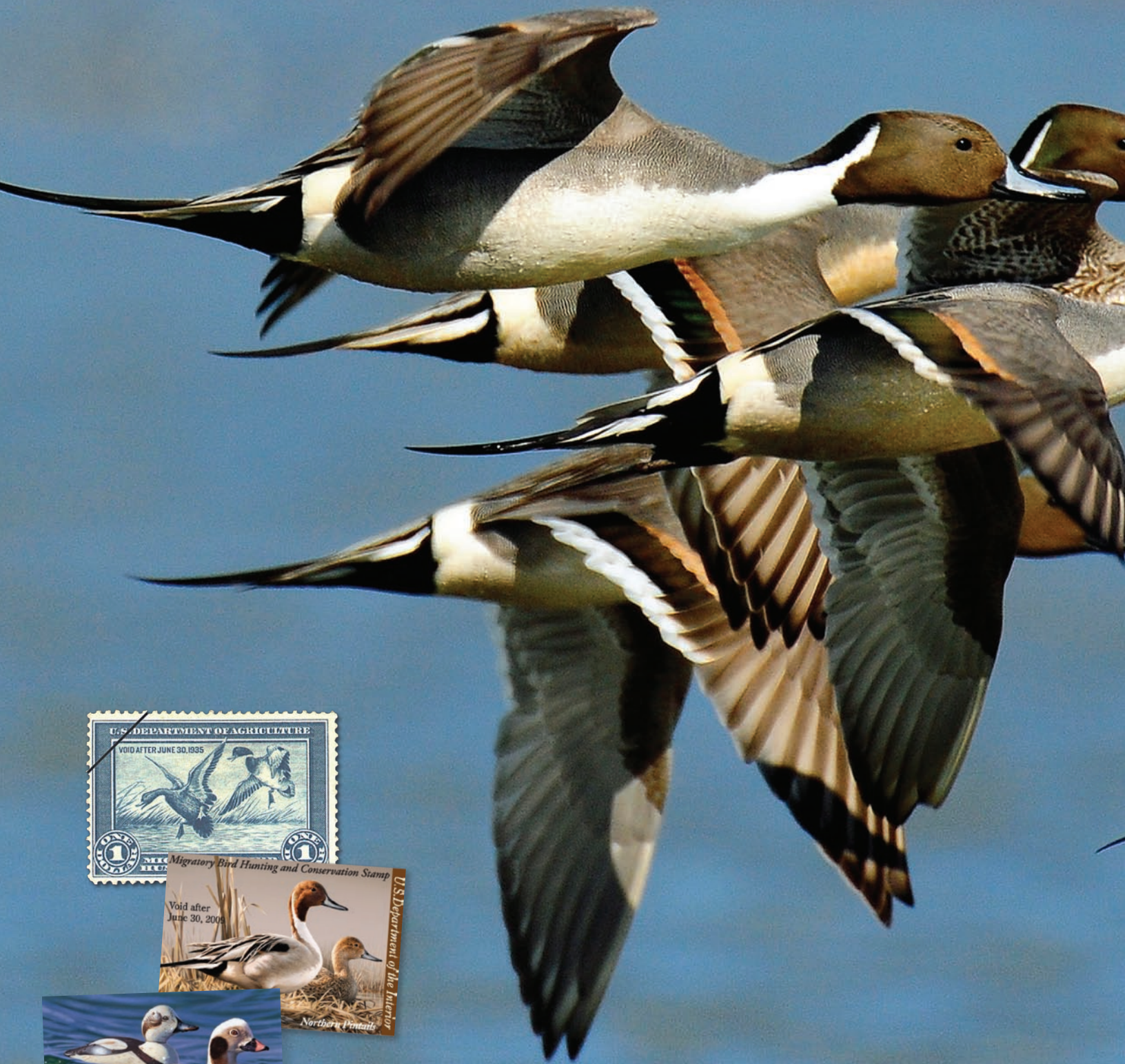


CONSERVATION SECTION
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For every dollar you spend on Federal Duck Stamps, ninety-eight cents goes directly to purchase vital habitat for protection in the National Wildlife Refuge System. At left are 3 of the 75 ducks stamps. From the top: Ding Darling's 1934 stamp; last year's northern pintail stamp by Joseph Hautman; and the newest stamp by Joshua Spies.

