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WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

A Stamp Success Story



Blackwater NWR with a distant pair of Bald Eagles
(Photo: John and Karen Hollingsworth)

In This Newsletter Issue

Stamp Success Story: Blackwater NWR

New Way to Support Jr. Duck Stamp

June 26 Release of New Stamp

Activities in September: Contest, Film

Quick Links

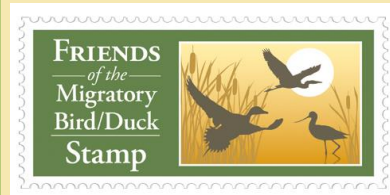
[Our Website](#)

[Resources](#)

[Join Us on Facebook](#)

[Support the Friends](#)

[Tweaking the Art Rules](#)



Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge, in Maryland

The Service's Region 5, in the Northeast, has many wonderful refuges. And [Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge](#) is one of the better-known refuges in the system, with its proximity to the Baltimore-Washington metro region and its depth and breadth of natural amenities. It's frequently named to [top 10 lists of favorite refuges](#). Situated on the Eastern Shore of Chesapeake Bay, the 1933-established refuge consists of 28,072 acres of forest, marsh, and shallow water in Dorchester County, Maryland, south of Cambridge. Often called "the Chesapeake's Everglades," Blackwater contains one-third of the state's tidal wetlands. What is less well-known about the refuge is that 73.0% of those acres were purchased with MBCF/Stamp funds.

Blackwater is managed as part of the Chesapeake Marshlands National Wildlife Refuge Complex,

which also includes Eastern Neck, Glenn Martin, and Susquehanna NWRs.

The refuge was one of those analyzed by Erin Carver and James Caudill in the [2013 report](#) by USFWS's Division of Economics, *Banking on Nature*. In 2011, Blackwater received 82 thousand visits, 80% of them by non-residents. The authors compute an annual "total economic effect" of \$3.7 million attributable to visitation by the public.

And there are certainly a number of activities for all those visitors to enjoy at the refuge. In addition to birding (70 thousand visits in 2011), Blackwater offers hiking and kayaking trails, a wildlife drive, limited hunting, and fishing and crabbing (from certain locations). In its 2006 [Comprehensive Conservation Plan](#) (CCP), staff called out environmental education, outreach, and interpretation activities as important management objectives.

Bird watching is a significant activity at Blackwater. The refuge is a major birding site on the Delmarva peninsula, and it is a regular stop for birders across the region.

Situated in the Atlantic Flyway, Blackwater fulfills a traditional NWR role of providing habitat for migrating and wintering ducks, geese, and other waterfowl. In addition, the property supports breeding Bald Eagles (it's in the greatest density of nesters north of Florida), Osprey, and long-lagged waders. The eagles are featured in an [annual festival](#); look for the next one in March.

Of special interest is the Delmarva Fox Squirrel (*Sciurus niger cinereus*) (DFS): listed as an Endangered Species, the DFS is endemic to the Eastern Shore, and its largest natural population lives at Blackwater. Management efforts have built the population back up to about 20,000.



Delmarva Fox Squirrel (Photo: USFWS)

Other conservation management concerns include the loss of tidal wetlands to a combination of subsidence (probably due to groundwater pumping), sea level rise, and other factors. The refuge's sheltered abundance has also entailed too much of a good thing. A decade-long [partnership to eradicate Nutria](#) (an exotic semi-aquatic rodent) from the Bay watershed is progressing. The CCP plans to reduce the resident Canada Goose population to its 1989 level and to extirpate the Mute Swan population.

Blackwater NWR is well-documented in film and in print. David W. Harp and Tom Horton's *The Great Marsh* is a handsome collection of photographs and essays about the place. USFWS, in collaboration with [Friends of Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge](#), released a [20-minute video](#) in 2005. And earlier this year, John Kelly [filmed his efforts](#) to observe the rare DFS.

A Great Way for You to Support the Jr. Duck Stamp Program



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

The good news is that the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp is now a registered charitable organization with AmazonSmile.

If you're a customer of Amazon.com, 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 Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program. This is an great way to benefit young wildlife artists and students of conservation while you shop.

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, birders, or Refuge Friends.

New Stamp to be Released on June 26th

The First Day of Sale for the 2015-2016 Federal and Junior Duck Stamps will be held Friday, June 26, at [Bass Pro Shops at the Pyramid](#) in Memphis, Tennessee. The event begins at 10 a.m. and is free and open to the public. The new stamps will be on sale and the new Federal and Junior Duck Stamp artists will be on hand to sign autographs.



This new Federal Duck Stamp (officially called the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp) will showcase Jennifer Miller's pair of Ruddy Ducks, shown on the right. This it will be the first stamp to cost \$25.

Mark the Date for Contest Activities: September 18-19

The 2015 Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest will be held on Friday and Saturday, September 18 and 19 at the National Conservation Training Center in Shepherdstown, West Virginia. The event is free and open to the public and begins at 10am (Eastern) each day. The contest will also be streamed live online. The USFWS will post a link to the broadcast on the Federal Duck Stamp webpage just prior to the start of the contest.

Also, there will be a free preview screening of new film on the Stamp, *The Million Dollar Duck*, on Friday, September 18th at the NCTC auditorium from 7-9pm. (This is not a premiere event but the creators of the film are confident that they will have a full version of the film by then. They are looking forward to seeing how the film plays to a significant audience.)

We will have more information on these September events on [our website](#) and in future issues of *Wingtips*.

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 to your colleagues and co-workers and to advance the message of the Friends.

You can also order our current 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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