

by allen kane, director npm

Visit the Jeanette Cantrell Rudy Duck Stamp Gallery



This year will mark the issuance of the seventieth Federal Duck Stamp. On July 1, 2003, the Museum once again will host the First Day of Sale ceremony. I am proud to carry on the Museum's tradition of hosting these duck stamp events. The revenues from the duck stamp program have been used since its inception in 1934 to help acquire U.S. waterfowl habitat. Speakers at the ceremony will include Federal Duck Stamp artist Ron Louque, as well as representatives from the Fish and Wildlife Service.

Duck stamps became a prominent part of the National Postal Museum's exhibits in June 1996 with the addition of the *Jeanette Cantrell Rudy Duck Stamp Gallery*. The gallery features a biannual

rotation of what are commonly called duck stamps, along with supporting objects and materials. Although the next rotation will not occur until 2004, there are plenty of reasons for waterfowl and duck stamp aficionados to make a pilgrimage to the Museum this summer. James O'Donnell, the gallery curator, will present a talk highlighting the many features of the gallery for visitors on

Wednesday, June 25 from 1-1:30 p.m. These first day ceremonies have been extremely popular over the past years, bringing a large number of visitors to the museum.

This year marks the fifty-fourth anniversary of the first duck stamp contest. The nation-wide competition is open to all U.S. artists. The winning entry must depict live birds in their natural habitat. Judges consider the artistic composition, immediate impact, authenticity, style, and lasting impression of each entry. This is the only contest of its kind sponsored by the U.S. Government. While the winning artists do not receive direct compensation for their stamp design, they are permitted to sell prints of their designs.

Prior to the first day ceremony, the Museum will host the Junior Duck Stamp exhibit. Each year, young Americans from kindergarten to twelfth grade are invited to submit wildlife stamp designs. The winning entries from all fifty states and the District of Columbia will be featured in the Franklin Foyer from June 25 through the end of July 2003. These pieces are a treat to view and I look forward to seeing what America's young artists have produced this year.

Visitors to the *Jeanette Cantrell Rudy Duck Stamp Gallery* this year will be able to view some wonderful pieces, including the design for the first U.S. duck stamp, titled "Mallards Dropping In." This original etching was drawn by Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling. Darling was one of the primary movers behind the Federal Duck Stamp program. This Pulitzer Prize-winning cartoonist for the *Des Moines Register* was also an enthusiastic conservationist and chief of the U.S. Biological Survey, 1934-35.



The original artwork for the 1946 Federal Duck Stamp, an ink drawing by Bob Hines, shows a male Redhead Duck landing amid a small swimming flock. The U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service returned Hines' first attempt, requesting that he take out a second flock of ducks. (Courtesy of an anonymous lender.)

Also on display in the gallery this year are a series of plate blocks of the 1934 duck stamp and original works of stamp art. Visitors will be able to view a series of "remarques" in which artists draw or paint an image, using the selvedge of duck stamps that they have designed. These images can mirror the stamp design or offer a different pose of the same species. Among the remarques on display are those by Maynard Reece, one of the greatest duck stamp artists. Between 1949 and 1971, Reece won the Federal Duck Stamp Design Contest five times, a feat no other artist has matched.

Since the opening of the *Jeanette Cantrell Rudy Duck Stamp Gallery* seven years ago, the Museum has invited visitors to celebrate ducks and duck stamps in a number of ways. In addition to viewing a changing array of stamps and philatelic material, visitors have painted duck decoys, and been able to watch duck decoy carvers and duck call makers at work.

In 2001 a major addition was made to the Museum's duck stamp collection when Bob Dumaine donated thirty mint and thirty signed U.S. Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation stamps dating from 1974 to 2000. The donation filled a gap in the Museum's otherwise extensive collection of federal

Fulvous Whistling Duck painted by Burton Moore. This southern species had never been featured on a Federal Duck Stamp until this 1986 issue. (Courtesy of an anonymous lender.)



and state duck stamps.

A number of remarkable duck stamps and related objects will continue to be displayed in this gallery in the coming years. I invite all of you to join us this

year for the First Day of Sale ceremony and related activities, and invite you back next year to see what treasures the next rotation of objects will have in store for us.



This photo inside the Duck Stamp Gallery was taken during the AP editor's visit to the National Postal Museum earlier this year.

The Museum is open seven days a week from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., except December 25.

Admission is free

**National Postal Museum
2 Massachusetts Ave., N.E.
Washington, DC 20002
(202) 357-2991**

[TTY] (202) 633-9849

**Visit us online at:
<http://www.postalmuseum.si.edu>**