

DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

FEATURE

For Release April 5, 1972

Saults 343-5634

MISSISSIPPI FLYWAY TOPS DUCK STAMP SALES FOR 39 YEARS

During the 39 years in which Migratory Bird Hunting Stamps (duck stamps) have been required for waterfowl gunning, the 14 States of the Mississippi Flyway have consistently supplied close to half of the total stamp sales. And Minnesota has been the stamp sales leader of that flyway; in all those years, it sold more duck stamps and thus could boast the most duck hunters every season except 1955-56. That year Michigan bought 146,000 to Minnesota's 132,000.

Little nuggets of statistical information like that are scattered through the numerical ore of a report by the Fish and Wildlife Service covering duck stamp sales in the period between their start in 1934 to the last full fiscal year that ended last June 30.

Examples: For the '34-'35 season, when the stamp cost \$1, the Mississippi Flyway bought 266,649 stamps; the three other flyways together totaled 368,352. By 1940, the Mississippi had 567,000 of the national total of 1,260,000. And it was in the same relative position for the 1970-71 season: 1,005,000 of the record 2,420,000 total.

But recently, California in the Pacific Flyway has been the leading stamp buyer: 189,000 last year to 174,000 for Minnesota. California led them all in '68-'69 and '69-'70, too. As Minnesotans point out, California also has five times their population and a more moderate climate for being in the duck blind.

It's hard to find anything else that's very consistent in the figures except for fluctuation. The '70-'71 season set a record for sales, but the previous record was set in '57-'58 at 2,355,000, only 65,000 less than last year. And as recently as '62-'63, sales were only 1,147,500, the lowest since 1939-40.

Fish and Wildlife Service technicians have long known that fall flight forecasts and the hunting restrictions that follow a poor nesting season bring a sharp drop in waterfowl permit sales. All proceeds from the duck stamp go into the purchase of waterfowl habitat in the U.S.

Starting out at \$1, the duck stamp was raised to \$2 in 1949, to \$3 in 1959, and will cost \$5 for the 1972-73 season, in a sequence that reflects the cost of land.

The fluctuations of income caused by the rise and fall of stamp sales, combined with those rising land values, caused Congress to authorize an advance of \$105 million against annual receipts from sales in 1961, with the funding to be spread over the years from fiscal 1962 through fiscal 1976. This authorization must be repaid to the Treasury after that, at the rate of 75 percent of annual receipts from sales.

In the past, when prices for stamps were raised, the sales fell off, then came back to "normal" within a couple of years. "Normal" means, of course, that sales again line up with the breeding season forecasts. The forecasts are based upon extensive summer nesting surveys by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and Canadian Wildlife Service. Ducks Unlimited, the highly active private organization of waterfowlers, also participates in the survey.

Estimates of duck stamp sales for the current fiscal year ending June 30 are that they will be on par with last year's record, perhaps slightly less. And fiscal '73 sales, with the new \$5 package, should drop somewhat even if there is a good nesting season in Alaska, the Canadian prairies and in U.S. pothole country--and may drop sharply if the fall flight forecast is gloomy, come the August end of summer-long surveys.

The duck stamp sales by States for fiscal 1971, the last complete year, were:

ATLANTIC FLYWAY

Connecticut -----	15,779
Delaware -----	12,503
D.C. -----	2,274
Florida -----	44,543
Georgia -----	14,005
Maine -----	18,182
Maryland -----	36,090
Massachusetts -----	29,993
New Hampshire -----	9,880
New Jersey -----	35,002
New York -----	108,582
North Carolina -----	31,730
Pennsylvania -----	81,074
Rhode Island -----	3,509
South Carolina -----	21,659
Vermont -----	7,435
Virginia -----	22,044
West Virginia -----	2,103
Puerto Rico -----	860

MISSISSIPPI FLYWAY

Alabama -----	16,933
Arkansas -----	56,108
Illinois -----	83,982
Indiana -----	29,352
Iowa -----	65,822
Kentucky -----	10,608
Louisiana -----	129,046
Michigan -----	131,404
Minnesota -----	173,877
Mississippi -----	26,526
Missouri -----	58,452
Ohio -----	43,508
Tennessee -----	28,123
Wisconsin -----	151,524

CENTRAL FLYWAY

Colorado -----	41,229
Kansas -----	60,633
Montana -----	28,344
Nebraska -----	48,774
New Mexico -----	6,607
North Dakota -----	50,015
Oklahoma -----	34,184
South Dakota -----	41,220
Texas -----	144,932
Wyoming -----	8,137

PACIFIC FLYWAY

Alaska -----	12,936
Arizona -----	14,199
California -----	188,861
Idaho -----	31,768
Nevada -----	14,361
Oregon -----	61,343
Utah -----	35,946
Washington -----	84,112
Hawaii -----	15