

March 13, 2013



WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

The Story of J.N. "Ding" Darling Debuts

Last year marked the 50th anniversary of the death of Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, and we now have an inspiring and thoughtful presentation of his life and contribution in the video, *America's Darling*.

Darling - cartoonist, political activist, and conservationist - changed America by drawing from the heart, identifying with the natural resources to be preserved, bringing talented people together, influencing Presidents, and winning over the public for a better vision of this country's potential.

In this 75-minute video, Sam Koltinsky, the executive producer and inspiration for this work, has put together a memorable collection of the story of Ding Darling's life, the people and movements he influenced, and the lessons of stewardship he left for those to follow. There are many creative roles in the video, including the narration by the young and endearing great-great grandson of Ding Darling, Chris Steffen, the family and political recollections by his grandson "Kip" Koss, the historic interpretations by famed author Douglas Brinkley, and so much more.

The viewer already has a great respect for the energy and drive of Darling, the Pulitzer-prize winning cartoonist, by the time the video is 27 minutes long, the point at which the Darling narrative has him becoming Chief of the Biological Survey (predecessor to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) in 1934. It's Darling and his team, during his Biological Survey tenure, who turn the varied refuges around the country into a real "system" with the start of a national vision. Darling's role in launching the "Duck Stamp" is a vital part of that story. The stamp idea preceded Darling's arrival in Washington D.C., but it was Darling who boldly seized the opportunity and moved the agenda.

The entire life-agenda of Darling is covered, from art to political criticism, to responsible stewardship, to uniting conservationists, to influencing youth. (Among other things, that last point lives on with the Jr. Duck Stamp Program. See our accompanying story below.)

There are additional wonderful parts of the video, such as

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NEW "DING" DARLING VIDEO

JR. DUCK STAMP DUE ON MARCH 15

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Did You Know?

- 1) A current valid Duck Stamp is a "free pass" for all National Wildlife Refuges that charge for admission. It's a real bargain, if ever there was one!
- 2) The first stamps (1934-35) cost \$1 apiece, and there were 635,000 sold.
- 3) The artwork for the first stamp, a pair of landing Mallards and called "Mallards Dropping In," was created by Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling in about an hour, due to a sudden printing deadline.
- 4) The last time the stamp price was raised was 1991, when it went up from \$12.50 to \$15.
- 5) Sacramento National Wildlife Refuge has had 99.6% of its lands (or 10,776 of its 10,819 acres) purchased through Stamp/MBCF dollars. The refuge, with its seasonal marshes, permanent ponds, and uplands in the heart of the Sacramento Valley, is one of California's premier waterfowl, waterbird, and shorebird locations.
- 6) The funds from the stamp not

interviews with Dale Hall of Ducks Unlimited and Larry Schweiger of National Wildlife Federation. But the comments of artists - be they biting cartoonists or sophisticated wildlife painters - are, perhaps, most moving. Indeed, it's Jim Hautman, stamp-artist extraordinaire, who captures the Darling living legacy through the stamp: "It's great to be a part of a program that contributes so much back to nature."

America's Darling: The Story of Jay N. "Ding" Darling is a video you should view and share with others. You can find more information [here](#).

only go to refuges, but since 1958, also go to purchase wetland and grassland habitats within the Prairie Pothole Region of the upper Midwest and northern Great Plains. Through the Small Wetlands Acquisition Program, the USFWS has protected nearly 3 million acres of wetland and grassland habitat. These units are commonly referred to as Waterfowl Production Areas or WPAs. All WPAs are part of the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Jr. Duck Stamp Art Due on March 15

The Jr. Duck Stamp Program is a unique effort of incalculable value. Since its start in 1989, and particularly since the implementation of a national art contest and stamp in 1993, the Jr. Duck Stamp Program has inspired hundreds of thousands of youngsters in conservation and the arts. Today, more than 27,000 students enter state Jr. Duck Stamp Art Contests annually.

In fact, 15 March 2013 is the deadline for submitting art for most state Junior Duck Stamp contests. Exceptions are South Carolina, which had its deadline on 11 January, and both Arizona and Ohio, which had their deadlines on 1 March.



Christine Clayton's art on the Jr. Duck Stamp for 2012-13.

A new Junior Duck Stamp is released by 1 July each year by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These stamps are sold for \$5 each. Proceeds from stamp sales are recycled back into the program and are used to fund scholarships for national contest winners, state programs, marketing, and environmental education materials. The current 2012-13 stamp is shown on the left.

The program is profoundly exciting and inspirational. Not only is the standard program one that brings thousands of youngsters to nature through art, but the new curriculum for the Jr. Duck Stamp Program also gives it more power, more relevance.

At the same time, the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp is concerned that the funding for the Jr. Duck Stamp Program is in serious jeopardy within the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. In a recent letter to Dan Ashe, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Friends stressed that the Jr. Duck Stamp effort is one of the most important things that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service does in the area of wildlife education for youth. Moreover, it is one of the best links to "create and sustain a constituency for the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp, teaching younger Americans - and reminding their parents - of the value of waterfowl, wetland, and grassland conservation."

While appreciating the difficult budget decisions that have to be made inside the USFWS these days, the letter requested that Ashe use the power of his position to "reverse any adverse funding decision and to continue to give the Jr. Duck Stamp program the support it so richly deserves." For more on the Jr. Duck Stamp Program and the letter, see [the news on our website](#).

About the Friends

The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to the promotion, preservation, sales, and better understanding of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (commonly called the Duck Stamp). The organization fosters an appreciation of how the funds collected through the stamp build the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Part of our emphasis is that the purchase of a stamp is not something that will just benefit ducks. Among scores of other bird species, numerous kinds of shorebirds, long-legged waders, and wetland and grassland songbirds are dependent on habitat derived from stamp purchases. (For example, densities of grassland bird species such as Bobolink, Grasshopper Sparrow, Clay-colored Sparrow and Sedge Wren, are remarkably higher on Refuge System grasslands than on the landscape in general.)

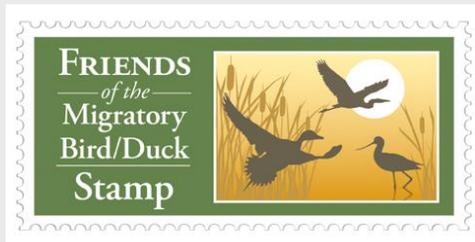
But it's not only birds that benefit from the stamp! Reptiles, amphibians, fish, butterflies, all flourish through stamp investments. Water quality is also strengthened.

One 15-dollar purchase of a stamp goes a very long way!



WHAT YOU CAN DO RIGHT NOW: There are many ways you can help support the growth and appreciation of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp. For starters, become familiar with the stamp on the [Federal Duck Stamp Office website](#). Then review the content of our [Friends website](#). You can download our flyers and posters for distribution. You can also forward *Wingtips* to friends (See the forwarding tool on the very bottom of the page.) And if you know others who wish to receive this irregular *Wingtips* newsletter, have them ask to be added to our mailing list. (Send a request to: info@friendsofthestamp.org.)

Of course, buy a stamp - or two - and use/display it proudly. And become a Friend. To find our how to do so, you can visit our [website](#).



The "Regular Friend" fee is modest, equal to the cost of one current Stamp (\$15), but all Friends are also asked to pledge to buy *two* stamps per year, joining with other individuals and organizations across the country with that promotional effort. You can also become a "Supporting Friend."

[**Become a Friend Today!**](#)