

December 21, 2018



WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp

SO, WHERE IS THE BIG SIGN?



Fans and supporters of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp are regularly surprised when "the conversation" comes up. You know, that conversation about how many Duck Stamp dollars have gone to acquire important and popular refuges across the country.

Birders are usually unaware. Wildlife photographers don't know, either. You could easily say the same about anglers. Many hunters - even waterfowl hunters - are confused over where the money from Duck Stamps goes. And environmental educators basically don't have a clue. Of course, some Friends Group leaders have a good idea about where Stamp dollars have gone to acquire *their own* refuges, but they may only have a vague sense of Stamp investment, system-wide.

But even if the usual refuge visitors are also clueless when it comes to Duck Stamp investment, *it's not really their fault.*

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WHAT PERCENTAGE?

Here is an eye-opening sample list of just 30 of the 154 refuges across the country with at least 35% of the property acquired through MBCF/Stamp dollars

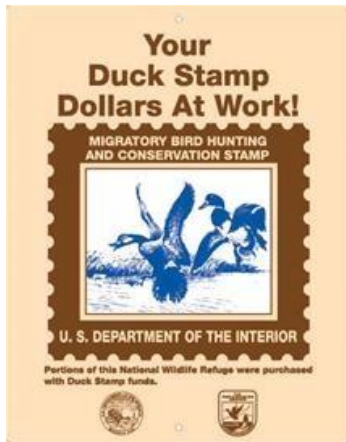
REFUGE

Tamarac (MN)	99.9%
Sacramento (CA)	99.6%
Bosque del Apache (NM)	99.2%
Pea Island (NC)	99.2%
Quivira (KS)	99.1%

The fact that 98% of the money collected for Stamps goes to fee-title acquisition and easements really needs to be promoted by the National Wildlife Refuge System itself.

And the details become impressive to visitors when they are informed that, say, 80% or 75% of the refuge they may be visiting is attributable to acquisition dollars from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF), where Stamp dollars are deposited.

So where is the bold refuge sign announcing that reality, that important fact? Of course, there are those excellent smaller signs on many refuges that read, "Your Duck Stamp Dollars at Work," but they are simply too vague, not specific enough.



Besides these small signs, it would be a good idea that if upon entering a refuge or near each visitor's center, there would be a standard sign, large but unobtrusive, with the percentage of MBCF dollars that went to secure that specific refuge.

Imagine, if you will, a large sign at the entrance of Edwin B. Forsythe NWR in New Jersey (the refuge pictured above) that announced to all:

Over 84% of this National Wildlife Refuge was acquired through the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, where the money from "Duck Stamps" is deposited.

And in smaller print on the sign, where appropriate:

You can buy your own Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp to further habitat acquisition in the Refuge System at our Visitors Center.

Muscatatuck (IN)	98.9%
Monomoy (MA)	98.8%
Horicon (WI)	98.7%
Parker River (MA)	97.7%
Bombay Hook (DE)	95.2%
Santa Ana (TX)	94.9%
DeSoto (IA & NE)	90.8%
Laguna Atascosa (TX)	86.3%
Montezuma (NY)	85.9%
Okefenokee (GA)	85.6%
Edwin B. Forsythe (NJ)	84.3%
Ottawa (OH)	83.8%
Anahuac (TX)	80.0%
Great Meadows (MA)	75.4%
Blackwater (MD)	73.7%
Chassahowitzka (FL)	73.1%
Cache River (AR)	70.4%
Chincoteague VA)	69.9%
Nisqually (WA)	56.3%
Seney (MI)	46.4%
Aransas (TX)	42.7%
Lake Umbagog (NH & ME)	42.2%
Cape May (NJ)	37.6%
Bear River (UT)	36.9%
J. Clark Salyer (ND)	36.5%

DID YOU KNOW?

1) The dollars reflected in the percentages above are from the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund (MBCF) where stamp dollars are the major, but not the only, contributor. A portion also comes from excise/import fees and some other minor sources. But the stamps are central to the MBCF.

2) Our three species of scoters have all appeared on the stamp, but only one time each: 1969-70 (White-winged Scoter by Maynard Reese), 1996-97 (Surf Scoter by Wilhelm Goebel), and

Or, perhaps use the word "continue" or "sustain" instead of "further." At this point, the exact wording is not crucial, *except* for the percentage number for each refuge. It's really the general message that counts. (And the use of the phrase, "Over 84%" or "Over 65%" or "Over 42%" can usually guarantee the effectiveness of the sign for a long, long time.)

But should every refuge that has made use of MBCF/Stamp dollars for acquisition be required to have such a sign? Perhaps not.

Maybe it's just the refuges that have, say, at least 35% of their properties attributed to the fund, that should have such signs. That 35% (i.e., over a third) may be a reasonable cut-off, and it would cover many of the most popular and much-visited refuges. A representative sample selection is included in the sidebar to the right.

You can find a fairly recent (developed in late 2016) [list of all the 250 refuges that can point to MBCF acquisition dollars](#) on the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission website. And of the 250 refuges in 45 states from this listing of MBCF/Stamp sourcing, 154 can point to having over 35% of the land secured from the Fund.

These signs don't have to be done all at once. The placement of signs could start with those NWRs with MBCF/Stamp acquisition above 97% and then go down the list. And perhaps the project could proceed with some creative matching funds. There are probably ways to start making this happen, even under tight budgets.

Still, shouldn't *all* of these 154 refuges eventually have large signs proclaiming their specific percentages? Today, when we need to spread appreciation and sales of the Stamp, is it really too much to expect?

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.

3) The last time that stamp sales topped the two-million mark was the 1980-1981 stamp, when 2,045,114 stamps were sold across the country.

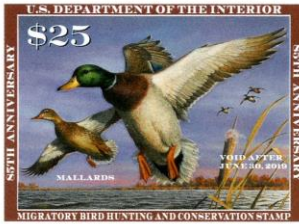
4) The first "certificates of appreciation" from the USFWS were sent to post-season purchasers of the 1959-1960 stamp. This was to reward buyers who bought the stamp after the hunting season was over. This was at a time when severe droughts were devastating waterfowl populations. The certificate was 5" x 7", printed in black and white on imitation parchment.

5) 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).

6) The first national Jr. Duck Stamp contest began with only eight states participating in 1993: Arkansas, California, Florida, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, South Dakota, and Vermont.

ORDER A STAMP THROUGH US

You can get your own current Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp at most large Post Offices, at many National Wildlife Refuges, and through a number of vendors.



If you want another easy way to get a current Stamp, send a check for \$25 made out to Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp, along with a *self-addressed stamped envelope* to us (at P.O. Box 2143, Columbia MD 21045), and a note with your phone number and your e-mail address in case there are any problems.

We'll send you the stamp ASAP... as long as our supply lasts!

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 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

WISHING YOU THE BEST!



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