



NEWS

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U.S. FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE SET TO UNVEIL 1997-98 FEDERAL DUCK STAMP

Breaking with tradition for a second year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will unveil the new 1997-98 Federal Duck Stamp June 21, 1997, at the Hilton Hotel in McLean, Virginia, in conjunction with the North American Philatelic Exhibitions (NAPEX) stamp show.

Another ceremony to showcase the new Duck Stamp and honor its creator, Robert Hautman of Plymouth, Minnesota, will be held July 19, 1997, at the Convention Center in Minneapolis, during Minnesota Stamp Expo '97. The 1997-98 Federal Duck Stamp goes on sale nationwide for \$15 on July 1.

"As we come together again this year to commemorate the Federal Duck Stamp, one of this agency's most successful conservation programs, it is only fitting that we do so along with some of the millions of stamp enthusiasts who support the program year after year," said Acting Service Director John Rogers. "And I am pleased to be honoring yet another member of the talented Hautman family, Robert Hautman."

The ceremony at the McLean Hilton begins at 10 a.m. and will be hosted by Acting Service Director John Rogers and Larry Rolufs, the director of the Bureau of Engraving and Printing. The five-member panel of 1996 Federal Duck Stamp judges, which includes conservationists, artists, writers, and the grandson of J.N. "Ding" Darling, the founder of the Federal Duck Stamp Program, will also be on hand.

At the ceremony, the Service will present its National Wetlands Conservation Award to the Private Sector, given each year to recognize outstanding contributions to wetlands conservation. Two winners, one individual and one organization, will be recognized.

The July 19 event honoring Robert Hautman will begin at 10 a.m. and also feature sales of 1997-98 Duck Stamp and a variety of Duck Stamp products. Robert Hautman will appear at both the Virginia and Minnesota ceremonies to autograph current Duck Stamps and Duck Stamp products. Artists Commemorative Issues bearing the outgoing 1994-95 Duck Stamp by Neal Anderson and the

incoming 1997-98 Duck Stamp will be available. This is the last time the 1994-95 Duck Stamp will be sold, as Duck Stamps are only available for 3 years after issue.

Federal Duck Stamps, formally known as Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps, must be purchased annually by waterfowl hunters age 16 and older. However they are also purchased by a growing number of stamp collectors and conservationists as a way to contribute to wildlife and habitat conservation.

Ninety-eight cents of every Duck Stamp dollar is used to acquire wetlands for the National Wildlife Refuge System, a unique national network of public lands and waters set aside for the conservation of fish and wildlife and their habitat. Since 1934 when the Duck Stamp was created, stamp sales have raised more than \$500 million for the purchase of more than 4.5 million acres of habitat for the 509 national wildlife refuges nationwide.

Duck Stamps are sold for \$15 at most U.S. Post Offices, national wildlife refuges, sporting goods stores, and K-Mart and Wal-Mart stores. They cost \$1 when they were first sold in 1934.

The 1997-98 Federal Duck Stamp features a single Canada goose in a wetlands setting. The new stamp's designer, Robert Hautman, is a veteran wildlife artist whose brothers Joe and Jim have both won the Duck Stamp Contest--Jim in 1989 and 1994 and Joe in 1991. Robert was a finalist in five previous Duck Stamp Contests before taking first place this year.