

Fish and Game Stamps of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe

by David R. Torre

Introduction

Information about stamps issued by Indian Reservations in South Dakota was first published in revenue publications in the early 1960s (see Figure 1).

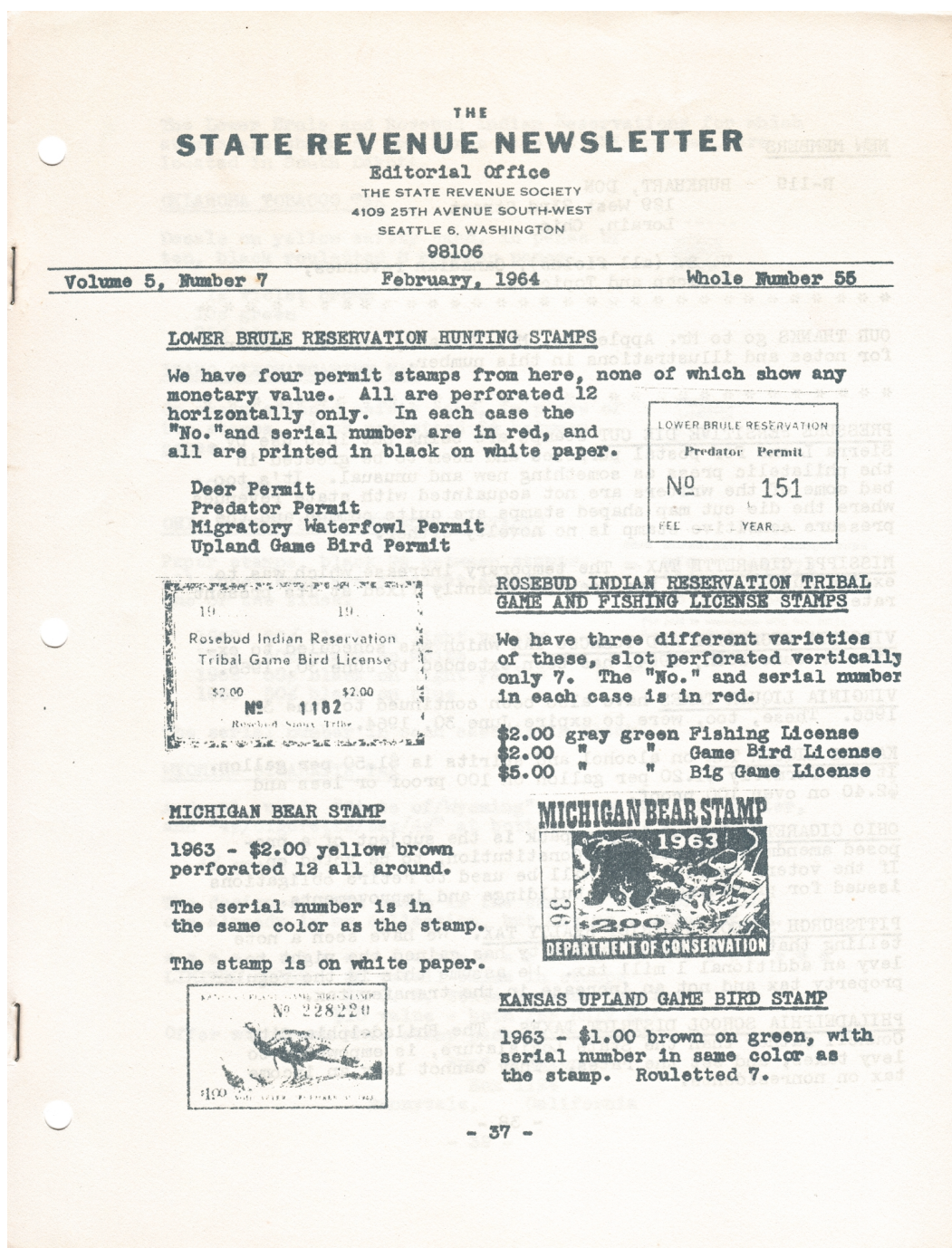


FIGURE 1. EDITOR DAVID STROCK INFORMED COLLECTORS ABOUT FISH AND GAME STAMPS ISSUED BY THE SIOUX TRIBES OF SOUTH DAKOTA IN THE SATE REVENUE NEWSLETTER IN EARLY 1964.

