

March 4, 2015



WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

Stamp Success Story: Mingo National Wildlife Refuge

Region 3 of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service ranges from Ohio in the east, to Minnesota in the north, to Missouri in the south, and it is there that our grand tour of refuge success stories stops next, at [Mingo National Wildlife Refuge](#). The refuge sits on 21,592 acres of lush bottomland forest and swamp in the bootheel region of Missouri, an hour's drive from Cape Girardeau. Drowned forests of water tupelo and bald cypress thrive in the Mingo Basin, an abandoned channel of the Mississippi River. The core of the refuge is 7,730 acres of Wilderness Area, the largest remaining tract of bottomland hardwoods in the state. And almost all of this land, 99.5% of it, was acquired through MBCF/Stamp funds.

In the late 1800s, lumbering in southeastern Missouri was big business. Once the trees were logged out, drainage districts were set up with the goal of converting the land to agriculture. One such was the Mingo Drainage District (whose boundaries almost exactly match those of today's refuge). Unfortunately for developers and farmers, keeping the basin drained was never quite successful; the soils were less productive than elsewhere; and the stress of the Great Depression forced the district into insolvency. USFWS purchased the land in 1944 and set about restoring it to something like a pristine state.

Now, wildlife and forest are once again abundant. In the bottomlands can be found seven species of oak, including a champion overcup oak 72 feet tall. Efforts to reintroduce alligator gar, a sharp-toothed freshwater fish that can grow to nearly 10 feet long and 300 pounds, began in 2009 in cooperation with the Missouri Department of Conservation. The swamp rabbit, the larger swimming relative of the eastern cottontail (and Jimmy Carter's nemesis), makes its home here.

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Did You Know?

1) Scoters may be the "Rodney Dangerfields of Duck Stamps," getting no respect. Our three species of scoters have all appeared on a stamp, but only one time each: 1969-70 (White-winged Scoter by Maynard Reese), 1996-97 (Surf Scoter by Wilhelm Goebel), and 2002-03 (Black Scoter by Joseph Hautman). In the last case, all the artists in the 2001 contest *had* to illustrate Black Scoter, since this was the last of our waterfowl species to make an appearance on the stamp.

2) The last time that stamp sales topped two million was the 1980-



Mallards at Mingo NWR. Photo: USFWS

The refuge provides regular wintering grounds for almost two dozen species of waterfowl and other species of

waterbirds, with individuals numbering in the tens of thousands. [A count](#) of Mallards in early January, for example, alone totaled 34,364 birds.

Not all wildlife that prospers at Mingo NWR is desirable, however. [Feral hogs](#), a non-native and aggressive species, are a particular management concern.

One project of interest at the refuge is that of forest restoration, an ongoing process. Mingo NWR is one of the sites where The Conservation Fund is [planting trees to sequester carbon](#) under its Go Zero program; the program's millionth tree was planted at Mingo.

The Mingo Swamp Friends is a key partner organization; see their [photo gallery](#) for some stunning images made in the refuge. A new LEED certified [visitor center](#) has recently opened. The annual [Eagle Days](#), in cooperation with the Missouri Department of Conservation, took place last month, when the NWR was host to more than 1,000 visiting students. Peter Rea of USFWS introduces Mingo in a [short film](#) produced by Dakota Counts and Greg Jackson.

Our Friends at "the North American"

The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp will be present at the 80th gathering of the [North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference](#) in Omaha later this month, celebrating 100 years of conservation.

The conference will be held in Omaha, Nebraska, between March 8th to March 13th. If you are attending "the North American" for any reason, please be sure to stop by our exhibit. We surely have some experiences and goals to share.

Please join us as we celebrate with other attendees a century of conservation, enhancement, and management of North America's wildlife and natural resources, an experience in which the Federal Duck Stamp has played a vital role.

1981 stamp, when 2,045,114 stamps were sold across the country.

3) Before the 1958 revisions of the law (effective 1 July 1960), land acquisition was only one of several programs financed at least in part with stamp dollars. Previously, about 20 percent of these funds were used to acquire refuge lands and approximately 50 percent had been used to develop and maintain migratory bird refuges after acquisition.

4) The first "certificates of appreciation" from the USFWS were sent to post-season purchasers of the 1959-1960 Stamp. This was to reward buyers who bought the stamp after the hunting season was over. This was at a time when severe droughts were devastating waterfowl populations. The certificate was 5"x7", printed in black and white on imitation parchment.

5) Stamp funds not only go to refuges. Since 1958, the funds also go to acquire smaller wetland and grassland habitats (the Small Wetlands Acquisition Program - SWAP) within the Prairie Pothole Region of the upper Midwest and northern Great Plains. In this way, over 3.6 million acres of wetland and grassland habitat have been added to Refuge System. These units are commonly referred to as Waterfowl Production Areas, or WPAs.

6) Only three women artists have ever won the Federal Duck Stamp Competition: Nancy Howe in 1990 (King Eider), Sherrie Russell Meline in 2005 (Ross's Goose), and Jennifer Miller in 2014 (Ruddy Duck).

T-shirts and Posters Available



The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp has created a t-shirt with the 2014-2015 image of the Stamp. The stamp image, reproduced here, shows a pair of Canvasbacks painted by Adam Grimm.

Through the t-shirt, we wish to spread the word about the unique role that the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp provides. Basically, we have a simple goal in producing the t-shirt: to increase the appreciation and sales of

the stamp.

The t-shirt comes in five standard sizes (S, M, L, XL, and XXL), and it comes in two colors (Cardinal Red and Dark Chocolate). And the cost is \$23.49 (any size and including shipping anywhere in the U.S.). You can find more details and order your own t-shirts by [using this form](#).

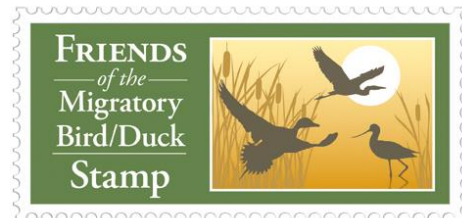
By using the 2014-2015 stamp image on this t-shirt, our Friends acts as a Nonexclusive Licensee of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, with the Stamp design the property of the United States Government. Also, as part of our use of the stamp image, five percent (5%) of the price of this t-shirt 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!

We also have an interesting [poster](#) available, displaying all the Federal stamps from 1934 to 2013. We have a small supply of these laminated posters. If you want one, simply send the Friends (address on the very bottom of this *Wingtips*) a check for \$15 with a note that you want a poster.

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, 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.

[Buy a Stamp. Join the Friends Group!](#)

Sharing and Adapting Our Content



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