

February 24, 2016



# WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

## It's a whole lot more...



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## LOOKING AT PROPOSED STAMP ART RULE-CHANGES...

The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp is in favor of recommended changes that the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) has recently made for the rules governing the famous Federal Duck Stamp Contest.

This proposal appeared in the Federal Register on Thursday, 11 February. The proposal states that the portrayal of the waterfowl on the Duck Stamp (officially known as the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp) should be enhanced by the addition of an appropriate non-waterfowl migratory bird species, beginning with the 2016 contest to be held this fall.

Of course, since 1934, the Duck Stamp has generated more than \$950 million for the preservation of over 6.6 million acres of wetland and grassland habitat. Since 1958, almost all of the proceeds from the approximately 1.7 million stamps sold annually go to secure this vital habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System.

The latest proposal is a real opportunity to:

- 1) draw positive attention to the centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty (MBT) this year,
- 2) provide new artistic challenges to the participating bird artists in the Duck Stamp Art Contest (and potentially bring in new artists),
- 3) generate additional enthusiasm among people to support migratory bird conservation (increase people's understanding that the Stamp is "not just for ducks") which may motivate more Americans to buy the Stamp.

This year's [centennial of the Migratory Bird Treaty](#) needs multiple showcase activities to reach the public. The change in the Stamp rules could be one such action. This centennial also presents a great opportunity to stress that many National Wildlife Refuges (NWRs) have been built through Stamp dollars to help protect the very migratory birds covered under the MBT. The NWRs are as different as Horicon (WI-98.7%), Santa Ana (TX-94.9%), Ottawa (OH-86.0%), Nisqually (WA-58.4%), Salyer (ND-36.5%), and Malheur (OR-25.6% - see image below).

The change in the Stamp rule may challenge and motivate the traditional artists and bring in new ones. The choice would be up to the artist, as long as it is a native migratory non-waterfowl. This contest certainly needs a real boost, and this new element might be just the right thing. In the December 18 *Wingtips*, the [artist submission trend was explained](#). Here are some years with entry totals, for a bit more than the past two decades:

1992	629
1994	585
1996	477
1998	337
2000	316
2002	250
2004	223
2011	190
2014	186
2015	157



Over 1/4 of Malheur NWR was created through Stamp/MBCF dollars.  
A view from the Buena Vista Overlook at Malheur - photo: Jeff Sorn

In the early 1980s, there were often over 1,200 entries annually. Clearly, something new has to be tried. And additional talented wildlife artists need to be reached.

The idea to include a "secondary bird species," in *addition to the dominant waterfowl* on the stamp, would be a great way to deliver the message that the funds collected from the stamp go to help other species far beyond waterfowl. Putting a Bald Eagle, Peregrine Falcon, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Long-billed Curlew, American Golden-Plover, or Prothonotary Warbler in the background - to correspond with the right season and location - would strengthen the vital message: *it's all about the habitat*. Smaller background images have successfully appeared on

past cherished and winning stamps: lighthouses, boats, duck-blinds, other individuals of the same waterfowl, and more.

The USFWS program for the Duck Stamp combines great art and design with a proven record of solid conservation that goes back over 80 years. It's art *and* conservation, both simple and beautiful. And while the program is waterfowl-driven, many other species of birds and other wildlife always benefit.

A number of organizations expressed support for this sort of rule-change concept, in [comments made last year](#).

The only disappointing thing about the current USFWS proposal is that it is not specific enough as presented. The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp maintains that the USFWS should have provided more details in the proposal, so that the public, which includes many talented artists and supporters, could provide better feedback to the USFWS.

The Friends presented just such specific wording suggestions in the past - to the USFWS in 2014 and then distributed through *Wingtips* in early February 2015. Those [details can be found here](#).

With the recent increase in the price of the stamp - to \$25 - it is important to devise innovative new ways to make the Stamp more appealing, especially for those Americans who are not required to buy a Stamp.

With that in mind, it is crucial to find out how to sell more Stamps for conservation, thereby securing vital wetland and grassland habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System and providing important recreational opportunities for all Americans. The effort cannot be effective unless all parties have a better understanding who, exactly, is buying the Stamp. A representative survey needs to be initiated. This is an additional priority that should run parallel to the proposed art rule changes.

