



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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PRESIDENT REAGAN AND CONGRESS DECLARE 1984 "GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY YEAR OF THE DUCK STAMP"

Secretary of the Interior William Clark praised President Reagan's signing of a special proclamation designating the first week of July as "National Duck Stamp Week" and 1984 as the "Golden Anniversary Year of the Duck Stamp" during a ceremony held today in the White House Rose Garden. Clark also applauded Congressional passage of a joint resolution marking the events.

"The ceremony and passage of the resolution by Congress recognize one of the most important Federal conservation efforts — one that for 50 years has been saving vital wetland areas so important to this Nation's wildlife heritage," Secretary Clark said.

Duck Stamps (formally known as Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps) are required of all waterfowl hunters 16 years of age or older. Since the program began in 1934, nearly 89 million Duck Stamps have been sold, providing \$285 million for the purchase of 3.5 million acres of habitat on 186 national wildlife refuges and many waterfowl production areas.

"Wetlands were once considered wastelands," Secretary Clark said. "Fortunately, that attitude is changing as more and more Americans — whether they are campers, birdwatchers, nature photographers, hunters, or fishermen — realize the unique value of these special places. The purchase of a Duck Stamp is one way in which all Americans can participate directly in the preservation of this Nation's wetland habitat and the wildlife dependent upon it."

The Duck Stamp program was put into effect in 1934 through the efforts of nationally known cartoonist and conservationist J.N. "Ding" Darling. During those early years, ducks, geese, and other migratory waterfowl were threatened by drought and loss of wetland nesting habitat to agriculture. Darling, an Iowan, wanted to provide a dependable source of funding to preserve this habitat and the Duck Stamp program proved to be the key. While aimed primarily at waterfowl, wetland areas acquired from Duck Stamp funds also benefit many other kinds of fish and wildlife.

The 50th anniversary Duck Stamp for 1984-1985 went on sale for \$7.50 at most post offices and selected national wildlife refuges July 2, 1984.