



DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

news release

Fish and Wildlife Service

October 18, 1996

Janet Tennyson 202-208-5634
Hugh Vickery 202-208-5634

ROBERT HAUTMAN COMPLETES FAMILY HAT-TRICK WINNING 1996 FEDERAL DUCK STAMP CONTEST

A remarkable family reign continued at this year's Federal Duck Stamp Contest as Robert Hautman of Plymouth, Minnesota, became the third of three brothers to win the prestigious competition, taking top honors with an acrylic painting of a single Canada goose in a wetland habitat.

Hautman's work was chosen best of 477 entries in the annual contest and will appear on the 1997-1998 Federal Duck Stamp. Money from the sale of the stamp is used to purchase and protect vital wetlands for waterfowl and numerous other species. These lands become part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, the world's largest and most diverse collection of lands and water dedicated to wildlife.

In recent years, Hautman played runner-up to other winners, including brothers Joe and Jim. A finalist in five previous contests, he placed second in 1994 behind younger brother Jim with a similar design featuring a single Canada goose. In fact, the only major difference in this year's winning design is wetland habitat added to the background.

"The Canada goose is such a majestic bird I wanted to paint a much simpler stamp--the bird makes for a good stamp standing alone," Hautman said.

The Hautman reign began in 1989 when Jim won the contest for the first time. Joe Hautman won the 1991 contest and Jim won again in 1994. Throughout the years, all three Hautman brothers have consistently been finalists in the competition.

Asked to explain the family secret, Bob Hautman said, "Each year the contest is different but what it always takes to win is hard work and spending many hours in the field observing ducks and geese. I am always going out to watch them. Often I'll just stop my car and get out and watch. There are certain things about birds you simply can't see by looking at photographs."

The best thing about winning after so many near-misses? "People will stop saying, 'Next year it's your turn to win,'" he said.

Second place in this year's contest went to Hank Buffington of Stockton, New Jersey, for a portrayal of a single pintail on water. Third place went to past winner Bruce Miller of Mound, Minnesota, for his acrylic painting of two pintails in a wetland habitat.

The Canada goose is the most identifiable goose species to many Americans because of its distinctive appearance and honking call. It is a large goose with a white check patch that usually covers the throat on an otherwise black neck and head.

Waterfowl hunters over 16 years of age must purchase the Federal Duck Stamp (formally known as the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp) every year. Duck Stamps currently cost \$15 and are available at most U.S. Post Offices, national wildlife refuges, and some sporting goods stores.

Ninety-eight cents of every Duck Stamp dollar is used for acquiring wetland habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System. To date, the more than \$500 million raised from Duck Stamp sales has been used to acquire more than 4.5 million acres of wetlands for the refuge system.

"All you have to do is look skyward this fall to see the good that Federal Duck Stamps do," said John Garamendi, Deputy Secretary of the Interior, who announced this year's winner. "Thanks in part to wetlands purchased with Duck Stamp funds, the fall duck migration will be the largest ever recorded."

Duck Stamps have become increasingly popular among stamp collectors, wildlife artists, and conservationists. In fact, the Smithsonian Institution's National Postal Museum in Washington, DC, recently opened a permanent exhibit honoring the Duck Stamp. Duck Stamp purchases by non-hunters have risen from 3 percent to 10 percent of all Duck Stamp sales in recent years.

The Federal Duck Stamp has been issued annually since 1934 when J.N. "Ding" Darling, chief of the Service's predecessor agency, the U.S. Biological Survey, designed the first stamp. Artwork for Duck Stamps was commissioned until 1949 when the Service began sponsoring annual contests to select the design.

Other species eligible for portrayal this year were the greater scaup, green-winged teal, black duck, and northern pintail.

The 1997-1998 Federal Duck Stamp will go on sale nationwide July 1, 1997.

Hautman's home state of Minnesota is a big state for ducks and Federal Duck Stamp artists. The Federal Duck Stamp has made a major impact in the state and Minnesotans, in turn, have been

leading contributors to the program. Minnesotans purchase an average of about 10 percent of all Duck Stamps sold in a year.

Twelve Duck Stamp artists have been born and raised in Minnesota or resided in the state at one time, three of whom have won the contest more than once.

Recently, all past Federal Duck Stamp artists from Minnesota joined with local conservation groups to launch an innovative fundraising effort to boost Service wetlands restoration efforts. The artists hold fundraising events at which they donate framed prints of their artwork for sale, giving the proceeds to the Service's Partners for Wildlife Program, a cooperative effort with private landowners who wish to restore habitat on their property.

Minnesota is part of the Prairie Pothole Region of the continent, which supports about 75 percent of the Nation's entire breeding duck population. The Service manages more than 511,000 acres of habitat in the State of Minnesota, about 85 percent of which has been acquire with Duck Stamp dollars.

Four of Minnesota's 11 national wildlife refuges, encompassing 74,000 of the total of 208,000 acres of refuge lands in the state, have been acquired using Duck Stamp revenues. In addition, Minnesota has 805 waterfowl production areas comprising 168,000 acres that have been acquired entirely with Duck Stamp dollars. Waterfowl production areas are small natural wetlands with associated uplands located mainly in the Prairie Pothole Region of the upper Midwest.

More information about the Federal Duck Stamp Program can be found at <http://www.fws.gov> on the Internet, then click on Servers Organized by Office.

-FWS-

Note: Black-and-white glossy photographs are available on loan to editors from the Fish and Wildlife Service. Contact Janet Tennyson at 202-208-5634.

