



WINGTIPS

Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp



Sandhill Cranes at Bosque del Apache
NWR

PHOTO: John Fowler

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ART CONTEST RULE CHANGE

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has revised regulations governing the annual Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Contest, also known as the Federal Duck Stamp Contest. Beginning in 2020, the Contest will include a permanent theme of "celebrating our waterfowl hunting heritage," and it will be mandatory that each entry include an appropriate waterfowl hunting scene and/or accessory. Changes to design elements and judging requirements begin with the 2020 Contest.

[Read the Final Rule.](#)

Comments were received from twenty-seven organizations, including three of the Flyway Councils (Central, Atlantic, Pacific), The Trumpeter Swan Society, the American Birding Association, Audubon societies, ornithological societies, and National Wildlife Refuge Friends groups. Hunters, birders, scientists, artists, Stamp and art collectors, and many concerned with increasing land conservation submitted statements. Comments included concerns that sales of the Stamp would be hurt rather than encouraged, and that adding a mandatory hunting element would discourage purchases from non-hunters. Others cited that the proposal would have imposed restrictions on artists and the design of the artwork, would limit other artists or experts from serving as judges, and reduce the number of entries. Comments in support of the proposed rule stated that it was important and long overdue to recognize hunters' contributions to conservation and the waterfowl hunting heritage.

While we are disappointed by this decision, we extend many thanks to all of you who participated by submitting comments on the proposed rule.

We greatly appreciate the unwavering support of waterfowl and other hunters for the Stamp. Purchases from hunters have provided the greatest amount of dollars towards acquisition of

wetlands in America. We also wish to acknowledge and applaud the diverse group of supporters, who, in addition to hunters, purchase the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp each year.

However, the number of stamps purchased continues to decline. By buying a Stamp, you contribute to conservation. Some 1.5 million stamps are sold each year, and as of 2019, Federal Duck Stamps generated more than \$1.1 billion for the preservation of more than 6 million acres of waterfowl habitat in the United States. A current Federal Duck Stamp is also a free pass into any National Wildlife Refuge that otherwise charges an entry fee.

Please continue your support of this program by purchasing your 2020-2021 Stamp, starting June 26.

2020 Duck Stamp Art Contest Rules

Updated [rules for the 2020 art contest](#) have been posted by USFWS. Art entries will be accepted starting June 1 and must be postmarked by midnight August 15, 2020. The eligible species for the artwork this year are:

- Brant
- Gadwall
- Cinnamon Teal
- Lesser Scaup
- Red-breasted Merganser



CALENDAR

- The First Day of Sale is scheduled for June 26, 2020, in Spanish Fort, Alabama. Postal cancellations will take place. The local Bass Pro Shops store will host the event, but details of the event are to be announced and are subject to change.
- The 2020 Duck Stamp Art Contest is slated for September 25 and 26 at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa. Jay N. "Ding" Darling, a noted hunter and wildlife conservationist, was a nationally known political cartoonist for *The Des Moines Register*.

National Wildlife Refuge Lands: Open or Closed?

Now more than ever is the time to get outdoors and enjoy Refuge lands that have been purchased with your Duck Stamp dollars. Experiencing wildlife, open spaces, and the general comfort of the peaceful outdoors is something we can all benefit from in these health-stressing times.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has developed a section on their website to summarize which facilities are available. The Service says that they "are proud to provide opportunities for safe, enjoyable outdoor experiences ... during the coronavirus pandemic. While most visitor centers and other visitor services are temporarily unavailable, outdoor recreation areas and trails are generally

open during their regular operating hours."

The information is provided [by state and specific refuge](#). The list is updated daily, but the public is advised to contact the facility directly for the most current information.

Enjoy your refuge lands!

2020 JUNIOR DUCK STAMP WINNERS

This year's Junior Duck Stamp Contest, originally scheduled for April 17 in Westborough, Massachusetts, was instead held virtually. First place winner was Madison Grimm, 13, of South Dakota with her acrylic rendition of a Wood Duck. Her art will be made into the 2020-2021 Junior Duck Stamp, which goes on sale June 26. Chowon Kim, 17, of New York, took second place with an acrylic rendition of a Hooded Merganser. Meijia Tang, 16, of Maryland, took third place in the Contest with an acrylic and oil rendition of Northern Pintails.

