

December 19, 2014



# WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

## President Signs 2014 Stamp Act

### What's next?



Jennifer Miller's winning artwork of a pair of Ruddy Ducks will grace the very next Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp for 2015-16. This will be the first stamp to cost \$25.

### In This Newsletter Issue

PRESIDENT SIGNS STAMP ACT

ABOUT THE FRIENDS

### Quick Links

[Our Website](#)

[About Us](#)

[Resources](#)

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On Thursday, December 18, President Obama signed the Federal Duck Stamp Act of 2014. This will increase the price of the stamp from \$15 to \$25. The price increase of \$10 will be dedicated to conservation easements. In this way, an estimated additional \$16 million per year could be made available for habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System.

Our Friends group maintains that the stamp is one of the most successful conservation programs in the history of our nation. It represents an incredible success story that brings people together to conserve America's wildlife heritage. Even at \$25, purchasing the stamp is a tremendous value, and it is the easiest thing anyone can do to protect crucial wetland and grassland habitat in the

National Wildlife Refuge System. Beyond waterfowl, the program helps shorebirds, long-legged waders, raptors, songbirds, and plenty of other wildlife.

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 stamp investments made through the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund.

A price increase in the stamp to \$25 was seen as a way to keep up with inflation since the last increase - in 1991- and particularly to attempt to keep up with the increase in land prices. At the same time, the conservation need has grown.

Dan Ashe, Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, said "By restoring the lost purchasing power of the Federal Duck Stamp, this legislation will give us the opportunity to work with thousands of additional landowners across the nation to maintain vital habitat for waterfowl, grassland birds, and hundreds of other native species."

Ashe also thanked the Friends group, adding that "The Federal Duck Stamp has no more passionate supporters than Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp. On behalf of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the American people, I want to thank your organization and its members for your invaluable assistance in the successful effort to restore the purchasing power of the stamp. The future of the Duck Stamp is bright, and the success of this bipartisan effort will benefit wildlife and people for generations to come."

With the President's signing of the act, the Friends group thanked members of Congress from both sides of the aisle who were instrumental in the legislation's passage and also pointed to organizations that helped push for this legislation.

The Friends group also thanked Congress and President Obama for the Permanent Electronic Duck Stamp Act, a related piece of legislation also signed into law on December 18. This authorizes the Secretary of the Interior permanent authority to allow any state to issue "electronic duck stamps." Under this law, Stamps will still be mailed to buyers, but the online proof of purchase immediately fulfills the requirement of possession. (After 45 days, the paper proof-of-purchase expires.)

For a more detailed press release from the Friends group on the signing of these two important bills into law, see [here](#).

The very next Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp will be released at the beginning of July, 2015. It will cost \$25, and it will show the artwork above, by Jennifer Miller, of a pair of Ruddy Ducks. The new stamp should be the start of something big.

The passage and signing of these two related bills are really not the end. They are better seen as the beginning of a longer and crucial process.

What must follow are efforts to maintain and increase sales, to spread the word on the role of the stamp, and to get more outdoor-involved Americans to appreciate how this program conserves habitat, builds a valuable National Wildlife Refuge System, and serves the American public.

## 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.

You can also order our new t-shirt, with the image of the 2014-2015 stamp, [here](#).

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

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