelight." If the duck is swimming on blue water in a published photo, paint or draw your own water ripples and make it greenish in color.

Take decoys or taxidermy mounts and place them in various settings. (Decoys may be depicted in your entry but a live waterfowl must be the dominant feature in the work.)

Collect aquatic plants, leaves, and bark to study and make sketches of these materials. Develop your own waterfowl sketchbooks and photo albums and fill them with ideas and different compositions and layouts of waterfowl and their habitats.

When you are ready to start painting from your sketches, we recommend you use a grid method to transfer your design onto your drawing board.

Your artwork should not be easily recognized as coming from any particular source. Remember, copying anyone else's art limits you as an artist. You will grow more as an artist by trying different techniques, angles, and backgrounds in your design. When someone views your artwork they should not be able to recognize the reference you used to create it.

Example of How to Use a Reference Image

Visual Reference
2004 Federal Duck Stamp

Improper Use of Reference
This illustration would be disqualified.

This is an **improper** use of the reference. This is a nearly identical copy of the 2004 Federal Duck Stamp and would be disqualified.

Both by Dominic Dropnik / USFWS

Proper Use of Reference
This illustration could be entered.

This is a proper use of the reference. Study the differences between the stamp and this drawing. The snow goose is featured in a different flight angle. Additional features in the stamp, such as the lighthouse, have been omitted. What other differences do you see?

Make it original. Make it your own!

Artistic Reference Form

You should explore your own sense of creativity while producing your original wildlife artwork. The Reference Form is where you will record the images, books, or objects you studied to create your original artwork.

Filling in Your Reference Form

For students in Grades 7-12 (Groups III and IV), you must include this Reference Form with your entry or your entry will be disqualified.

Reference all sources.

Include as much information as possible (see examples below).

Reference Examples

Published References:

Must include full name of author, photographer or editor; title of the publication and page number(s). **Example:** *Mueller, Keith. Waterfowl Concepts. Pages 6, 32, 54, 112.*

References Not Found in a Book:

Such as personal observations or photographs (including your own): must include full name of observer or photographer, species, date, and location. **Example:** *Herman, Amber, Mallards, Mississippi River, Davenport, Iowa, May 2007.*

Images from the Internet:

Must include photographer or artist's full name, and full website address. Do not simply state "Google Images" or "found on line". **Example:** *Sevcik, Jan, www.naturephoto-cz.com/photos/sevcik/mallard—anas- platyrhyncos-5.jpg*

Other Sources:

Provide as much identifying information as possible.

All students are encouraged to include their reference materials (or copies there of) with their entry.

All students in grades 7-12 must submit the Reference Form along with your entry. You may attach the Reference Form to your artwork or include it in the envelope with your entry, or give it to your teacher to send along with your artwork. Students in grades K-6 (Groups I and II) are encouraged to work with their teacher or parent to complete the Reference Form, but are not required to submit it with their entry.

Two Types of Federal Duck Stamps

The Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, or "Duck Stamp" was created in 1934 to help fund the purchase and conservation of our nation's wetlands. While anyone can purchase a Duck Stamp, it is a required purchase for waterfowl hunters 16 and older. A current Duck Stamp can also serve as an entrance pass to national wildlife refuges where entrance fees are charged. Many conservationists and outdoor enthusiasts, stamp collectors and wildlife art lovers also buy them.

Sales of Federal Duck Stamps have generated more than $1.3 billion to acquire over 6.5 million acres of wetlands in the United States. These conservation lands are managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System. Benefits of having a nearby refuge include economic and aesthetic support to local communities. Students can find many opportunities to observe waterfowl and see wetland habitat on national wildlife refuges. For more information about refuges visit: <www.fws.gov/program/national-wildlife-refuge-system>.

The Junior Duck Stamp was modeled after the Federal Duck Stamp. Since 2000, the Program has received more than 580,000 contest entries. Many other students have not submitted entries but participated through the educational curriculum in their classrooms, nonformal education settings or on national wildlife refuges.

More than $1.25 million in Junior Duck Stamp proceeds have been used to provide recognition, incentives, and scholarships to participating students, teachers and schools. The Program continues to educate youth about land stewardship and the importance of connecting to their natural worlds.

If you want to help perpetuate and grow the Junior Duck Stamp Program so that it can continue providing students in K-12 a conservation through the arts education, you should consider purchasing and collecting the $5 stamp.

Where to Buy Duck Stamps

Federal Duck Stamps are sold for $25 in many U.S. Post Offices, sporting goods stores, online at www.duckstamps.com, and at many national wildlife refuges. Additionally, anyone can purchase stamps, no matter where they live or whether or not they hunt, through any of the states that sell e-stamps as part of their online hunting license sale sites. Ninty-eight percent of the sale price goes to conserving wildlife habitat used by ducks, geese, swans, and many other species of wildlife.

Junior Duck Stamps are also sold online through the U.S. Postal Service and at <www.duckstamp.com>. You can also ask your local national wildlife refuge if they carry them. All of the proceeds from the sale of Junior Duck Stamps goes back into the Program to support student art and conservation education.

Check <www.fws.gov/service/buy-duck-stamp-or-e-stamp> for more information on where to buy Federal and Junior duck stamps.

Junior Duck Stamp Program MS:MB
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Headquarters
5275 Leesburg Pike
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803
703/358-2145
www.fws.gov/program/junior-duck-stamp

OMB Control No. 1018-0172

For State relay service
TTY/Voice:711

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Serivce

www.fws.gov

November 2025

We Are Green

This brochure is offered online.
Please help us conserve our environment by accessing Junior Duck Stamp materials on the Web and only printing what is necessary. Thank you!

Connecting Youth with Nature Through Science and Art!