

December 2, 2013



WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

A Stamp Success Story: Tamarac NWR



Photo: Courtesy of USFWS.

As autumn finishes washing over the country, our tour of the refuges brings us to Region 3 and [Tamarac National Wildlife Refuge](#). Situated 18 miles northeast of Detroit Lakes, Minnesota, at an elevation of about 1,400 feet, the refuge comprises rolling forested hills interspersed with 28 lakes and numerous marshes, bogs, wooded potholes, and shrub swamps. Although spelled differently, its name recognizes our only deciduous cone-bearing tree, the Tamarack, or Larch (*Larix laricina*). A [stop on the Pine to Prairie Birding Trail](#), Tamarac is the nexus of one of the most diverse vegetative transition zones in North America, a convergence of northern hardwood forests, coniferous forests, and the tall grass prairie.

All but 0.1% of Tamarac's 35,197 acres were purchased with MBCF funds, per FWS data tables. One of our early refuges, it was established in 1938.

Located close to Lake Itasca and the headwaters of the Mississippi River, Tamarac is in "near pristine" condition. Its three river systems provide significant wild rice production. Some water management is performed to maintain stands of this important source of food and cover for wildlife. Prescribed burns, plantings, and occasional timber harvests maintain a diverse and well-structured forest.

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Did You Know?

1) The Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC), the body which decides how Stamp/MBCF dollars are spent, has usually convened three times a year in March, June, and September. The MBCC recently decided that, at least for the time being, it would meet twice a year, in early spring and in the fall.

2) The five waterfowl species eligible for depiction in the 2015-16 Stamp will be Brant, Northern

Tamarac's big success story in birdlife restoration is Trumpeter Swan, which was extirpated in Minnesota in the 1880s. Beginning with the introduction of several birds in Jim's Marsh in 1987, the swan's population has grown to 30 nesting pairs in the refuge and 5,500 birds statewide.

Efforts to conserve Golden-winged Warbler are more of a work in progress. Minnesota provides 42% of the breeding habitat for the global population of this songster, and Tamarac's habitat is ideal for this species. Unfortunately, populations are crashing throughout the warbler's range, and current numbers are one-fourth what they were 40 years ago. Researchers working at Tamarac [are studying](#) habitat preferences, nesting success, and other factors affecting this declining species.

The [Friends of Tamarac](#) is raising funds to build an educational Discovery Center for the refuge. You can virtually visit Tamarac via this [brief video](#) of a day on the property. Or experience it in person at next year's [Detroit Lakes Festival of Birds](#).

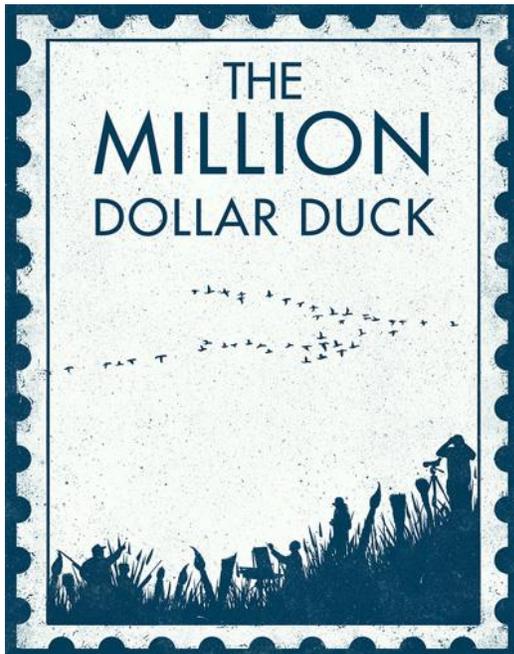
Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, Canada Goose, and Red-breasted Merganser.

3) The all-time highest number of Stamps sold was for the 1971-1972 stamp. That year, 2,445,977 were sold. Displayed on the stamp were Cinnamon Teal by Maynard Reece.

4) The first Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest open to the public was in 1966.

5) The last time the stamp price was raised was 1991, when the price went up from \$12.50 to \$15.

Million Dollar Duck in Progress



There is a documentary now being filmed about the Federal Duck Stamp Program. Central to this project - called the *Million Dollar Duck* - are the artists and the associated competition that reveals the ambitious nature of the talented participants. The conservation consequences, of course, will also be emphasized in the film.

The creative film team, led by Brian Davis, is filled with award-winning talent, people dedicated to getting more people to appreciate the Stamp. According to Davis, "From the moment I first read about the Federal Duck Stamp program I immediately came infatuated with it. I couldn't believe a program like this existed and that I wasn't aware of it. I also couldn't believe there wasn't a film about it. I was so excited I immediately grabbed my camera and jumped into filming, and it wasn't until I called Joe Hautman, a four time Duck Stamp winning artist, that I got the question 'Why are you doing this?' Up until this point I hadn't really had time to sit down and think about it."

And Davis continues, "The best way to continue this vital conservation program is to create a new, wider audience for the stamp. My hope is to create an entertaining film that illuminates this great tradition and exposes it to a broader audience."

The filmmakers have released a preview of the film and are also raising money through a "Kickstarter" effort. The goal is to raise \$20,000, with over \$16,000 already reached. The deadline is very early (2:59am) this Friday morning, December 6. You can watch the preview and find out more [here](#).

Stamp: Some News and Notes

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

1. In mid-November, America's Voice for Conservation, Recreation and Preservation (AVCRP) sent a letter to Congress urging investment in natural resource conservation, outdoor recreation, and historic preservation. More than 500 organizations signed the letter, including our Friends group. You can read the letter and see the list of signatories [here](#).

2. Birder-oriented pro-stamp printed public service announcements (PSAs) are now available. See our models [here](#), and if you need more information, you can contact Devin M. Lang at CHS_Yearbook_2014@yahoo.com or (734) 341-3702.

3. Last month, the USFWS released a report, *Banking on Nature*, which showed that NWRs are a good investment for American taxpayers and a boon to local economies. The report shows a trend of increased visitation to refuges and increased economic contribution to local communities, even during the height of the worst economic recession since the Great Depression. You can access the full report [here](#).

4. 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!](#)

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. Indeed, 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!](#)