Since then, a relatively small group of state revenue and fish and game collectors have avidly pursued these paper artifacts. As the early tribal stamps feature printed text only, they may not appear especially attractive in comparison to many classic pictorial fish and game stamps issued during this period (see Figures 2 and 3).

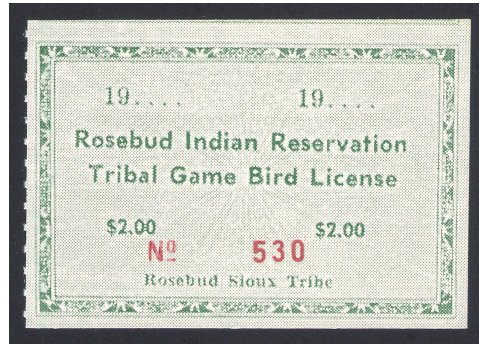


FIGURE 2. THE ROSEBUD SIOUX BECAME THE FIRST TRIBAL GOVERNMENT TO ISSUE FISH AND GAME STAMPS IN 1959.

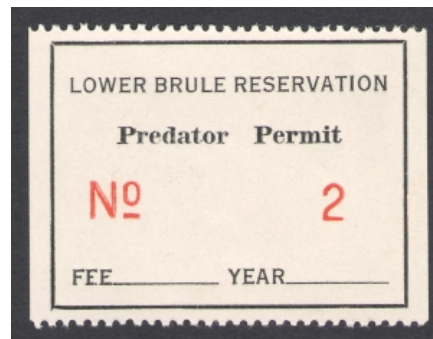


FIGURE 3. THE LOWER BRULE SIOUX STARTED ISSUING STAMPS IN 1962.

Despite this fact, they have held a special interest for many collectors as they link stamp collecting with the study of Native American culture. The choice on the part of tribal governments to adopt the system of stamps and licenses previously developed by the federal and state governments represent an effort on the part of the Indian peoples to assimilate with an American institution of special interest to revenue collectors. Collections that include these interesting stamps serve to document this accomplishment.

In 1989 and 1990, the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe introduced several different types of pictorial stamps. These attractive stamps are likely to be of interest to a much broader spectrum of collectors, and will hopefully bring attention to this important area of American revenue philately.

The Turbulent 1970s

In the 1970s the Indian rights movement swept the country and precipitated the temporary decline of non-tribal member hunting and fishing on the reservations (Moum, McGee). This was punctuated by bloodshed at the Incident at Wounded Knee in 1973. Few tribal stamps are known to have been issued during this decade and the State of South Dakota attempted to negotiate limited hunting on the reservations (see Figures 4 and 5).



FIGURE 4. RARE SOUTH DAKOTA STAMP OVERPRINTED FOR ARCHERY HUNTING ON THE LOWER BRULE RESERVATION DURING THE MID 1970S

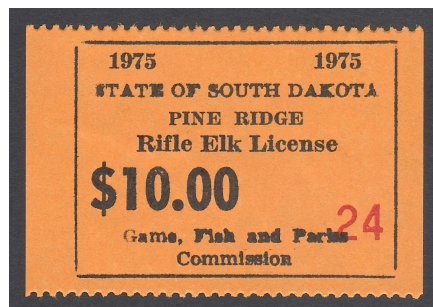


FIGURE 5. SOUTH DAKOTA STAMP PRINTED FOR HUNTING ON THE PINE RIDGE RESERVATION IN 1975.

The 1970s notwithstanding, there exists a high level of interest on the part of all parties involved to have non-tribal members hunt and fish on Indian reservations. The interest on the part of non-members stems from the fact that the relatively undeveloped reservations still retain abundant wildlife resources, in contrast to many areas of the country which have witnessed the phenomenon of urban sprawl (see Figure 6).



FIGURE 6. DEER HUNTING WITH A TRIBAL GUIDE ON THE PINE RIDGE RESERVATION, SOUTH DAKOTA.

Interest on the art of tribal members may be viewed as proprietary in nature. The reservations often have a harvestable surplus, and it makes sense to allow hunters and fishermen to come into the area if they are willing to pay fees and abide by Indian laws. It should be noted that hunters and fishermen, not unlike tourists, often patronize local eating, lodging and sporting goods establishments. In short, they positively affect the local economy.

