

May 4, 2018



WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

MBCC SECURES MORE NWR HABITAT



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THANK YOU, SEN. COCHRAN

JUNIOR DUCK STAMP WINNER

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MIGRATORY BIRD CONSERVATION COMMISSION AT WORK

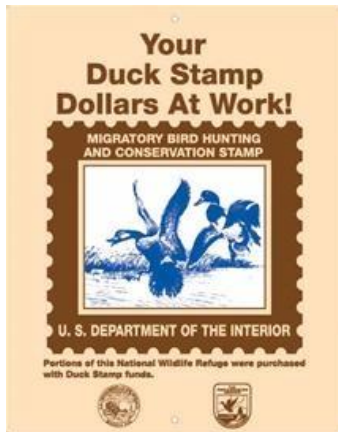
On April 25, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC) met in Washington D.C. to make a number of important decisions, including the investment of Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) dollars in new NWR habitat.

The commission approved almost \$9.8 million from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund to conserve 5,628 acres for two national wildlife refuges. These funds, of course, were raised largely through the sale of Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, commonly known as "Duck Stamps." The following two National Wildlife Refuges were approved for funding:

- Catahoula National Wildlife Refuge, Louisiana: \$6,787,800.
- Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge, Washington: \$3,003,000.

The Catahoula NWR project was directed toward preserving and restoring 4,113 acres of bottomland hardwood habitat for migratory waterfowl, including Mallards, Northern Pintails, Gadwalls, and nesting Wood Ducks. Of course, other species would also benefit through this activity, and this investment would maintain access for public recreational use and refuge management purposes.

At Turnbull NWR, 1,516 acres would be involved, directed to preserve wetland and upland habitats to benefit migrating, wintering, and breeding waterfowl and other migratory birds. Since 1987, the Service had managed this private property as part of the Refuge under a restrictive no-cost lease that prohibited any public access. Now, however, the USFWS would be able to restore and manage the property directly as habitat for wildlife and migratory waterfowl, including Mallards, Redheads, Gadwall, Cinnamon Teal, Wood Ducks, Ruddy Ducks, and Canada Geese. This would also would enable the Service to provide new public access and expand public recreational opportunities, including hunting (waterfowl and big game), wildlife observation, photography, and interpretation.



Residential development is spreading towards this area, just 16 miles south of Spokane. And, if the Service did not secure this property, the public would lose the opportunity to conserve and restore these crucial wetlands and expand recreational access.

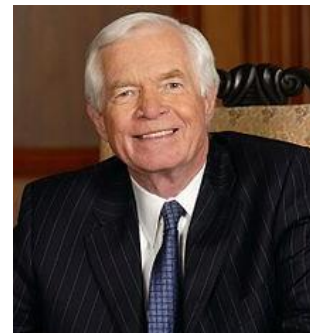
These decisions by the MBCC are proof-positive of "your Duck Stamp dollars at work," evidence that when you buy a Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp, the funds go to meaningful and long-term habitat conservation in the Refuge System.

Senator Thad Cochran: Celebrating a Workhorse for Conservation

By Ed Penny, Director of Public Policy for the Southern Regional Office of Ducks Unlimited (DU)

Senator Thad Cochran of Mississippi retired last month, on April 1. Described by his Senate colleagues as "a workhorse, not a show horse," Cochran was often quieter than his colleagues during many of the debates surrounding the hottest, most controversial issues in recent years. However, the senior Senator from Mississippi could always be relied upon for his knowledge and leadership in agriculture, conservation, and forestry. His consistent support for conservation was renowned.

Of course, migratory birds depend upon reliable and sustainable funding, and Sen. Cochran was always a champion for the cause. His legacy is demonstrated by his support for the vital network of National Wildlife Refuges and other public lands, the continued success of voluntary conservation programs in the Farm Bill, and in the recently reinforced funding for the programs that restore and enhance habitat for birds. Therefore, there is no doubt that Mississippi Senator Thad Cochran, former Chairman of the Appropriations Committee and former Chairman of the Committee on Agriculture, Forestry, and Nutrition, deserves to be called one of the most consistent and strongest congressional supporters for conservation in memory.



Sen. Cochran's influence on the Senate Agriculture and Appropriations Committees not only made a difference in my home state of Mississippi, but his impact made an enormous difference for birds and the places where we enjoy them. His service on both committees allowed him to work closely with his colleagues from across the country and across the political spectrum. His reputation of humble service also extended to the staff he assembled over the years. Staff turnover is an unavoidable fact of working on Capitol Hill, but from the year that he was first elected to the time of his retirement, his staff was always a steady and experienced presence in Congress. Their tireless dedication to these issues helped him build a deep and trusted knowledge of conservation and related issues. Now, his former staffers, many of them Mississippians, can go on to play a crucial role during future discussions over key conservation programs and their funding.