The Linchpin

Of Conservation Success

The Federal Duck Stamp Program Celebrates its 75th Anniversary.

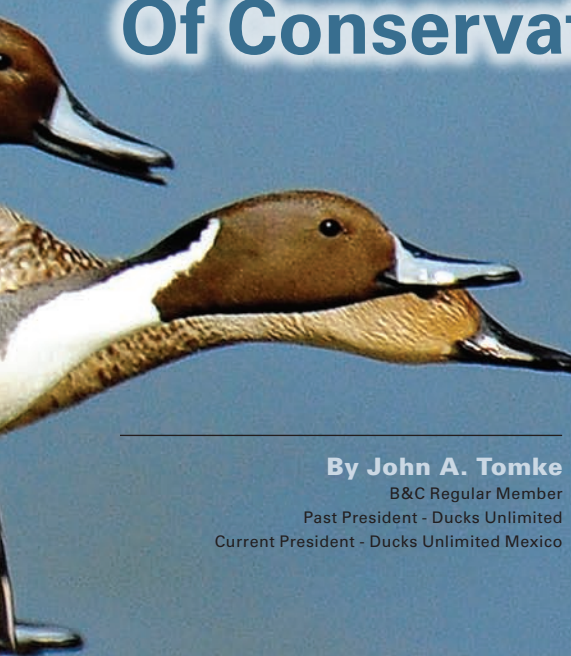
By John A. Tomke

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One of the greatest conservation success stories in American history, the federal duck stamp, is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year. From Ding Darling to Joshua Spies, artists and their artwork have played a crucial role in the restoration of migratory waterfowl populations on the continent. Officially known as the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, this revenue tool has been required since 1934 for waterfowl hunters over 16 years of age.



Sales of the stamp have netted over \$700 million and enabled the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to purchase or lease more than 5.2 million acres of important habitat. These lands are now protected as part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. "All of us at USFWS are extremely proud of the duck stamp program. Its efficiency routinely exceeds 98 percent. By all measures, it has been and continues to be an effective way to protect waterfowl habitat in the United States," says Paul Schmidt, assistant director for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Migratory Birds).

It's difficult to pinpoint the exact date when the concept of the duck stamp was born. Ray Holland and his boss, George A. Lawyer, chief U.S. game warden, had talked publicly about the need for additional wildlife refuges for waterfowl as early as 1920. And four years prior, on October 21, 1916, a brilliant cartoon depicting the deplorable state of waterfowl

appeared in the *New York Herald Tribune*. The cartoon titled "The Annual Migration of Duck is On" was the creation of J.N. "Ding" Darling.

Jay Norwood Darling was born October 21, 1876, in Grand Traverse Bay, Norwood, Michigan. He was the son of a Methodist minister. At the age of 10, Darling's family moved to Sioux City, Iowa. It was his experiences as a youth there that led to the blossoming of this passionate conservation leader and spokesperson. He graduated from Beloit College in 1900 and began his newspaper career back home in Sioux City. Darling sketched his first conservation cartoon in 1901 during Theodore Roosevelt's presidency. The cartoon supported Roosevelt's plan to establish a forestry service.

In 1906, Darling set out for a new position with the *Des Moines Register and Leader*. For the first time, he was officially recognized as a cartoonist. When Darling retired in 1949, he had drawn some 15,000 cartoons for *Collier's* magazine, the *Des Moines Register*, and the *New York Herald Tribune* and its hundreds of syndicated affiliates. His primary subjects were politics and conservation. Two of his most famous cartoons commemorated the deaths of his boyhood idol, Buffalo Bill Cody, and his friend, Theodore Roosevelt.

They were titled "Gone to Join the Mysterious Caravan" and "The Long, Long Trail".

One of the most interesting ironies in Darling's life was to occur in 1934. Darling was a staunch conservative and a devoted Republican. He felt President Franklin Roosevelt was much too liberal and that he was a threat to American free enterprise. Yet in spite of their differences, FDR asked the popular cartoonist to serve on a three-member "duck committee" to address the declining waterfowl populations. The other members of the committee were Aldo Leopold, the acknowledged leader of modern game management, and Tom Beck, the editor of *Collier's*. Beck was also Chairman of the Connecticut State Board of Fisheries and Game. Darling was appointed because of his passion for conservation and his public platform. He had also served as a leader of the Iowa Fish and Game Commission. It was here through this duck committee that the arduous, 14-year journey to the creation of the duck stamp would finally end.