Tensions subsided and starting in 1979, non members once again were welcomed onto the reservations. Along with the increase in non-member hunting and fishing during the 1980s, came the ill effects of widespread poaching and over-harvesting (McGee). Concerned tribal members brought this to the attention of the Department of the Interior, which is still somewhat responsible for maintaining the welfare of the reservations. This resulted in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service encouraging the tribal governments to formally organize local fish and wildlife programs whose intent is to protect, conserve and manage these vital resources (Catlin). Tribal hunting seasons were established, game wardens were hired and many of these programs were made to include stamp and license requirements in their general provisions.

South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks officials worked with many of the tribal governments to develop their stamp and license requirements (Catlin). The state formally recognizes the tribal hunting seasons and the validity of the stamp and license requirements when used on reservation trust lands and within the guidelines established by the tribe (Catlin, Neilson). Additionally, specific agreements exist between the state and tribal governments. Purchase of a tribal waterfowl stamp for example, not only conveys hunting rights on the reservation, but allows hunters to transport game off the reservation, through South Dakota and to their destinations (Neilson). When the 1980s came to an end, at least six reservations had issued fish and game stamps (see Figures 7 and 8).



FIGURE 7. TRIBAL MEMBER BIRDS & SMALL GAME STAMP ISSUED BY THE CHEYENNE RIVER SIOUX TRIBE IN THE 1980S.



FIGURE 9. SIMILAR STAMP PRINTED FOR NON (TRIBAL) MEMBERS.

The Cow Creek Sioux

The Crow Creek Sioux Tribe are descendants of a nomadic people that once occupied Minnesota. Following the invasion of their territory by whites, and the subsequent fighting that has become known as the Minnesota Uprising of 1862, the remnants of the tribe were relocated to their present home by the U.S. Department of the Interior (Anonymous). The Crow Creek Reservation is located adjacent the Missouri River in central South Dakota between the cities of Chamberlain and Pierre (see Figure 10).



FIGURE 10. THE CROW CREEK RESERVATION.

Of the approximately 270,000 acres comprising the reservation, about half is Indian owned land held in trust by the U.S. Government. The State of South Dakota considers the Crow Creek Reservation, as it does all of the reservations, to be a part of the state (Catlin). Although they enjoy a degree of self-government, the tribes cannot be viewed as completely sovereign nations in that tribal members enjoy state benefits such as welfare, full voting privileges and are represented in the state legislature (Catlin).

The Federal courts have confirmed that it is the tribal governments which have the authority to regulate hunting and fishing on the reservations (Moum). There are approximately 65,000 acres of tribal land within the Crow Creek Reservation which can be hunted with a valid tribal hunting license (Authority, 1990). Since the reservation is centered within the Central Waterfowl Flyway, there are massive numbers of migrating ducks and geese. Small and upland game is abundant, including ring-necked pheasant, sharp-tailed grouse, prairie chicken and Hungarian partridge (see Figure 11). White tailed and mule deer are plentiful, as are a variety of animals and birds that the Indians classify as varmints. These include coyotes, skunks, porcupine, ground squirrels, prairie dogs, jack rabbits and crows. Game fish include sturgeon, salmon, trout, bass and walleye (Authority, 1988, 1990).



FIGURE 11. RING-NECKED PHEASANT ROOSTER ON THE CROW CREEK RESERVATION.

Stamps Issued

The earliest known stamps used at Crow Creek were reported by E.L. Vanderford to have been first issued in 1961, and were required by non-Indian hunters only. Very little is known about these stamps, as tribal records for this period were lost in a flood (McGee). There were at least two types, one for small game and migratory waterfowl and another for big game. The stamps are imperforate and feature printed text in black on white paper with red serial numbers. They measure approximately 44 x 35 mm. The earliest known stamp in collectors' hands has the date typeset "1962". The same stamps are known to have been used in 1963 and 1964 with the only difference being that the date was changed manually with a ballpoint pen (see Figures 12, 13 and 14).

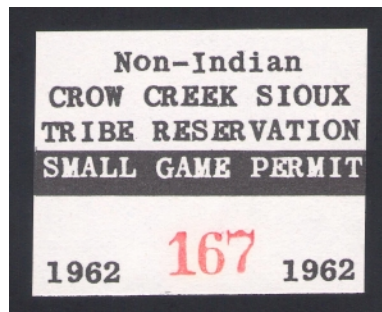


FIGURE 12. CROW CREEK SMALL GAME ISSUED IN 1962.