The Senator's service was exceptional in his role on the Senate Agriculture Committee. He worked hard to strengthen America's rural communities by developing and funding programs upon which farmers, ranchers, and landowners depend. In every Farm Bill debate, he was a solid guardian of wetlands because he recognized their importance to sustaining waterfowl and hunting traditions. One such example was his role in launching the Wetland Reserve Program (WRP), which continues in its present name as Wetland Reserve Easements (WRE). This program is responsible for restoring wetlands on over 700,000 acres of marginal farmland in the three states of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi and has protected over three million acres nationwide. The program is celebrating its 30-year anniversary this year. It continues to be extremely popular, as demand from landowners exceeds available funding. As Congress works to reauthorize the Farm Bill, WRE, and other related voluntary conservation programs over the next several months, Senator Cochran's wisdom and experience will be sorely missed.

Sen. Cochran's most recent accomplishment was leading the way to passage of the 2017-18 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Omnibus). The enormous and complicated spending package actually strengthened funding for Farm Bill conservation programs and the North American Wetland Conservation Act (NAWCA), which had both experienced reductions in funding over the last several years. During a time in which wins are few and far between, any modest increase should be considered a victory. This achievement would not have been possible without the leadership and hard work by Sen. Cochran and the staff of the Appropriations Committee.

Not only has he been a leader on important Senate committees, but Sen. Cochran retires as the longest-serving Senator on the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC) in its history, having served since 1982. The MBCC, of course, is responsible for overseeing land acquisition for the National Wildlife Refuge System through the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF - where Duck Stamp dollars are deposited). The MBCC is also responsible for overseeing NAWCA project funding.

Since Sen. Cochran's MBCC service began, the USFWS has used Duck Stamp dollars to conserve a total of 2,391,263 acres, including 709,128 acres in 131 national wildlife refuges spanning 39 states! These acres are secured for the National Wildlife Refuge system through direct acquisition or through the purchase of voluntary, perpetual conservation easements. And since the inception of NAWCA in 1989, Sen. Cochran and his colleagues have approved more than 2,644 projects that have conserved more than 33.4 million acres of bird habitat across North America. As such, Sen. Cochran's legacy includes an astounding 38,791,263 acres of wetland, bottomland, and grassland habitats protected for wildlife and for future generations.

Indeed, Senator Thad Cochran's quiet but distinguished record of conservation accomplishments during his long career in the Senate rivals other great leaders in conservation history. As a

Mississippian, I know what he has done for us in many areas, but as he quietly retires to his home after a career of public service, he should be also honored by all of us who treasure our migratory birds and their habitats. Sen. Cochran's career will undoubtedly be celebrated over the coming months, and the conservation community should be among those applauding him the loudest. With that in mind, we should also be actively cultivating the next generation in Congress to continue his quiet and effective legacy of making a difference for conservation.

Thank you, Senator Cochran!

Junior Duck Stamp Winner

Rayen Kang, an 18-year-old student from Johns Creek, Georgia, took top honors in the 2018 National Junior Duck Stamp Contest with a lovely painting of an Emperor Goose (shown here). Last month, in Bismarck, North Dakota, a panel of five judges chose her entry, painted in acrylics, from among the 53 best-of-show entries from all 50 states, Washington, D.C., Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands.



Students annually participate in the Junior Duck Stamp Program at school, at home, in after-school groups, and at refuges, parks, and nature centers. The top piece of art in the nation - which is chosen at this annual competition - is featured on the Junior Duck Stamp, sales of which support the educational efforts of the program.

Second place in this year's Junior Duck Stamp Contest went to Daniel Billings, 17, of Gallatin, Missouri, for his oil painting of a Redhead. And third place went to Larissa Weber, 17, of Anderson, Indiana, for an acrylic painting of a pair of Trumpeter Swans. More details, including related images, can be found on the USFWS [Duck Stamp Website](#).

Support 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.



Our membership is annual, corresponding to the year of validity for the Federal Duck Stamp, namely from the beginning of July to the end of the following June. Our "Regular Friend" fee is modest, only \$15, but all Friends are also asked to *pledge to buy TWO stamps per year*, joining with other organizations across the country in that effort.

You can access a secure online form to join the Friends - or to make a contribution - [via Razoo](#). Or you can access our simple mail-in [membership form](#).

We encourage you to commit yourself to the promotion of the Stamp program, the Friends, and smart conservation through the sales and promotion of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp.

And don't forget support for the Jr. Duck Stamp Program which reaches tens of thousands of youngsters. One way to help is described here, on the right, through AmazonSmile.

Shop at AmazonSmile
and Amazon will make
a donation to:

The Junior Duck Stamp Program
through our Friends

Get started

amazonsmile

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