

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

news release

For Release November 15, 1978

David Klinger 202/343-5634

## TEMPERA PAINTING OF GREEN-WINGED TEAL WINS 1979-80 DUCK STAMP CONTEST

A colorful close-up of a pair of green-winged teal ducks on the water painted by Kenneth L. Michaelsen of Ft. Bragg, California, has won the 1979-80 Duck Stamp competition at the Interior Department in Washington, D.C.

Michaelsen's design will be reproduced on next year's Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp purchased by waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older, conservationists, and philatelists. Revenues from sales of the Duck Stamp are used to buy additional wildlife habitat under a program administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

Michaelsen, 42, is a professional wildlife artist who won the 1978-79 California State duck stamp contest with his painting of hooded mergansers. This was the first time that he had entered the Federal Duck Stamp competition.

Michaelsen, whose father is also an artist, began his interest in art as a child and went on to study at the San Francisco Academy of Art. At that time he was also employed as a staff artist for the San Jose (Calif.) Mercury/News. He also served 4 years in the U.S. Air Force as an artist making training aids for cadet students.

The artist was employed for 15 years as a commercial illustrator, and began his interest in wildlife art in the early 1970's. About 5 years ago, in his own words, "I made a decision that I wasn't going to do anything but wildlife art. I dropped out of commercial art."

He has exhibited his work in two California galleries and at one in Richmond, Virginia. Michaelsen's wildlife art has also appeared in science textbooks produced by a national publishing house. He recently traveled the Baja California Peninsula in Mexico with a group of naturalists and conservationists in a photographic expedition.

To produce his fine-ground tempera painting of a green-winged teal drake (male) and hen, Michaelsen used a medium called "gouache" which is a mixture of opaque colors ground in water and mingled with a gum preparation. Michaelsen was most concerned with showing the coloration and detail of this small duck, which is also one of the most common varieties.

The green-winged teal, because of its small size, gives the impression of great speed in flight, although mallards fly faster. Teals' flight is often low and erratic, with the entire flock twisting and turning as a unit.

(more)

It is a hardy variety of duck, some birds wintering as far north as open water is found. The nest as far north as Alaska and migrate in all four flyways.

Contest applicants were allowed only one entry each. A panel of five judges, made up of prominent artists and conservationists, included Ray Arnett, former director of the California Department of Fish and Game; Franklin Bruns, curator of philately for the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and stamp columnist for the Washington Post; Sheila Link, outdoor writer and consultant for the National Rifle Association of America; William Vogt, outdoor writer associated with the National Wildlife Federation; and Albert Earl Gilbert, wildlife artist and designer of the 1978 Duck Stamp.

Frank Sharpless, foreman of engravers, Bureau of Engraving and Printing, Treasury Department, served as consultant to the judges.

Michaelsen's work won over 373 other entries, a record number for the Duck Stamp contest. The entries are judged on the basis of immediate visual impact, composition and design, style, lasting first impression, and distinctiveness. Each category is assigned equal weight in the judging.

Prior to 1949, wildlife artists were commissioned to provide a design for the annual stamp. Since that time, the design has been chosen by a contest open to all artists who are residents or citizens of the United States. The prestige of winning the contest has enhanced the reputation of established artists and has elevated otherwise unknown artists to public acclaim. The winner's financial reward is also significant. The Federal Government offers no prize, but commercial wildlife art dealers in the past have been eager to market limited edition reprints for the winner.

The annual competition is the only art contest regularly sponsored by the Federal Government. The colorful stamps constitute the longest running, annually issued series of stamps in U.S. revenue or postage stamp history.

Since 1934 when Duck Stamps first went on sale, over \$200 million in revenue has been collected and used for the acquisition of 2.2 million acres of prime waterfowl habitat. By purchasing the stamps, more than 2.4 million conservationists annually provide close to \$12 million in revenue.

The Interior Department encourages non-hunters who also enjoy the wildlife resource through photography, birdwatching, and other activities to contribute to the U.S. conservation effort by buying a stamp.

Next year's issue will go on sale at post offices on July 1, 1979.

x x x

EDITORS: Black and white glossies are available by calling 202/343-8770.

