

September 22, 2014



# WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

## New Artwork Chosen for Next Stamp



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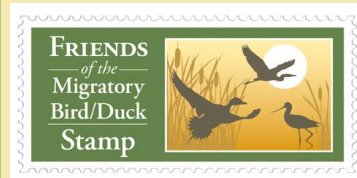
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The 2014 Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest was held on Friday and Saturday, September 19 and 20, at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The five eligible species for the artwork for the 2015-2016 stamp were: Brant, Canada Goose, Northern Shoveler, Red-breasted Merganser, and Ruddy Duck. There were 186 pieces of waterfowl artwork that were eligible for the two-day contest. This is how the artwork was distributed by species:

- Brant (4.3%)
- Canada Goose (28.5%)
- Northern Shoveler (32.3%)
- Red-breasted Merganser (15.1%)
- Ruddy Duck (19.9%)

Starting Saturday morning, the five-member team of judges went through the [186 submissions](#) to vote on which ones would be "in" or "out" for subsequent rounds of judging.

Saturday's rounds of voting were intended to reduce the number to the top three winners, with

the first place artwork to appear on the 2015-2016 stamp. For the first time ever, there was a three-way tie in the voting, and extra rounds had to be run to pick the final top three in order.

The winning artwork was of a pair of Ruddy Ducks painted in acrylic by Jennifer Miller of Olean, New York. (See her reproduced artwork above.) Coming in second was a flying Red-breasted Merganser by Ron Louque of Charlottesville, Virginia, and third was a Canada Goose by Frank Mittelstadt of Beaver Dam, Wisconsin.

You can find more on the results of the contest at the [Federal Duck Stamp Office website](#).



Photo: Paul J. Baicich

To the left is a photo of the judges and U.S. Fish and Wildlife leaders with all three top-winning images. From left to right: Jerome Ford, Assistant Director, Migratory Birds; Pete Anastasi, judge; George Petrides, judge; Delwin Benson, judge (holding third-place Canada Goose); Deb Hahn, alternate judge (holding second-place Red-breasted Merganser); Gloria Erickson and Terry Miller, judges (holding the winning Ruddy Ducks), and Rowan Gould, Deputy Director of the USFWS.

Jennifer Miller, the artist for the winning image with the Ruddy Ducks has been known for her fantasy artwork, yet she is currently creating wildlife artworks, jewelry, masks, and sculpture as well.

Describing her outdoor as well as artistic interests, Miller says, "I grew up with a very vivid imagination, and couldn't stop drawing birds and dragons. I am mostly self-taught, with no formal art education, and studied under the guidance of the natural world... I draw a lot of inspiration from the land around me! I have what others have referred to as an 'explosive' passion for nature and wildlife, and indeed I go out of my way daily to study, observe, and learn about my interests. I am equally happy examining a wild bird through binoculars as I am examining bits of moss growing across a fallen tree."

You can find out more about Miller and her work on [her website](#).

Curiously, the gender of the artists making submissions to this contest was just over 80 percent male, and just under 20 percent female. Only two other women have come in first in the contest previously: Nancy Howe in 1990 (King Eider) and Sherrie Russell Meline in 2005 (Ross's Goose).

Miller's artwork with her pair of Ruddy Ducks will appear on to the 2015-2016 Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp. Individual stamps, of course, will be sold for \$15 each, with almost all the proceeds - adding up to about \$24 million per year - going directly to the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF). This funding secures vital breeding, stopover, and wintering habitats for waterfowl, other bird species, and other wildlife across the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Today, parts of 252 National Wildlife Refuges (accounting for 2.37 million acres) and over 200 Waterfowl Production Areas (with over 3.0 million acres secured) owe their existence to the stamp investments made through the MBCF.

We in the Friends Group can think of no better - and more efficient - way to support wildlife habitat than the act of buying a federal stamp. Buy this year's stamp, and when next year's stamp showing the two Ruddy Ducks becomes available (at the end of June 2015) buy that one, too!

It's simple. It's inexpensive. It's proven.

## Join 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.

The purchase of a stamp is, perhaps, *the easiest thing you can do* to protect crucial habitats in the U.S. Indeed, a 15-dollar purchase of a stamp goes a very long way!



The wetland, riparian, and grassland habitats that are secured through the stamp benefit waterfowl, of course, but the investments go much further. Among the other birds helped are shorebirds, gulls, terns, long-legged waders, rails, raptors, and many songbirds. And there are also mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish, and insects (e.g., butterflies and dragonflies) that flourish due to ongoing stamp investments. Yes, it's not just for ducks!

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 a promotional message. Our "Friend's Year" also corresponds with the "year" of a valid Stamp - from July through the following June.

When you join our Friends for the year 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, rejoin, or send us a contribution today, you can go to [our online form](#).

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