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WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

The Case for a Secondary Species

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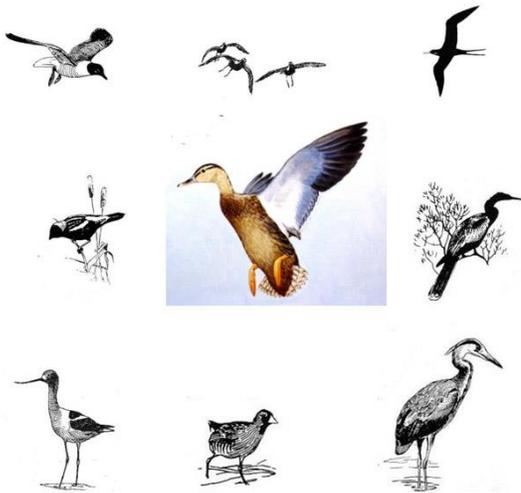
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This collage shows different pieces of artwork by Bob Hines (1912-1994), who was the prolific USFWS artist who actually created the Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest. A committed conservationist, Hines helped foster a concern for waterfowl, other bird and wildlife, and their habitats. His artwork here features a female Mallard in the center, with other representative birds. They are, clockwise from the upper left: Laughing Gull, American Golden-Plover, Magnificent Frigatebird, Anhinga, Great Blue Heron, Sora, American Avocet, and Bobolink.



The artwork above, by the wildlife artist, [Bob Hines](#), is representational. It helps to show the variety and interest of one creative wildlife artist. It also helps to show that a devotion to waterfowl and wetland conservation overlaps with an interest in other birds that can benefit through a concept, promoted since the 1990s, known as "integrated wetland management." Indeed, what helps waterfowl in wetland and grassland habitats almost automatically helps other bird species (e.g., long-legged waders, rails, shorebirds, raptors, gulls, terns, and associated

songbirds) as well as other wildlife.

Now is the ideal time to present this approach on the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp, since next year will mark the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty, an event which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service wishes to recognize. Insofar as the Migratory Bird Treaty has protected *all our migratory birds*, the artwork on the Stamp can help deliver that core message. (Indeed, that celebration could easily extend to 2018, marking the Congressional ratification of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act, and into 2020, marking the centennial of the Supreme Court upholding the Act.)

An addition to the Stamp artwork - showing a "secondary bird species" along with the dominant waterfowl - is fully appropriate, starting with the art contest in the 2016 centennial year. This is a concept that we presented in some detail in a [previous issue of Wingtips](#). In fact, the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp has also proposed [some model wording](#) to the art contest to help facilitate such a tweaking of the art rules. (Moreover, when an artist submits artwork to the contest, he/she might also clearly indicate the non-waterfowl species pictured as well as the dominant waterfowl species in the art.)

In that spirit, we present below a representative sample of supporting opinions - from many quarters - on the value of this "secondary species" approach. Most of them are excerpts from letters sent to the USFWS in support of this concept. And we [welcome your own comments](#) on different aspects of this innovation.

The inclusion of the secondary species would be an excellent way to recognize the coming centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty in 2016. It would serve as a real challenge for the artists in the contest. And it should serve as an opportunity to reach new people, people who do not currently buy the stamp or who misunderstand that the stamp is "just for ducks."

We understand that changing the art contest rules should not be difficult, and believe that there is plenty of time to vigorously promote this new initiative.

Kurt R. Schwarz
Conservation Chair
Maryland Ornithological Society

We at the Roger Tory Peterson Institute for Natural History (RTPI) applaud this expanded concept and think that it is a constructive and creative idea that will resonate with a large audience.

As the official institutional steward of Dr. Roger Tory Peterson's work and his enduring legacy, RTPI is keenly focused on meaningful wildlife art and the conservation message it can relay. We appreciate the role of the artwork that has surrounded the history of the Federal Duck Stamp and have been active supporters of the program and promoters of its broad conservation value. In fact, for four months during last spring we ran a wonderful exhibit entitled 'Bob Hines: National Wildlife Artist' focused on this great USFWS artist and his influence on the Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest, which he virtually ran for three decades. This upcoming July, Jennifer Miller will present

a public program at RTPI that highlights her experience as a wildlife artist and winner of the 2014 Federal Duck Stamp Contest. The Bob Hines exhibit was very well received by a wide audience and attendees included a range of outdoor enthusiasts, art-lovers and naturalists - we can only assume that the positive exposure for the Federal Duck Stamp program enticed people to purchase one. We are of course hopeful that Jennifer Miller's program will have the same effect on her audience.

