

October 9, 2013



WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

A Winning Piece of Artwork



The Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest, took place on September 27-28 at the Maumee Bay State Park Conference Center in Oregon, Ohio.

The eligible waterfowl for this year's art competition had been Canvasback, Mallard, Gadwall, Cinnamon Teal, and Blue-winged Teal. All of this year's 201 art entries can be viewed [here](#).

This year's contest winner is Adam Grimm, of Burbank, South Dakota, who painted a pair of Canvasbacks, pictured above. This image will appear on the 2014 - 2015 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp.

Canvasbacks are particularly elegant ducks, with characteristic sloping foreheads and long black bills. The male has his head and neck a rich reddish-chestnut, with the sides and back a grayish-white. The female has a pale brown head with a distinctive eyeline pattern along with a pale brownish-gray back and sides.

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Did You Know?

- 1) October 21 marks Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling's birthday. He was born in 1876. Darling was a Pulitzer Prize-winning American cartoonist, unwavering conservationist, Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, major promoter of the Federal Duck Stamp program, and the artist for the first stamp design (1934-35).
- 2) Maynard Reece from Arnolds Park, Iowa, had his artwork on five stamps: 1948-49 (Bufflehead), 1951-52 (Gadwall), 1959-60 (Mallard), 1969-70 (White-winged Scoter) and 1971-

The species is locally common in marshes, lakes, and bays, often feeding in impressive flocks.

"Cans" had serious population declines in the 1980s and 1990s, but the numbers have stabilized and even increased. The recovery is in no small part attributed to the investment of Stamp dollars in the Prairie Pothole Region.

Adam Grimm now becomes a two-time winner of the contest. His beautiful oil painting of a Mottled Duck appeared on the 2000-2001 Federal Duck Stamp. At the time he was 21, the youngest winner of a Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest. You can view examples of Grimm's varied and excellent artwork [here](#).

Surprisingly, his daughter, Madison Grimm, won the Jr. Duck Stamp Art Contest earlier this year. The Grimms represent the first father-daughter tandem to hold the senior and junior duck stamp titles.

The sales of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp - commonly called the Federal Duck Stamp and increasingly called the Migratory Bird Stamp - raises about \$25 million annually, of which 98 percent goes toward purchase of migratory bird habitat - wetlands and grasslands - in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Waterfowl hunters are required to have a current stamp, but increasingly, others, including non-waterfowl hunters, birders, photographers, and collectors, are buying the stamp to support the Refuge System.

72 (Cinnamon Teal).

3) The 1959-60 stamp, with artwork by Maynard Reese, depicted a Mallard, but it really highlighted a Labrador retriever, King Buck. The required theme for the 1959-60 stamp was "Retrievers save game," and there were 110 entries by 64 artists in the open competition.

4) The 1959-60 stamp - the first \$3 stamp - was the first of a series of five stamps designed with a message to conserve waterfowl and promote habitat protection during a serious drought period.

5) Backgrounds in the stamps have often been significant. Sometimes sea-loving waterfowl stamp images have included lighthouses in the background: 1963-64 (Bodie Island, NC), 1996-97 (Barnegat, NJ), 2003-04 (Assateague, VA).

6) The 1996-97 stamp, showing two Surf Scoters and Barnegat Lighthouse, was based on an oil painting by Wilhelm Goebel, and it was the very first stamp to raise more than \$23 million for refuge habitat.

A Stamp Success Story: Bosque del Apache NWR



Photo: John Fowler.

Our *Wingtips* tour of National Wildlife Refuges moves on to Region 2 of the Fish & Wildlife Service and brings us to New Mexico's Bosque del Apache NWR. Known to many as simply "the Bosque," the refuge is located on the northern edge of the Chihuahuan Desert and consists of more than 57,000 acres along the Rio Grande. The heart of the Refuge is 13,000 acres of moist bottomlands - active floodplain and areas where water is diverted to create extensive wetlands, farmlands, and riparian forests. The surrounding uplands are arid foothills and mesas, rising from a floodplain elevation of 4,500 feet to the Chupadera Mountains on the west (peak elev. 6,272 feet) and the San Pascual Mountains on the east.

The refuge's name translates as "Woods of the Apache." Native Americans often camped in this riverside forest. The area was occupied by Pueblo peoples; in the 16th century, it was explored by the Spanish, who built a Camino Real from Mexico City to Santa Fe through the refuge's territory. The first water impoundments were constructed in the 1930s by the CCC, and the refuge was officially established in 1939.