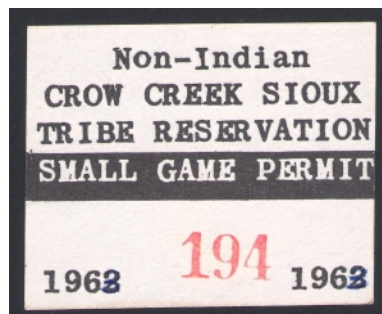


FIGURE 13. STAMPS WERE USED IN SUBSEQUENT YEARS BY CHANGING THE DATE MANUALLY WITH A BALL POINT PEN.

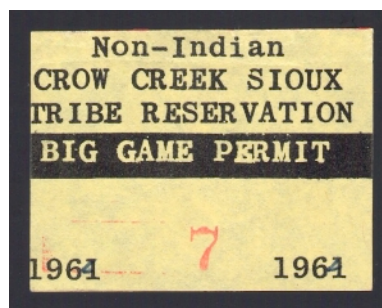


FIGURE 14. ALTHOUGH ISSUED IN 1964, THIS STAMP PROVIDES EVIDENCE CROW CREEK ISSUED STAMPS AS EARLY AS 1961.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe experimented with a variety of different types of licenses, but no stamps are known to have been issued during this period (see Figures 15, 16 and 17). Collectors of waterfowl stamps and licenses will take note of the interesting boating permit reproduced in Figure 16, which also allowed the holder to hunt migratory waterfowl (from a boat only?).

License Fee \$1.25 Agent's Fee .25 _____ Name _____ Street Address _____ Town _____ Nº 616 _____ Signature of Agent	Crow Creek Reservation GENERAL HUNTING LICENSE YEAR _____ Agent's Fee .25 License Fee \$1.25 The undersigned permittee is hereby permitted to hunt on the Crow Creek Reservation. Permittee _____ Address _____ Street _____ Town _____ Age _____ Height _____ Weight _____ Color Eyes _____ Color Hair _____ _____ Signature of Permittee Agent	This permit is not transferable and not valid unless signed by Permittee Nº 616
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FIGURE 15. CROW CREEK GENERAL HUNTING LICENSE USED IN THE 1970S.

Out-of-State \$3.50 _____ Name _____ Street Address _____ Town _____ Nº 100 _____ Signature of Agent	Crow Creek Reservation Boating Permit Out-of-State \$3.50 Year _____ The undersigned permittee is hereby permitted to hunt migratory waterfowl on the Crow Creek Reservation. Permittee _____ Address _____ Street _____ Town _____ Age _____ Height _____ Weight _____ Color Eyes _____ Color Hair _____ State Hunting License No. _____ _____ Signature of Permittee Agent	This permit is not transferable and not valid unless signed by Permittee. Nº 100
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FIGURE 16. CROW CREEK OUT OF STATE BOATING PERMIT. NOTE THE PERMIT CONVEYED THE RIGHTS TO HUNT WATERFOWL ON THE RESERVATION.

Resident Non-Member \$100.00 _____ Name _____ Street Address _____ Town _____ Nº 11 _____ Signature of Agent	Crow Creek Reservation Commercial Fish Trapping License Year _____ Resident Non-Member \$100.00 The undersigned permittee is hereby permitted to trap fish within the Crow Creek Reservation. Permittee _____ Address _____ Street _____ Town _____ Age _____ Height _____ Weight _____ Color Eyes _____ Color Hair _____ State Hunting License No. _____ _____ Signature of Permittee Agent	This permit is not transferable and not valid unless signed by Permittee. Nº 11
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FIGURE 17. CROW CREEK NON MEMBER COMMERCIAL FISH TRAPPING LICENSE.

Crow Creek Sioux make Philatelic History

The Crow Creek wildlife program was formally established in 1988. (McGee) The following year a game, fish and parks code was published outlining hunting, fishing and licensing requirements. (Authority, 1988) In 1989, The Crow Creek Sioux Tribe also introduced their first fish and game stamps in a quarter century which included the first pictorial stamps issued by an Indian Reservation in the United States (see Figure 18).



