

There's More to Ducks Than Pretty Pictures

By Frank Correl

Thanks to an inspired collaboration at the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum, the world is finding out that there is much more to duck stamp collecting than just the federal stamps. The Feds had their day in the sun at the Postal Museum at the 1998-99 Federal duck stamp first day ceremony and the reopening of the Jeanette Rudy Duck Stamp Gallery on July 1. Now, the non-federal aspect of financing waterfowl hunting and conservation is the subject of a special exhibit of state, local and Indian reservation duck stamp issues that was inaugural at the Museum on July 4, 1998.

The exhibit in the Postal Museum's Rarity Vault presents a selection of more than forty rare state, local and tribal waterfowl stamps from the prize winning personal collection of David R. Torre of Santa Rosa, California. Comprising pioneer issues and some outstanding rarities of this extensive and complex field, it was developed by the Museum's project manager Jim O'Donnell, working closely with Torre, named as the guest curator.

The exhibit was opened at 10 a.m. on independence Day when Museum Director James Bruns and David's son Eric cut the ribbon (see Figure 1). The group of invited guests made an appreciative tour, after having first been treated to a tasty breakfast of fruit, coffee bagels and pastries.



FIGURE 1. ERIC TORRE BECOMES THE YOUNGEST PERSON IN HISTORY TO CUT THE RIBBON FOR A SMITHSONIAN EXHIBIT. ERIC IS SIX YEARS OLD.

Background

After the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act providing for Federal Duck stamps was established in 1934, it soon became evident that for effective waterfowl management across America extensive cooperation of state and loyal authorities was required. During the 1930's there was some qualified success to stem indiscriminate killing of waterfowl and to obtain funds for conservation as programs were adopted in many jurisdictions requiring hunters to purchase license. After World War II, the problem became more severe with the increased popularity of hunting, especially among many ex-GIs. To satisfy the demand for public hunting grounds and to introduce effective management and conservation programs, natural resource agencies in many states purchased and developed additional areas, for seasonal use during the year for hunting, but serving as refuge and feeding areas at other times.

To fund these programs and to provide evidence that hunting license fees have been paid, the use of stamps was introduced. Unlike the Federal stamps, these issues were strictly utilitarian and often consisted of nothing but a few lines of print on a gummed label.

In 1937, Ohio became the first state to issue waterfowl stamps for hunting in a specific location, the vicinity of Pymatuning Lake on the Ohio-Pennsylvania border (see Figures 2, 3 and 4).

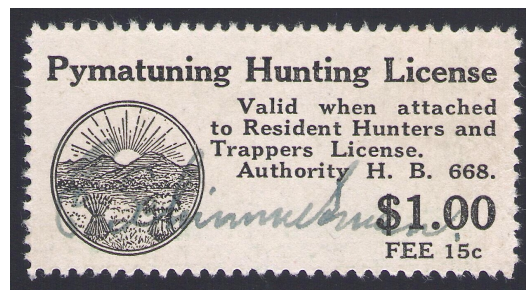


FIGURE 2. UNDATED PYMATUNING HUNTING STAMP THAT WAS USED FOR THE 1937 SEASON. ONE OF THREE EXAMPLES RECORDED.



FIGURE 3. TENNANT PHARMACY, LOCATED ON THE OHIO SIDE OF PYMATUNING LAKE. THIS PHOTO WAS TAKEN AFTER IT WAS BOUGHT OUT BY THE REXALL DRUG CHAIN. THE BIGGEST VENDOR FOR PYMATUNING FISHING AND WATERFOWL STAMPS.



FIGURE 4. PYMATUNING WATERFOWL STAMP ISSUED BY TENNANT PHARMACY IN 1940. USED WITH A 1940 DUCK STAMP, RW7.

In 1941, Marion County, Kansas, became the first local government authority to issue waterfowl stamps. Their 1943 issue was the first at any level of government to be inscribed "Duck Stamp." (See Figures 5 through 9.)