Presented correctly, these contest changes will benefit wildlife artists, waterfowl hunters, and other Americans who buy the Stamp, support the Refuge System, and, most importantly, conserve the birds and other wildlife depending on us to secure wetland and grassland habitat for their survival.

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*Details on the USFWS proposal (including a downloadable PDF) and the comment period (through 14 March 2016) can be found [in the Federal Register](#), Revision of Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Duck Stamp) Contest Regulations. (A shorter, sharable link is <https://federalregister.gov/a/2016-02665>.) To view other public comments and contribute your own, visit [Regulations.gov](#), docket ID FWS-HQ-MB-2015-0161.*

## T-shirt with Classic Stamp Image Available from the Friends

The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp has created a new stamp-support T-shirt. It features the classic first stamp, with the wonderful artwork by Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling. The message on the shirt is simple - "Securing Wildlife Habitat Since 1934."

The price (\$11.20 plus shipping and handling) is being kept as low as possible, to get the T-shirt in the hands - and on the backs - of bird advocates and conservationists across the country.

Through the T-shirt, we wish to spread the word about the unique role that the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp provides.

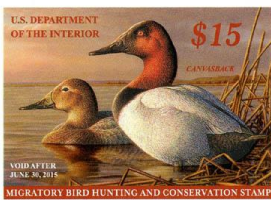


Also, by using the original 1934-1935 stamp image on this T-shirt, our Friends acts as a Nonexclusive Licensee of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, with the Stamp design the property of the United States Government. Also, as part of our use of the stamp image, five percent (5%) of the price of this T-shirt is deposited into the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, the fund where Duck Stamp dollars are sent for acquisition of wetland, bottomland, and grassland habitats in the National Wildlife Refuge System. Yes, by buying a T-shirt you will also help secure actual refuge habitat!

Right now, our T-shirts come in traditional men's style only. They are available in five sizes: S, M, L, XL, and 2XL.

You can find T-shirt images and specifics [here](#).

## 'Million Dollar Duck' released at Slamdance Festival



This time last month, *The Million Dollar Duck*, the film by director, Brian Golden Davis, had its official curtain-raiser at the Slamdance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. The film, on the Federal Duck Stamp Contest, was very well received at the festival.

The artwork for the 2014-15 stamp, two Canvasbacks by Adam Grimm (shown here), is part of the highly entertaining story in *The Million Dollar Duck*.

At Park City, the attitude of the wildlife artists present and the enthusiastic audience response impressed the folks at the Discovery Channel enough to put forward an offer to distribute the film. The result is that Lions Gate will be releasing the film in Los Angeles, New York, and Washington DC for a short theatrical run, directly followed by a television premiere on Animal Planet later this year. To top things off, at the end of the festival was the Slamdance awards ceremony. The film which was in competition with seven other documentaries ended up with the Audience Award and Jury Award for "best documentary." The awards were totally unexpected. More details will appear in *Wingtips* as they become available. In the meantime, you can read a short report from [Variety](#).

## While online shopping, you can help the Jr. Duck Stamp Program

"AmazonSmile" is a simple concept that works like this: When you shop through the Amazon website, the folks at Amazon will donate to your favorite designated tax-exempt organization or charity.



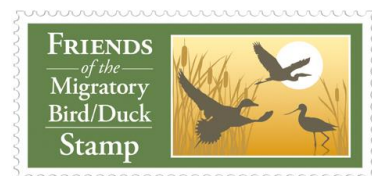
The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp is now a registered charitable organization with AmazonSmile. You can designate 0.5% of your eligible purchases to be donated to the Friends, at no cost to you. In turn, these funds will be re-donated by the Friends to sustain the creative activities of the the Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program. You can find a lot more details [here](#).

Please consider sharing this information to supporters of the Jr. Duck Stamp Program, whether they are environmental educators, art teachers, hunters, bird watchers, or Refuge Friends.

## 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.



Our "Regular Friend" fee is kept modest, only \$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. [Join our Friends group!](#)

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