When presented correctly, the inclusion of a secondary bird species in the stamp artwork will also provide a new and creative challenge for the regular and reoccurring artists who enter the contest. Perhaps more importantly, there is also the serious potential of attracting new and aspiring wildlife and bird artists to the art competition. In either case, the artists will want to know exactly what the judges' precise instructions for judging will be, and the requirement for inclusion of a secondary species needs to be clearly and precisely stated. This concept can build on the grand traditions of the stamp, keeping a waterfowl as the dominant species.

Twan Leenders
President
Roger Tory Peterson Institute for Natural History

I am writing to support the concept... to add other species of migratory birds in addition to the featured duck species in future stamp artwork. While this may be a bit surprising due to Delta's focus on ducks and duck hunting, but I am eager to see if this can be an action that catalyzes broader support for the duck stamp and the resultant habitat benefits we all derive from incremental increases in stamp sales.

I do offer this support with one caveat that I think is critically important-that is a mechanism or system is developed to discern if adding additional species to the stamp does in fact increase the buying pool beyond the traditional duck hunting market. Capturing simple demographic information from stamp purchasers (name, address, age, etc) plus a simple question about whether they are a waterfowl hunter or non-consumptive user. I think this information would be of great utility to the Service in assessing who is buying stamps, how to market the stamp to other non-traditional markets and discerning trends in stamp purchases over time.

John L. Devney
Vice President, U.S. Policy
Delta Waterfowl

The idea of including a "secondary" bird species that is not a waterfowl, either in the background or even alongside the duck, is excellent, and has the full support of the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. I could imagine this making for a very attractive and creative design, perhaps involving a shorebird, tern or gull, a raptor, or even a wetland-associated songbird such as Yellow Warbler or Yellow-headed Blackbird.

It makes especially good sense to launch this experiment with the 2016 contest, given the upcoming centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty in 2016. Moreover, I think this would constitute a terrific new design challenge for the artists, no doubt adding to the variety of designs submitted and maybe even attracting a new generation of artists. And most important of all, including a non-duck in the painting would be of enormous help for those of us who have been trying hard to promote the Stamp to bird-watchers and nature enthusiasts who are not active hunters.

You and I both know well that the Stamp is not "just for ducks," but the general public is still in the dark about this. The new design idea would help us make that point that purchasing the Stamp benefits a huge variety of habitats and bird species, while also maintaining the important waterfowl traditions inherent in the stamp's long history.

Using every platform I can muster at the Cornell Lab, both in print and online, I have been touting the benefits of the Stamp for a long time. The publicity surrounding this new idea would give us a great platform to renew the call that every concerned naturalist and conservationist in the country should buy a Stamp every year.

John W. Fitzpatrick
Louis Agassiz Fuertes Director
Cornell Lab of Ornithology

The Ohio Ornithological Society affirms the excellent work that has been done for conservation by funds from the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, or Federal Duck Stamp. We encourage our members to purchase stamps each year. Unfortunately, some birders still think the stamp is all about "duck hunting."

The OOS Conservation board believes that adding a secondary migratory species could expand the appeal of the stamps to bird watchers. We would embrace the idea of a new experimental requirement for artwork on the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp or Federal Duck Stamp, starting with the 2016 art contest. It might even be an exciting new challenge for the artists in the contest. It would send strong message that the stamp is not just for ducks, which could help us reach new markets for the stamps.

After all, the more stamps sold, the more habitat gets protected.

Cheryl Harner
Conservation Chair
Ohio Ornithological Society

I think it is an exciting idea to change the rules for the 2016, 2017 and 2018 stamps to require the addition of a secondary migratory species. As a wetland biologist in Nebraska, I spend

considerable time restoring wetland habitat across the state and we never claim we are doing it just for the ducks and geese. Wetland ecosystem protection and restoration benefits birds across numerous guilds - ducks, geese, waders, secretive marsh birds and shorebirds as well as the countless other migratory species that utilize the habitat. The inclusion of a secondary species on the stamp would help broaden its appeal to other outdoor enthusiasts well beyond the hunting community and inject new interest and energy into the federal duck stamp program.

Randy G. Stutheit
Wetland/Wildlife Biologist
Nebraska Game and Parks Commission
and
Wetland Projects Coordinator
Rainwater Basin Joint Venture

There are a least four solid reasons that we think the inclusion of a secondary species has value: 1. Seventy one million U.S. residents are engaged in the life sport of bird watching or birding according to the latest national surveys. 2. The use of a secondary species would be an appropriate way to recognize the coming centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty in 2016. 3. An inclusive contest could serve as a real challenge for artists of all ages. 4. And it should serve as an opportunity to reach many new stamp-buyers, people that love birds and nature, who might have the misunderstanding that the duck stamp is just that...a duck stamp.