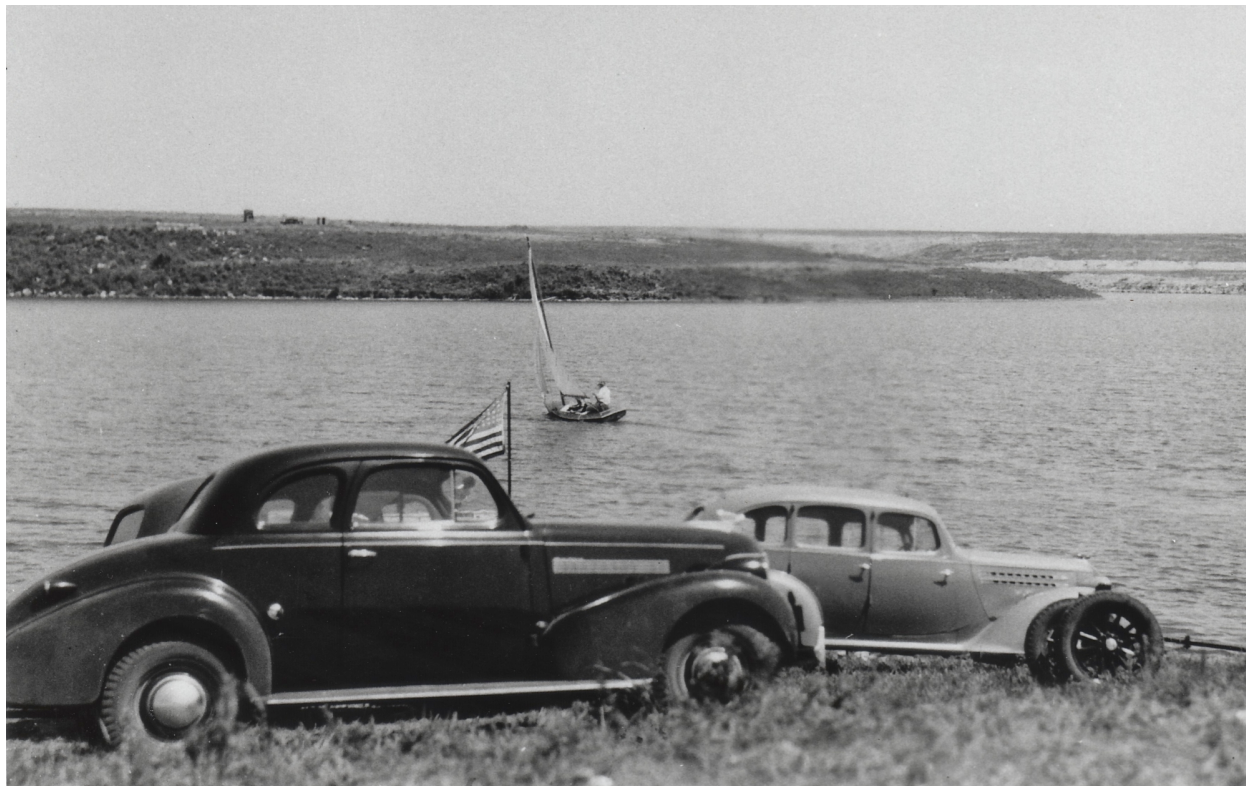


FIGURE 5. MARION COUNTY, KANSAS, 1940 FISHING SEASON OPENING DAY.

Resident's Fee, One Dollar N^o 69201

RESIDENT LICENSE TO HUNT

MARION Kan., 6-22-41, 19...

BY VIRTUE OF THIS LICENSE,

Mr. J. E. Mulliken

Street Marion, City of Marion, County of Marion

is permitted to hunt in Kansas in the open season in conformity with law.

June 30, 1942.

25c 1941 25c

Marion Co. Lake
Resident
Migratory Water
Fowl
Hunting Permit

GUY D. JOSSERAND,
Director.

County Clerk.

of MARION County.

DESCRIPTION AND SIGNATURE OF LICENSEE.

Age 5-5

Color of hair Br

Height 5-7

J. E. Mulliken

KANSAS

J. E. Mulliken

Quail Stamp

VOID AFTER JUNE 30, 1942

**MIGRATORY BIRD
HUNTING STAMP**

VOID AFTER JUNE 30, 1942

**U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF THE INTERIOR**

FIGURE 6. THE FIRST COPY SOLD OF THE FIRST MARION COUNTY WATERFOWL STAMP. SOLD TO PARK AND LAKE SUPERINTENDENT JERRY MULLIKEN.