FIGURE 18. IN 1989 THE CROW CREEK SIOUX BECAME THE FIRST TRIBAL GOVERNMENT TO ISSUE PICTORIAL FISH AND GAME STAMPS.

The idea to use pictorial stamps is reported to have originated with Department of Natural Resources biologist Steven Laing (McGee). While not a stamp collector, Laing desired to conform to standards previously developed by South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks. The stamps were printed at the State Printing Office in Pierre, and all are identical in size and format to the South Dakota state waterfowl stamps (McGee). They were issued in vertical booklet panes containing five stamps, and are perforated 11.5 horizontally. All stamps are individually serial numbered in red and measure approximately 47 X 35 mm. A total of sixteen different stamps were issued in 1989 (McGee). In addition to the pictorial stamps, there was a series of four sportsman stamps that featured the tribal seal (see Figure 19).



FIGURE 19. PURCHASE OF A SPORTSMAN STAMP CONVEYED ALL HUNTING AND FISHING RIGHTS ON THE RESERVATION.

Purchase of a single sportsman stamp allowed the holder to hunt all the types of game for which the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe issued individual pictorial stamps. In addition, the sportsman stamp conveyed inland fishing rights (Authority, 1988, 1990). Waterfowl hunting was allowed with the sportsman stamp in combination with a Federal waterfowl stamp. Fees charged for the sportsman stamp represented just over a 50% savings over the combined individual fees for reservation residents, just under 50% for South Dakota residents, and about 15% for non-residents (Authority 1990). Included in the sportsman series was the only stamp of any kind printed for use by tribal members. The fee charged to tribal members for all hunting and fishing privileges was \$10.00 which included the right to trap furbearers on tribal and trust lands within the reservation. Only tribal members were allowed to trap furbearers at Crow Creek. Two hundred of each stamp were printed and issued to vendors in 1989, with the exception of the tribal member sportsman stamp that had a printing of 300. For a complete listing of serial numbers used on specific types of 1989 stamps, see Table I.

Table I

Serial numbers used on 1989 Crow Creek Sioux Tribe fish and game stamps			
Serial No. Range	Total Printed	Face Value	Stamp Type
1-200	200	\$10	Reservation Deer
201-400	200	\$50	SD Resident Deer
401-600	200	\$100	Non-Resident Deer
601-800	200	\$5	SD Resident Varmint
801-1000	200	\$10	Non-Resident Varmint
1001-1200	200	\$3	Reservation Varmint
1201-1400	200	\$25	Reservation Sportsman
1401-1600	200	\$50	SD Resident Small/Upland Game
1601-1800	200	\$100	Non-Resident Small/Upland Game
1801-2000	200	\$10	Reservation Small/Upland Game
2001-2200	200	\$10	Reservation Waterfowl
2201-2400	200	\$30	SD Resident Waterfowl
2401-2600	200	\$65	Non-Resident Waterfowl
2601-2800	200	\$250	Non-Resident Sportsman
2801-3000	200	\$100	SD Resident Sportsman
3001-3300	300	\$10	Tribal Member Sportsman

Tribal hunting and fishing licenses were available the Tribal Wildlife office in Fort Thompson, or from vendors located throughout the reservation. Laing designed a passbook with spaces inside for each of different types of stamps used, along with one for the Federal Waterfowl stamp. It measures 275 X 100 mm when opened and laid flat (see Figure 20). This passbook was introduced and used along with the new stamps in 1989 (McGee).



FIGURE 20. RESERVATION BIOLOGIST STEVEN LAING DESIGNED A PASSBOOK FOR USE WITH THE NEW STAMPS.

The same sixteen stamps were issued the following year. (McGee) The designs are identical, except that the year reads "1990." The face value of the individual stamps remain unchanged from 1989; however, at some point in 1990 it was decided to charge South Dakota residents the same fees as non-residents (Moum, McGee). Rather than print new South Dakota resident stamps with a higher face value, non-resident stamps were required thereafter on all licenses sold to South Dakota resident hunters (see Figure 21).

FIGURE 21. 1990 NON RESIDENT WATERFOWL STAMP USED ON LICENSE PURCHASED BY A SOUTH DAKOTA RESIDENT HUNTER AFTER THE FEE INCREASE.

