

March 14, 2014



# WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

## E-Stamp Moving Along

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is set to expand the Electronic Federal Duck Stamp program (E-Stamp). The E-Stamp was established as a pilot program with the Electronic Duck Stamp Act of 2005. Since then, there have been eight states engaged in the effort: Arkansas, Colorado, Florida, Idaho, Maryland, Minnesota, Texas, and Wisconsin. Anyone can [buy a Stamp](#) through any of those states.

In a USFWS report evaluating the pilot program and submitted to Congress in August 2011, the Service wrote that the "E-Stamp Program has proven to be a practical method that is readily accepted by the stamp-buying public. The increased sale of E-Stamps, coupled with few complaints about the process through the three-year pilot, suggests customers are satisfied with this method of acquiring their Duck Stamps and the options available to them in their States."

The pilot program now continues. Starting in August, there will be openings for five more states for each of three years - 2014, 2015, and 2016.

Clearly, the E-stamp allows hunters and others to conveniently purchase a Stamp. The E-stamp provides a printable receipt to be used by the holder *until a physical Stamp is mailed*. The E-stamp serves as a temporary substitute for the physical stamp, and this distinction is crucial.

The "hard copy" of the Stamp still plays the vital role that it always has: part of a unique experience for artists and for collectors, real evidence that the holder is contributing to wetland, riparian, and grassland conservation in the Refuge System, and a continuation of a grand 80-year conservation tradition.

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## Did You Know?

- 1) The five waterfowl species eligible for depiction in the 2015-16 Stamp and to be judged at the contest in September will be Brant, Northern Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, Canada Goose, and Red-breasted Merganser.
- 2) The all-time highest number of stamps sold in one year was for the 1971-1972 Stamp. That year, 2,445,977 were sold.
- 3) The first Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest open to the general public was in 1966.
- 4) Public Law 98-369, signed July 8, 1984, amended the 1934 Stamp Act to authorize reproductions of Duck Stamps and required that all resulting proceeds be deposited into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund.

## 80th Anniversary is Upon Us

Sunday, March 16, is the 80th anniversary of the Federal Duck Stamp. In 1934, after years of debate and disappointment, forces for wetland and waterfowl conservation were finally able to agree and get a Stamp bill through Congress.

The backdrop was a triple crisis confronting the country: the Depression with its impact on virtually all sectors of the economy, drought that was to contribute to creating the Dust Bowl, and the corresponding loss of crucial wetlands and their birds across the land.



The First Stamp: 1934-35

As soon as the bill passed, it was signed into law by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt. That was on March 16, 1934.

The artwork for the very first stamp (1934-1935) was created by Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, the Pulitzer-Prize winning American cartoonist and dedicated conservationist, who had just been appointed by the President as the Chief of the Bureau of Biological Survey, predecessor to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. For more on that history, see [here](#).

The urgently needed funds generated from the Stamp were immediately directed to buy or lease wetland habitat.

Now, almost 80 years later, we can visit the wetland, riparian, and grassland habitats in the National Wildlife Refuge System that have been secured through the acquisition decisions of the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission.

Waterfowl, other birds and wildlife, and the American public have all benefited greatly from the Stamp, and we can certainly celebrate that fact after these 80 years.

## Be Heard: Stamp-price Increase Comments



In 1991, the price of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp went from \$12.50 to \$15.00. In terms of the buying power of the dollar, \$15.00 in 1991 is today equal to \$25.76 today.

Looking at it another way, \$15 could also get you about 12 gallons of gasoline in 1991!

Meanwhile, the price of wetland, riparian, and grassland areas targeted by the USFWS for preservation continues to increase. At its current price of \$15, the land-buying power of the Stamp has never been lower. *Never.*

In December, the Migratory Bird Habitat Investment and Enhancement Act was introduced in the

U.S. Senate. This proposal, [S. 1865](#), could raise the Stamp price from \$15 to \$25.

Ducks Unlimited has just launched a page on their website which calls for comments and "testimonials" from the public on the importance of the Stamp and the need to raise the price of the Stamp, up from the current \$15.

You are invited [to add your comments](#).

## Pheasants Forever Regularly Delivers the Message

*Fall pheasant hunting check list:*

- ✓ Shells
- ✓ Boots
- ✓ Cooler
- ✓ License
- Duck Stamp?*

**Yes!** Federal Duck Stamps have funded the purchase of 5,551,703 acres of Waterfowl Production Areas and National Wildlife Refuges, most of which are open to public hunting. WPAs are home to many pheasants and other game and non-game wildlife.

*Ducks Stamps may be purchased at any U.S. Post Office or online at <http://duckstamps.fws.gov>*

Above is the Public Service Announcement that Pheasants Forever has regularly run in the fall issue of their publication. *Pheasants Forever* magazine, with a circulation of 108,000, has promoted Duck Stamp sales to its members for years, even though the Stamp is *not* required to hunt pheasants. Ring-necked Pheasants, however, make extensive use of wetlands for winter cover and associated uplands for nesting, particularly in the Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) in the Refuge System. Through this method PF communicates to its members and encourages them to get on board with a Stamp.

## Refuge System Turns 111 on March 14

On Friday, March 14, the National Wildlife Refuge System celebrates its 111th birthday. Today, 562 refuges and 38 wetland management districts make up the nation's premier wildlife conservation network, the Refuge System. It started with Pelican Island in 1903 with President Theodore Roosevelt's decisive action to save that island for the birds.

*Happy Birthday*

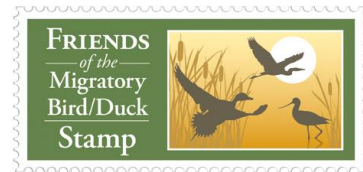
It's also time to remember that 252 of the 563 refuges can attribute at least part of their habitat to MBCF/Stamp acquisition dollars. And 84 percent of WPAs making up the wetland management districts, 3 million of 3.6 million acres, can be attributed to MBCF/Stamp dollars.

Indeed, there's plenty to celebrate about our Refuge System this month!

## 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!](#)