FIGURE 7. THE 1943 MARION COUNTY ISSUE WAS THE FIRST AT ANY LEVEL OF GOVERNMENT TO BE INSCRIBED "DUCK STAMP".

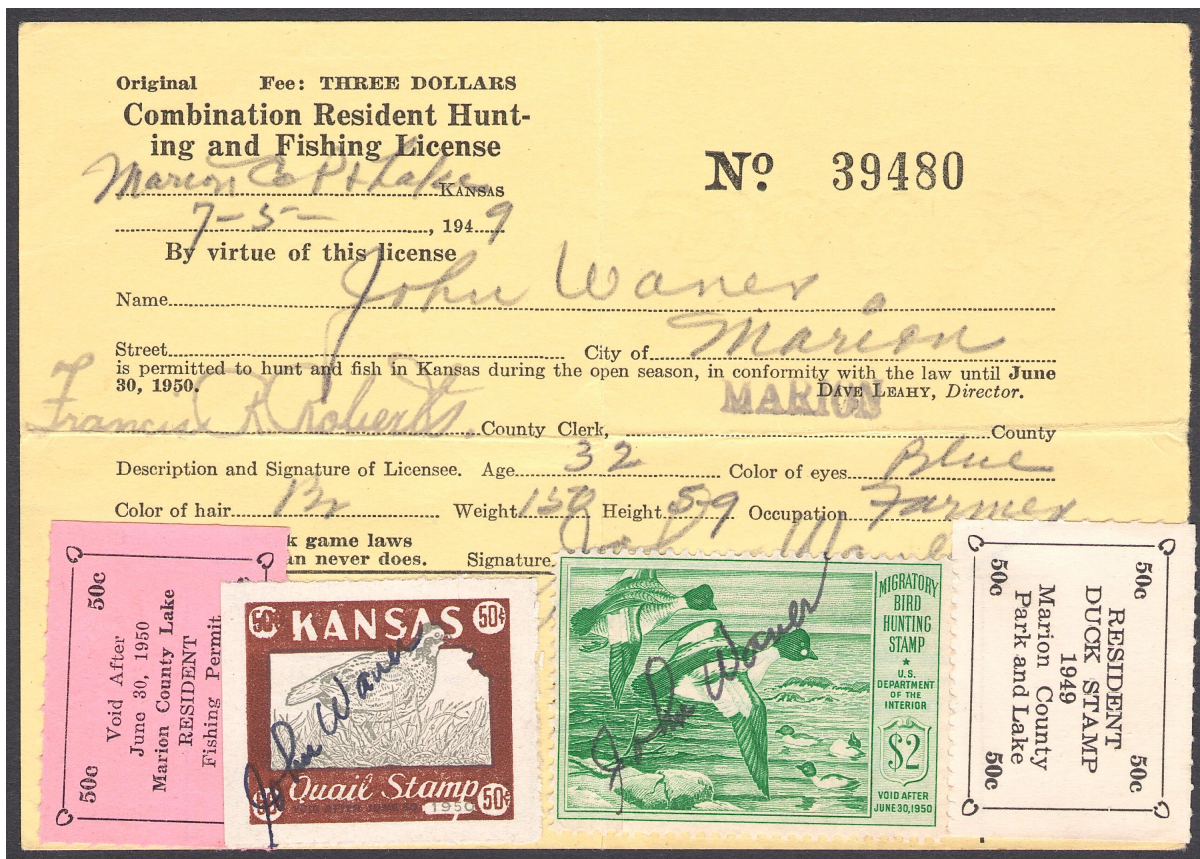


FIGURE 8. THE "WANER" LICENSE, GENERALLY REGARDED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT LICENSE IN FISH AND GAME PHILATELY; BEARING THE ONLY EXAMPLES RECORDED OF OF BOTH MARION COUNTY STAMPS FROM 1949; ALSO WITH U.S. 1949 DUCK STAMP, RW16.



FIGURE 9. MARION COUNTY 1969 DUCK STAMP COMPLETE PANE OF TEN CONTAINING ONE "DUSK" ERROR (POSITION EIGHT).