Two hundred fifty of each stamp were printed and issued to vendors in 1990, including the tribal member sportsman stamp. Several Crow Creek stamps are known from 1990 with the serial number missing. This seems to be a product of a faulty numbering machine at The State Publishing Company, as there are many other cases of South Dakota stamps printed over the years with the serial numbers missing. In each case there have been five examples recorded (see Figures 22, 23 and 24). Further, as no Crow Creek stamps from 1989 have been recorded with the serial number missing, it is now believed this glitch occurs in the serial number range between 200 and 250. For a complete listing of serial numbers used on 1990 stamps, see Table II.

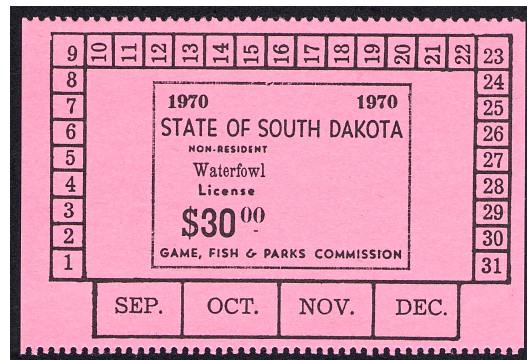


FIGURE 22. 1970 SOUTH DAKOTA NON RESIDENT WATERFOWL STAMP WITH MISSING SERIAL NUMBER.



FIGURE 23. 1980 SOUTH DAKOTA WEST RIVER GOOSE FOR PERKINS COUNTY WITH MISSING SERIAL NUMBER.

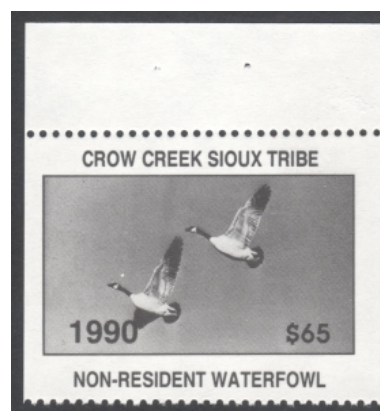


FIGURE 24. 1990 CROW CREEK NON RESIDENT WATERFOWL STAMP WITH MISSING SERIAL NUMBER.

Table II

**Serial numbers used on
1990 Crow Creek Sioux Tribe fish and game stamps**

Serial No. Range	Total Printed	Face Value	Stamp Type
1-250	250	\$10	Tribal Member Sportsman
251-500	250	\$100	Non-Resident Deer
501-750	250	\$5	SD Resident Varmint
751-1000	250	\$10	Reservation Deer
1001-1250	250	\$3	Reservation Varmint
1251-1500	250	\$25	Reservation Sportsman
1501-1750	250	\$50	SD Resident Deer
1751-2000	250	\$10	Non-Resident Varmint
2001-2250	250	\$30	SD Resident Waterfowl
2251-2500	250	\$100	Non-Resident Small/Upland Game
2501-2750	250	\$250	Non-Resident Sportsman
2751-3000	250	\$65	Non-Resident Waterfowl
3001-3250	250	\$50	SD Resident Small/Upland Game
3251-3500	250	\$10	Resident Waterfowl
3501-3750	250	\$10	Reservation Small/Upland Game
3751-4000	250	\$100	SD Resident Sportsman

Readers will notice that the 1990 waterfowl stamp shown in Figure 21 is affixed to a generic type of license with boxes to check off the type of hunting and blanks to fill in the fee charged. Passbooks were printed and distributed to vendors for use in 1990. Within days, however, the Tribal Council instructed DNR officials to remove the passbooks from use as they did not contain an implied consent section which placed the holder under the civil jurisdiction of the Crow Creek Sioux Tribal Court while hunting or transporting game on the reservation (McGee). DNR officials apparently did not want to bear the expense of redesigning and printing up new passbooks, so a supply of old licenses that had been previously used since the early 1980s were called into service (McGee). The back of these licenses did contain the implied consent section (see Figure 25), however, they did not contain a space for the new stamps. This proved to be inconvenient when more than one stamp was placed on a license.