You may be interested in knowing that we at Sonoma Birding... are already engaged in preparing the next generation of wildlife artists and wildlife conservationists. We have been champions of the Jr. Duck CA. Stamp Contest, environmental, offer bird education to schools, a public nature lecture series and the significant engagement of our Congressman, Mike Thompson, who is the new House Democrat on the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission. We originated the kid-size CBC in Sonoma - a "Christmas Bird Count for Kids" which is now offered in 22 states and throughout Canada in French, Spanish, and English. Several National Wildlife Refuges, with public access support CBC4Kids movement.

In short, we are fully engaged in those kinds of efforts which are essential to sustaining bird and wildlife education and conservation from one generation to the next, including full appreciation of the Federal Duck Stamp and the Jr. Duck Stamp.

Tom Rusert and Darren Peterie
John Muir Award - Conservationists of the Year - 2013

I understand that you are working on a new experimental requirement for artwork for the Federal Duck Stamp, starting with the 2016 art contest. This would include a "secondary species," a non-waterfowl migratory bird in the background.

NIC is supportive of ideas like these as they are both constructive and creative. This dovetails

nicely with NIC's proposal to sell more stamps as it serves as an opportunity to reach new people, people who are unaware of the impact of the the stamp.

The idea builds on the grand traditions of the stamp, centered as it is on waterfowl, and it emphasizes that the stamp is for crucial wetland and grassland habitats for the national wildlife refuge system. It's a real educational opportunity.

Laura Groat
Director
NIC Federal

As an organization that supports the goals of USFWS by encouraging the annual purchase of the Stamp, including additional bird species will help us to promote sales to the community of ornithologists and birders outside the traditional hunting community.

Adding a second wildlife subject would also appeal to other artists who may wish to participate in the annual contest for the accepted design and may broaden the appeal of the stamp to an even greater audience of collectors and purchasers. Broadening the support of a wildlife stamp and the increased revenue this may bring would further help the USFWS preserve and protect habitat for all species.

We also urge that an attempt be made to capture demographic information from the buyers when Stamps are sold. Understanding the incentive of the purchaser, whether that be for hunting, birding, wildlife enjoyment, stamp collecting or for multiple combined reasons, combined with information about where the purchaser resides and uses the Stamp, can lead to better marketing of the Stamp and reaching out to new potential purchasers.

David B. Donsker
President
Nuttall Ornithological Club

We at the California Waterfowl Association (CWA)... are open to this idea, but only as long as a duck or goose species remains the dominant image on the stamp and that there is a meaningful way to measure its effectiveness in increasing stamp sales.

We understand that the concept builds on the long-established traditions of the stamp, and it further emphasizes that the stamp is for crucial wetland and other waterfowl habitats in the National Wildlife Refuge System. We also agree that its a real educational and promotional opportunity.

As you are aware, changing the art-contest rules is not particularly difficult; it's been done

before. (We remember, for example, the 2001 contest when all the artists were required to display a black scoter.)

There is also a real need to find effective ways to track who, exactly, is buying the stamp. We all could have benefited from this years ago, but there is no time like the present to start. In our view, serious marketing to expand stamp sales can only proceed if we all have access to this kind of information.

Mark Hennelly
Vice President, Legislative Affairs and Public Policy
California Waterfowl

We believe this concept builds upon and enhances the long-established traditions of the Stamp, and it further emphasizes that proceeds from Stamp sales are for crucial new wetland and other habitats in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The upcoming centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty in 2016 is a major educational and promotional opportunity; and of course that treaty covers all migratory birds, not just waterfowl. Including a secondary species to the Stamp would be a creative way to send a strong positive message to the public that Stamp sales benefits a very large variety of species including non-hunted birds, as well as numerous species of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fishes and many others, as well as their essential habitats. Such a resounding and ecologically-oriented statement that the Stamp is not "just for ducks" is long overdue.

Ric Zarwell
President
Allamakee County Protectors - Education Campaign, Inc.

We strongly support the addition of a secondary native bird species to the background of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp. This addition will make the stamp more appealing and valuable to all users of our natural resource areas. Originally designed as a hunting stamp, it should now be referred to as a natural use stamp since many non-hunting activities (birding, photography, hiking, camping, etc.) utilize our natural resources as well.

John Verdon
Vice-President
Friends of Pool 9
Upper Miss National Wildlife and Fish Refuge

Our organization appreciates the multiple benefits that this program provides for a wide variety

of both game and non-game bird species, as well as other wildlife, and the critical role that proceeds from Stamp sales play in protecting habitat. Among the non-hunting public, however, there is a lack of awareness of the importance of this critical program. This lack of awareness translates into a reduced number of supporters purchasing the Stamp each year. Adding bird species beyond waterfowl to the Stamp would help to raise awareness of this important program among the non-hunting community of birders and other wildlife and nature enthusiasts.

