



# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

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**MINNESOTA ARTISTS SWEEP FEDERAL DUCK STAMP COMPETITION;**  
**Daniel Smith of Eden Prairie Takes First Place**

Not only have the Minnesota Twins taken the baseball world by storm, Minnesota artists swept the top three places in the prestigious annual Federal Duck Stamp Contest November 10, at the Department of the Interior in Washington, DC.

Daniel Smith of Eden Prairie, Minnesota, took top honors this year with his striking rendition of a single lesser snow goose flying over a marsh at dawn's first light.

Second- and third-place winners were decided after a three-way tie was finally broken following three rounds of tough decision-making. Second place was captured by James Meger of Edina, Minnesota, with his acrylic painting of a pair of blue-phase lesser snow geese flying over water; and third place honors went to Jim Hautman of St. Louis Park, Minnesota, for his acrylic painting of a pair of bufflehead ducks, also flying over water.

"This is one of the biggest honors I've ever had," said Smith when he learned through a phone call from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Frank Dunkle that he had won the contest. And Smith, 33, already has earned many honors in the wildlife art world, from winning numerous State stamp design competitions to illustrating five pages of National Geographic's Guide to North American Birds.

In announcing the winners of the contest, Dunkle called the Duck Stamp the mainstay of Federal waterfowl conservation efforts. "Today, as the United States and Canada are working together through the North American Waterfowl Management Plan to restore waterfowl populations, the Duck Stamp will be even more important in conserving vital U.S. habitat areas," he said.

Smith has entered the Federal Duck Stamp contest annually since 1980, when he placed second. Subsequent tries put him in the top five an additional four times. All but one of his entries featured snow geese, usually in pairs and typically flying against a dark, stormy background.

"I had been working on contrast, the white birds against a dark sky," Smith said, "but this year, I wanted to try something different. I focused on stronger color combinations, and tried a single bird." He prefers painting white birds because the absence of color allows him to concentrate on form and structure and the effects of light and shadow.

A professional wildlife artist, Smith's work has been featured on wildlife conservation stamps in six States, including two of Minnesota's five Pheasant Habitat Stamps, selected in a competition much like the Federal Duck Stamp Contest. He was the featured artist for the 1987 Minnesota Wildlife Heritage Show and will be the featured artist for the National Wildlife Art Collectors Society show to be held in Minneapolis next spring.

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A native of Minnesota, Smith developed his appreciation for wildlife at an early age during hunting trips with his father. He was born in Mankato and received his formal art training at the Mankato Area Vocational School.

The lesser snow goose depicted in Smith's painting can be distinguished from the greater snow goose by its smaller size and unique two color phases. The white phase is distinguished by a white body contrasting with black outer wing-tips. In the blue phase, the adults have white or partially rusty-stained heads, white upper necks, and slightly grayish bodies with varying amounts of white on the bellies. The wing is pearl-gray with black primary flight feathers. Both phases have pink bills with black chin patches.

Waterfowl hunters 16 years of age and older must purchase the Federal Duck Stamp each year. The stamps are also purchased by many stamp collectors and non-hunting conservationists to support wetlands acquisition through the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund. More than 94 million Duck Stamps have been sold since 1934, providing more than \$325 million for the purchase of close to 4 million acres of prime wetland habitat for waterfowl and other species.

Judges for this year's competition were Sheldon Coleman, chief executive officer of the Coleman Company, Inc., and a member of the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, Wichita, Kansas; James Eckes, art director for OUTDOOR LIFE Magazine in New York City; wildlife art collector Kenneth Hofmann, of Hofmann, Inc., a building and development firm in Concord, California; Janet Manley, a Montana rancher, conservationist, and Duck Stamp collector; and Andrew McGivern, curator of exhibitions for Leigh Yawkey Woodson Art Museum in Wausau, Wisconsin. The alternate judge was Joan Love Allemand, an art educator and administrator from Beverly Hills, California.

The Duck Stamp has been issued annually by the Federal Government since 1934 when J.N. "Ding" Darling's drawing of a pair of mallards in flight became the first design for the stamp. Subsequent artwork was commissioned until the contest began in 1949. That year, eight waterfowl designs were submitted for the competition. This year, 844 wildlife artists vied for the honor of winning what has become the Nation's premier waterfowl art competition.

The Federal Government offers no monetary prize or award to the winner other than a sheet of the following year's Duck Stamps bearing his or her design and autographed by the Secretary of the Interior. However, commercial wildlife art dealers usually are eager to market limited-edition prints under private agreements with the winner. Through this contest, the reputations of previously unknown wildlife artists have been established and those of professionals considerably enhanced.

Duck Stamp Contest rules and regulations are published each spring in the Federal Register. They are also available from the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Contest Office, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Department of the Interior, 18th and C Streets, NW., Washington, DC 20240. Prospective entrants are urged to read the regulations carefully as they are subject to change from year to year.

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NOTE TO EDITORS: Single black-and-white glossy prints of this year's design are available on a loan basis by calling 202-343-5611.

