

This Day in History... March 16, 1934

Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act

On March 16, 1934, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, creating America's popular Duck Stamps.

Overhunting and a severe drought led to a rapid decrease in migratory birds in the early 1900s. The loss of nesting grounds in the north, resting areas along the migratory path, and wintering places in the south all contributed to the decline in the migratory bird population.



Stamp issued for the 50th anniversary of the act.

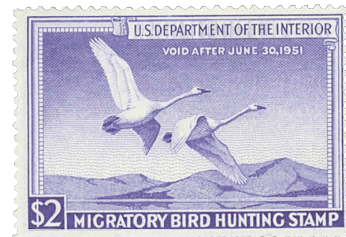


The first Duck stamp, and was designed by Jay Darling.

President Herbert Hoover signed the Migratory Bird Conservation Act in 1929. This created a commission to evaluate the establishment of new waterfowl refuges, but didn't grant funds to buy and preserve these wetlands.

Famous cartoonist and conservationist Jay N. Darling soon grew concerned over the decreased bird habitats and potential extinction of several species. He began to incorporate the ideas of wildlife conservation into some of his cartoons. He gained attention for the cause and was made chief of the Biological Service – a forerunner to the Fish and Wildlife Service. In this role, he developed the idea of issuing Duck Stamps to raise money for the purchase of wetlands.

Darling then petitioned Congress to create legislation authorizing the creation of these stamps to fund waterfowl protection. As a result, they passed the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, which President Franklin Roosevelt signed into law on March 16, 1934.



The first Duck stamp design selected by a public contest.

The act authorized the issuance of an annual stamp, which outdoorsmen age 16 and up were required to have in order to hunt migratory birds. The funds raised by the sale of these "Duck" stamps were then placed in the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund.



The first multi-colored Duck stamp, issued in 1959.

As an artist and driving force behind their creation, Darling took it upon himself to create the first design – a \$1.00 stamp that pictured two mallards preparing to land. The stamp was issued on July 1, 1934. That first year alone, sales of the stamp raised \$635,000 for wetland conservation.



The first Duck stamp printed by intaglio and offset.

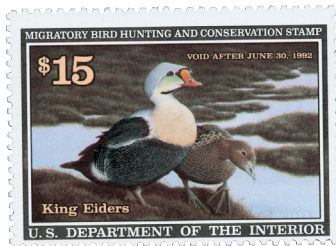
The beauty and novelty of this new stamp immediately appealed to stamp collectors,

This Day in History... March 16, 1934 continued

and the desire to own one became widespread. The government was unyielding, however. The stamp was for hunters only, not for collectors. It had to be attached to a license, signed, and kept intact for one year. But the collectors would not give up, and fifteen days before the first stamps expired, they were placed on sale for stamp enthusiasts.

For the next several years, the artwork for Duck Stamps was commissioned. But that changed in 1949 when designer Bob Hines (creator of the 1946-47 issue) suggested the idea for a contest, which has proven quite popular.

When originally purchased, ninety-eight cents of each dollar spent on the license went to wetland conservation. Since the program's start, more than \$1 billion has been used to purchase or lease over 6 million acres of waterfowl habitat. This land is now protected through the US Fish and Wildlife Service's National Wildlife Refuge System. These areas benefit migrating waterfowl such as geese and ducks, but mammals, fish, reptiles, and amphibians living in the wetlands also flourish because of this program.



The first Duck stamp painted by a female artist, Nancy Howe.

Bird hunters are not the only ones who purchase Duck Stamps. Bird watchers and other nature lovers gain free annual admission to the refuges when they buy a stamp from a sporting goods store or a post office. Conservationists know that a large portion of the purchase price goes to investing in America's wetlands. Collectors buy these stamps because of the high-quality artwork pictured.



Stamp commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Duck stamp program.



2018 was the first year that both the pane and the single stamp were self-adhesive.

The New Federal Duck Stamp Self Adhesive Single



...presented by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service


\$500 MILLION
in Duck Stamps since 1934 have purchased

5 MILLION ACRES...
an area the size of Massachusetts!

98% OF DUCK STAMP DOLLARS
purchase wetlands and other wildlife habitat.

Help conserve America's natural heritage
Do your part - Buy Duck Stamps!



If applicable, sign, peel and attach to license

Since 1998, Duck stamps have also been issued in self-adhesive dollar-bill-size panes so they could fit securely in the cash drawers of Walmart's sporting goods departments.

Mystic Stamp Company • Camden, NY 13316

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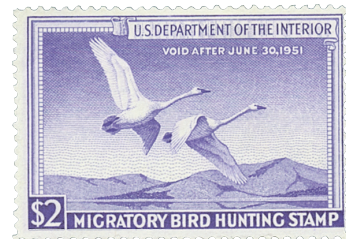


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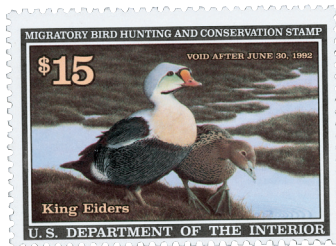
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