The extended drought of the 1930s and the dramatic declines in waterfowl population played a role in that journey by finally bringing the plight of waterfowl to the public and political forefront. The duck stamp sought to stabilize habitat losses south of the Canadian border. Three years later, in 1937, a group of business leaders with a passion for hunting, formed Ducks Unlimited. Its objective was to conserve, restore, and manage waterfowl habitat north of the 49th parallel.

The heroes of the duck stamp journey included the duck committee members and Sen. Peter Norbeck, D-S.D., who fought long and hard to establish wildlife refuges for waterfowl and secure adequate funding for them. He had been supported along the way



**Clockwise from top left:
Judges take a closer look**

at the Duck Stamp Contest Entries. ■ A collection of various stamps from other wildlife and fisheries related programs spawned from the original Federal duck stamp program. ■ Artist Larry Chandler signs copies of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker Conservation stamps.

by a broad coalition of groups including the Boone and Crockett Club, Campfire Club of America, the National Association of Audubon Societies and the U. S. Department of Agriculture. That coalition would later be joined by the *New York Times*, the Izaak Walton League, and the National Federation of Women's Clubs.

Roosevelt also asked Darling to move to Washington and take charge of the Bureau of Biological Survey—the oft-maligned precursor to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Darling was sworn in on March 10, 1934. One week later, President Roosevelt signed into law the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act. The fight to make the duck stamp a reality had been fought in the Senate by Norbeck and Senator Frederic Walcott, R-Conn. On the House side, Rep. Richard Kleberg, D-Texas, was the champion.

Darling's governmental career was short, but during his tenure he brought credibility to the Bureau of Biological Survey. Through logic and some sleight of hand, he and Sen. Norbeck were to secure funding for the Bureau. The story is told that Darling requested \$1 million in funding from the President. Roosevelt told him that he just didn't have the money but jokingly gave him an IOU. Not to be outdone, Darling somehow managed to get the \$1 million IOU into a Senate resolution. Sen. Norbeck felt that if \$1 million was good, \$6 million would be better, so he changed the amount in the resolution to \$6 million. When asked to read the resolution on the Floor of the Senate, Norbeck quietly removed his dentures and went to the podium. With his thick Scandinavian accent, Norbeck was difficult to understand. Without his dentures, he was incomprehensible. The amendment passed. His colleagues understood Norbeck's passion and probably also knew that he was dying of cancer.

As head of the Biological Survey, Darling believed that he could make better use of former agricultural land than anyone else. He wrote, "Others just grow grass and trees. We grow grass, trees, marshes, lakes, ducks, geese, furbearers, impounded water and recreation." He added, "The \$6 million we got from Congress is mostly going to buy Okefenokee, the ranches on the winter elk range in Jackson Hole, the private lands that lie in the midst of the Hart Mountain antelope range and for rehabilitation of the duck ranges we bought last year."

Throughout his career, Darling had teamed with the Boone and Crockett Club not only on the duck stamp legislation but also on the Sheldon Antelope Refuge in

Wyoming, elk management in the Olympic Peninsula and in Jackson Hole, and the passage of the Key Deer Refuge Bill. Over his lifetime, Darling was honored by many of America's conservation groups. However, one of his greatest honors was to be elected an Honorary Member of the group founded by his longtime friend, Theodore Roosevelt, the Boone and Crockett Club.

The creation of the federal duck stamp has spawned similar wildlife funding programs in Canada and Mexico and in all 50 states. From the king salmon stamp in Alaska to the turkey habitat stamp in Minnesota, from the black bear hunting stamp in West Virginia to the New Mexico and Wyoming elk stamps, designated dollars are

being collected to care for wildlife and its habitat. The willingness of sportsmen and sportswomen to support these programs has been the linchpin of the conservation movement across North America.

When Ding Darling died in 1962, his admirers set out to honor his conservation achievements and further add to his conservation legacy. They brought private interests, federal, state and local agencies together and in 1967 created the Ding Darling National Wildlife Refuge on his beloved Sanibel Island of southwestern Florida. It was a fitting tribute to a conservationist, a cartoonist, and an artist—a man who for over 60 years had influenced the conservation ethic in America. ■

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B	58 / 2.28
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w/rail M	156 / 6.14



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