The addition of a non-game species to the Stamp would send a powerful message that could greatly boost sales as a new audience of stakeholders is engaged and purchases the Migratory Bird Hunting Conservation Stamp. In the end, the more successful this program is, the more acres of habitat and diversity of bird and wildlife species we will all have to enjoy for a multitude of outdoor recreational purposes.

Patrick M. Comins
Director of Bird Conservation
Audubon Connecticut

The inclusion of a second native bird in the artwork background would be an important addition, for at least two very good reasons. First, it would educate the general public by emphasizing that stamp proceeds are critical to creating and preserving more wetlands, through the National Wildlife Refuge system and federal Waterfowl Production Areas. which serve a much large contingent of birds than just waterfowl. Second, it would greatly assist organizations like Iowa Audubon in assuring non-hunters that stamp purchase is not meant just to benefit hunters, but also birders and anyone who enjoys our avian resources in their natural habitats. It might be appropriate at this point to state that Iowa Audubon does not ever oppose hunting based upon sound biological data. In fact, some of our members are hunters, and almost all of our members realize that without the historic financial help of hunters over the past 80 years, much of the public wildlife habitat we enjoy today might be gone.

We don't believe it should be very difficult to change the stamp art contest rules for including a background nongame bird species. Changes in the contest have been made before, and this proposed change might greatly assist an increase in stamp sales - especially needed as waterfowl hunter numbers are slowly dwindling. Such a change in the rules is also likely to increase the number of artists who may wish participate in the stamp contest each year.

Douglas C. Harr
President
Iowa Audubon

We know the Duck Stamp has played an important role in the acquisition of wetlands for much of our National wildlife Refuge system. This habitat not only benefits waterfowl but many other non-game species, and we think including a secondary species can only benefit the Duck Stamp program. Adding a secondary species will help reach a new group of purchasers, such as birders and nature lovers, who don't currently know about or understand the Duck Stamp program.

Tulsa Audubon is strongly in favor of this concept because we have already pioneered a similar concept it in Oklahoma. Several years ago TAS lobbied the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC) to establish the Oklahoma Conservation Passport.

We suggested the ODWC develop a special permit for non-consumptive users to purchase in order to utilize our state WMAs. They agreed with the concept, and in 2010 the Oklahoma state legislature passed a bill establishing the Oklahoma Wildlife Passport. The Passport is now required of all persons who enter or use the state WMAs, unless they already possess a hunting or fishing license.

We feel any effort to expand the audience for the Duck Stamp program and include more non-consumptive users, is a worthy task.

John Kennington
President
Tulsa Audubon Society

Although the Duck Stamp features waterfowl, and should never minimize this species group in the future, adding non-waterfowl species appropriate to the habitat depicted for the primary waterfowl subject is simply a recognition of the tremendous, broad-scale values of protecting such habitats. We feel this is a message that needs to be repeated over and over.

We think the revisions of the Duck Stamp contest rules, as proposed on the Friends of the Migratory Duck Stamp website, appropriately protect the integrity of the existing waterfowl focus of the Duck Stamp, while broadening the message of the value of wetland protection to a multitude of species. We fully support the proposal and look forward to participating in any roll-out of Migratory Bird Treaty celebrations and related Duck Stamp designs.

Larry Shanks
Chairman
Association of Retired Fish and Wildlife Service Employees

The Georgia Ornithological Society (GOS) has long been a proponent of the federal duck stamp program and we encourage our membership to support birds and bird habitats through perennial purchase of the stamp.

The addition of a secondary species has value for several reasons. It could reach a new group of conservationists who don't yet realize that this program benefits a vast array of birds and bird habitats, not just waterfowl. Further, the quality of art could be advanced by drawing from the different skill sets and styles of those who haven't yet been compelled to submit their work.

At the Georgia Ornithological Society we have been selling the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp for years, mostly to birders. And we think these proposed design-changes will help us - and others - sell more!

Changing the 2016 art-contest rules should not be particularly difficult. Still, the artists will want to know exactly what the judges will be told, and what their precise instructions will be for judging. Therefore, a requirement for a secondary species will need to be clear and precise. Most importantly, any change should be an opportunity to make a statement about bird conservation and the refuge system in the process.

Nathan Farnau
Conservation Chair
Georgia Ornithological Society

About the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp is an independent, nonprofit organization dedicated to two fundamental 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.

When you join our Friends, you will receive a stamp-holder, sticker, and/or other supporting material (as supplies last). Please use these to "spread the word" about the stamp and about our Friends.



To join or send us a contribution today, you can go to [our online form](#).

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