



## Action Alert: Proposed rules change for the Duck Stamp Art Contest

**U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is proposing a permanent rule change to the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp Contest (known as the Duck Stamp) that would make the theme “Celebrating Our Waterfowl Hunting Heritage” and the mandatory inclusion of an appropriate hunting element permanent, beginning with the 2020 Contest.**

### The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp recommends rejecting this proposal.

The Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (Stamp) plays a vital role in advancing wetland and grassland conservation, preserving valuable habitats for wetland birds and for future generations. The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp’s interest is to support the Federal Duck Stamp program, advocating and promoting the effort with its tremendous scope, reach, and value in celebrating our American culture and heritage since 1934.

The Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp (Friends) opposes the proposed rule change because:

- The requirement of a hunting element restricts design and results in less room for creativity. A similar rule change to the 2018-2019 Contest saw a 25% decline in artist participation. We believe that this change will lead to an additional decline in participation over the years.
- Increasing sales should be the top objective.
- The hunting community has provided most of the dollars to support the purchase of wetlands in America. Even with their current unwavering support, the number of stamps purchased continues to decline as the number of hunters declines.
- We need to broaden the base of support to include the growing number of non-consumptive citizens who value land protection. According to the 2016 USFWS National Survey of Hunting, Fishing and Wildlife-Associated Recreation, wildlife watching increased 20% to 86 million participants from 2011.
- Less sales mean less land protection. The challenge now is to increase sales of the Stamp, which are down from a high of 2,412,651 in 1970-1971 to today’s 1,514,551 in 2017-2018 (numbers to be updated as final numbers come in). If more Stamps are not sold, not only will the Stamp and the Contest be negatively impacted, but waterfowl hunting and hunters who benefit most from this program, along with others who use our public lands, will see the impact of this program on preservation of waterfowl habitat shrink.

This [proposed rule to revise the Contest Regulations](#) was posted on the Federal Register on January 29. **The proposed rule is open for public comments until March 16, 2020.** All comments must be submitted through the process described in the proposed rule – if they are submitted any other way, they cannot be incorporated or considered. [You can access the proposed rule and/or comment, via the Federal Register.](#)

You can comment on the rule via the portal provided above, or by postal mail. Ahead of entering your final comments, we recommend that you create your letter, ready to cut and paste to the portal.

**We urge everyone to comment on this proposal.** As a starting point for your customized response, the Friends have provided a [sample letter](#), a list of [talking points](#), and the rationale for our position. Please share this information via your preferred communications.

Thank you for taking the time to comment and thanks for your support of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp and the Federal Duck Stamp Office!

For additional information, please go to our website, <http://www.friendsofthestamp.org/>.