The Conservation Message Contest in this year's contest was won by Abby Gilreath, 16, of Nebraska, for this message: "When we practice conservation, we protect not only our wildlife but our health and environment for future generations." Congratulations to Madison Grimm, Chowon Kim, Meijia Tang, and Abby Gilreath!

All native waterfowl species are eligible subjects for Junior Duck entries. The recent revised regulations governing the Federal Duck Stamp Contest to include a permanent theme of "celebrating our waterfowl hunting heritage," and making mandatory that each entry include an appropriate waterfowl hunting scene and/or accessory, do not apply to the Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest.

Proceeds from the sale of Junior Duck Stamps support the program. You can purchase them at [various outlets listed by USFWS](#), the [USPS Postal Store](#), and some National Wildlife Refuges.

Read the full [press release](#) about this year's contest, or learn more about the [Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program](#).

Next year's Junior Duck Stamp Contest, is tentatively scheduled for April 16, 2021, in Westborough, Massachusetts.



Wood Duck by Madison Grimm



Hooded Merganser by Chowan Kim



Northern Pintails by Meijia Tang

IMAGES: USFWS

Stamp Success Story Revisited: Bosque del Apache NWR

In 2013, we began a tour of National Wildlife Refuges that have benefited from Duck Stamp funds. We'll be revisiting some of those refuges in the coming issues, updating links and statistics.

Our tour of National Wildlife Refuges brings us to New Mexico's [Bosque del Apache NWR](#). Known to many as simply "the Bosque," the refuge is located on the northern edge of the Chihuahuan Desert and consists of more than 57,000 acres along the Rio Grande. The heart of the Refuge is 13,000 acres of moist bottomlands -- active floodplain and areas where water is diverted to create extensive wetlands, farmlands, and riparian forests. The surrounding uplands are arid foothills and mesas, rising from a floodplain elevation of 4,500 feet to the Chupadera Mountains on the west (peak elev. 6,272 feet) and the San Pascual Mountains on the east.

The refuge's name translates as "Woods of the Apache." Native Americans often camped in this riverside forest. The area was occupied by Pueblo peoples; in the 16th century, it was explored by the Spanish, who built a Camino Real from Mexico City to Santa Fe through the refuge's territory. The first water impoundments were constructed in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps, and the refuge was officially established in 1939.

The rock star of the refuge's wildlife is the Sandhill Crane (*Grus canadensis*). Up to 17,000 of these stately birds spend the winter at the Bosque. Attendees of the annual [Festival of the Cranes](#), based in nearby Socorro and hosted by the [Friends](#) group, enjoy lectures, tours, and workshops. (Unfortunately, this year's festival has been [canceled](#).)



At the same time, a blizzard of geese can accompany the cranes: Snow, Ross's, Canada, Cackling, and Greater White-fronted Geese. Gambel's Quail and Greater Roadrunner are two more specialty birds of the refuge. Among mammals, the refuge's [wildlife checklist](#) lists Mule Deer as common and Javelina as fairly common.

The refuge has been host to a range of [research and monitoring projects](#): exploring water use by phreatophyte plant communities (like cottonwoods), monitoring a subspecies of [Meadow Jumping Mouse](#) (*Zapus hudsonius luteus*) (endangered in New Mexico), analyzing earthquakes along an active fault that crosses the property, and using [aerial imaging](#) to count migratory waterfowl. A 17-minute video highlights the ["intensive habitat engineering"](#) that is part of the job of managing the refuge.

Finally, stamp supporters should all know how much of the Bosque del Apache NWR was acquired through the MBCF/Stamp funding. It has been an amazing 99.2 percent!

A version of this Stamp success story originally appeared in the 9 October 2013 issue of Wingtips.

PHOTO: [Gambel's Quail](#), by [Andy Reago & Chrissy McClarren](#) [CC BY 2.0](#)

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