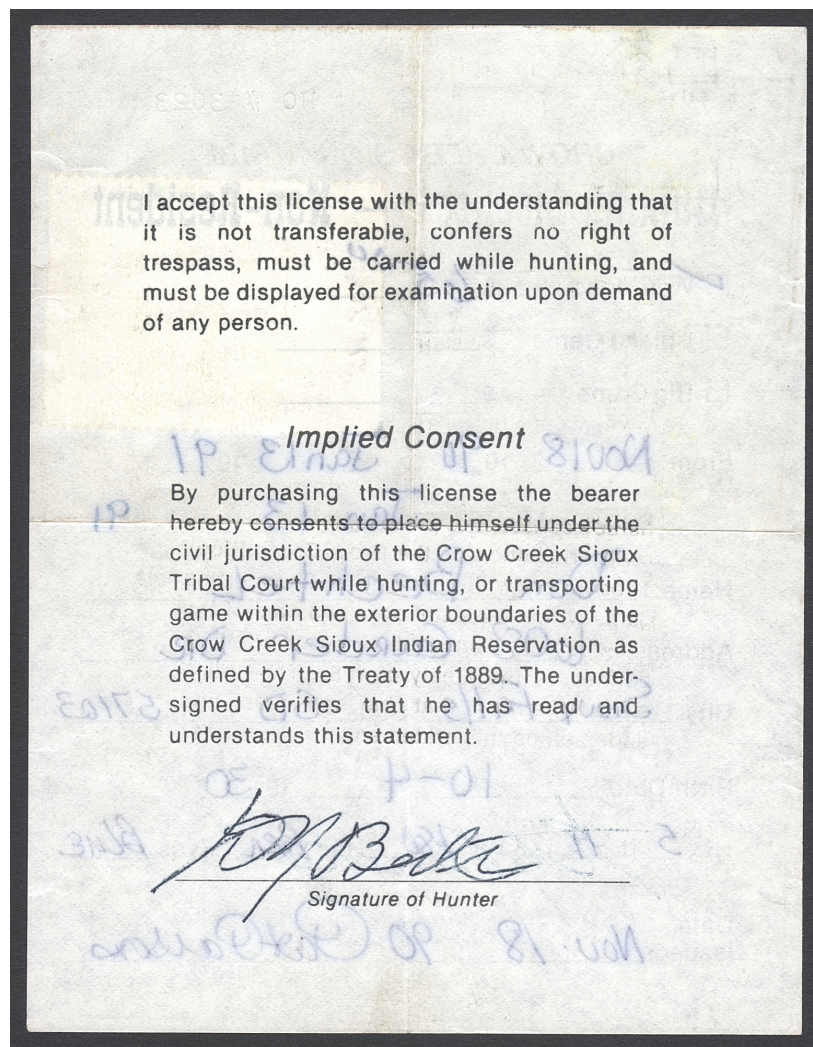


FIGURE 25. REVERSE OF LICENSE SHOWING IMPLIED CONSENT SECTION.

Despite this fact, this was the system that was used during 1990. Throughout the year, DNR officials discussed how they might best provide a solution to this problem, it was suggested that fine implied consent section could be shortened and placed on the reverse of the stamps themselves for 1991 (McGee).

Unfortunately, no stamps were issued in 1991 due to a failure on the part of the DNR officials to agree on the specific wording to be printed on the reverse of the stamps (McGee). It is hoped that this will soon be resolved, and that stamps will again be issued by the Crow Creek Sioux Tribe in the near future. As of this writing, the Crow Creek varmint stamps are unique to United states fish and game stamps. Since they feature a prairie dog, it is hard to void labeling them as “cute.” The Crow creek Sioux Tribe may soon have another treat in store for collectors, as a buffalo season is planned for upcoming years (McGee). Once the issuance of stamps is resumed, perhaps we can expect to see buffalo hunting stamps!

Editor's note: Please keep in mind this article was originally published in 1992. As it turns out, a change in the Tribal Council would serve as yet another delay to new stamps being printed. This did not actually occur until 1994. See Crow Creek Resumes Stamp Program.

Acknowledgements

The author gratefully acknowledges the following persons, without whose help and support this article would not have been possible: Marsha McGee, wildlife Director for Crow Creek Sioux tribe Department of Natural Resources; Ed Nielson, former supervisor of South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks; Ron Catlin, chief of law enforcement for South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks; and Ken Moum, Information and Education officer for South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks.

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