The rock star of the refuge's wildlife is the Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*). Up to 17,000 of these stately birds spend the winter at the Bosque. Attendees of the annual [Festival of the Cranes](#), based in nearby Socorro and hosted by the [Friends](#) group, enjoy lectures, tours, and workshops. At the same time, a blizzard of geese can accompany the cranes: Snow, Ross's, Canada, Cackling, and Greater White-fronted Geese. This year's cranes festival is coming soon: it takes place from 19 to 24 November. Gambel's Quail and Greater Roadrunner are two more specialty birds of the refuge. Among mammals, the refuge's [wildlife checklist](#) lists Mule Deer as common and Javelina as fairly common.

The refuge is host to a range of [research and monitoring projects](#): exploring water use by phreatophyte plant communities (like cottonwoods), radio tracking a subspecies of Meadow Jumping Mouse (*Zapus hudsonius luteus*) (endangered in New Mexico), analyzing earthquakes along an active fault that crosses the property, and prototyping a GPS telemetry system for migratory waterfowl. A 17-minute [video](#) highlights the "intensive habitat engineering" that is part of the job of managing the refuge.

Finally, stamp supporters should all know how much of the Bosque del Apache NWR was acquired through the MBCF/Stamp funding. It has been an amazing 99.2 percent!

An Important Sign-on Letter

The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp recently joined hundreds of other organizations in a letter calling on Congress to support essential funding for wildlife conservation. That letter, signed by almost 850 groups (representing over 1,600 organizations), focused on the following five crucial federal funding sources:

- State & Tribal Wildlife Grants Program
- North American Wetland Conservation Fund (NAWCA)
- Neotropical Migratory Bird Conservation Fund
- Forest Legacy Program
- Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Investments in natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation total less than one percent of all discretionary federal spending. However, over the last several fiscal years, the conservation programs that appropriators propose to defund have already been reduced by more than 25 percent.

Background on the letter can be found [here](#), and the letter itself along with the signatories can be viewed [here](#).

Refuge Closures and the Stamp



Here is part of a statement on the ongoing U.S. government closure from our colleagues at the National Wildlife Refuge Association:

Across the nation, communities are feeling the effects of the government shutdown. For communities that depend on tourist dollars from area National Wildlife Refuges, the refuge closures are especially difficult. Fall migration is well underway and hunting season is just beginning. The nation's National Wildlife Refuge System, with nearly 46 million annual visitors, offers prime wildlife viewing, hunting and fishing opportunities, so this time of year is particularly important to local merchants, outfitters, guides and other businesses that rely on refuge visitors. Adding insult to injury, volunteers are unable to contribute their time, skills and expertise - volunteers nationwide provide an additional 20% of work on refuges - the equivalent of almost 700 full time staff.

To this we add the irony that this coming week there would normally be celebrations on National Wildlife Refuges and Wetland Management Districts across the country to recognize "National Wildlife Refuge Week" (13-19 October). Of course, visiting the NWRs and WPAs that have benefited from Stamp investments during this upcoming Refuge Week may be impossible, unless Congress can agree to open up all the government.

For more information, see [here](#).

Stamp: Some News and Notes

Here are some recent news items that stamp supporters might find interesting:

1. The Playa Lakes Joint Venture had its September newsletter, the *Playa Post*, almost entirely dedicated to importance of the Stamp. You can view it [here](#).
2. The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp has a Facebook page that continues to grow. You and your friends may want to [get on board!](#)
3. Kenn Kaufman, field-guide author and naturalist, had a particularly thoughtful blog post last month on the stamp on "Why Birders Buy the Stamp." It's worth [a read](#).
4. Sometime next month we will have a *Wingtips* devoted to building the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (the MBCF), where stamp dollars are deposited. Four options will be reviewed: selling more stamps, raising the price of the stamp, increasing the items to be covered under import duties, and passing a New Wetlands Loan Act.

About the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp



Our Friends Group is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to two basic goals:

1. To increase promotional and educational efforts among various target audiences concerning the stamp and the National Wildlife Refuge system.
2. To increase the regular, voluntary purchase of the stamp among hunters and non-hunters alike.

The purchase of a stamp is, perhaps, the easiest thing you can do to protect crucial wetland and grassland habitat in the U.S.

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

Our "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. Our "Friend's Year" also corresponds with the "year" of a valid Stamp - from July to July.

[Become a Friend Today!](#)