The first state stamp issued to license hunting on a statewide basis was in South Dakota in 1949. The revenue earned helped keep the state's duck population steady, both for preservation and hunting purposes. This was in sharp contrast to many parts of the country where waterfowl populations were in serious decline (see Figures 10 and 11).



FIGURE 10. THE FIRST STAMP ISSUED TO HUNT ON A STATEWIDE BASIS; SOUTH DAKOTA'S 1949 WATERFOWL STAMP. RARE VARIETY PRINTED ON HORIZONTAL SAFETY PAPER.



FIGURE 11. PROOF BLOCK OF FOUR OF THE 1950 SOUTH DAKOTA WATERFOWL STAMP.

California and Illinois picked up on the theme in the 1950s with selective programs (see Figures 12 and 13). In the late 1950s, the Rosebud Sioux tribe in South Dakota became the first Indian reservation authority to require purchase of waterfowl hunting stamps (Figure 14). Eventually, over 1,000 state, local, and tribal waterfowl stamps were issued, usually in very small quantities, to satisfy licensing requirements.



FIGURE 12. ILLINOIS STARTED USING DAILY USAGE STAMPS IN THE EARLY 1950S. THE STAMPS WERE EMPLOYED AT STATE RUN WILDLIFE AREAS.

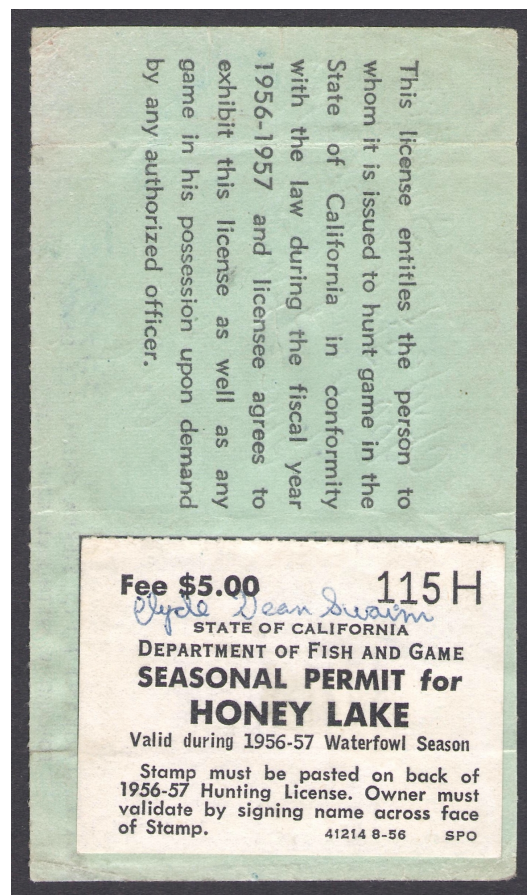


FIGURE 13. CALIFORNIA ALSO ISSUED STAMPS FOR A STATE OPERATED AREA, HONEY LAKE, STARTING IN 1956. THIS EXAMPLE ON LICENSE IS THE ONLY SOUND COPY.



FIGURE 14. IN THE LATE 1950S, THE ROSEBUD SIOUX TRIBE BECAME THE FIRST INDIAN RESERVATION AUTHORITY TO ISSUE STAMPS REQUIRED TO HUNT WATERFOWL.

Collecting State & Local Ducks

These strictly utilitarian duck stamps were issued without regard to collectors. Eventually, some Jurisdictions added a pictorial element. The stamps constitute a highly challenging and exclusive collecting field.

Inevitably, authorities caught on that there was money to be made off collectors. Ingenuity and production went into high gear. The first state pictorial design was issued by California in 1971, followed by Maryland and Massachusetts in 1974.

Nothing breeds success like success, and thirteen more states climbed aboard the pictorial bandwagon between 1976 and 1980. By now, almost half of the fifty states have added a further wrinkle by producing their wildlife stamps in two formats: one, usually in booklet form, to be sold for use on licenses; the other, in sheets for sale to collectors and investors.

In 1989, the Crow Creek Sioux were the first tribal government to issue pictorial duck stamps—not to cater to collectors, but to meet prescribed state standards. Distinctive stamps in very small quantities were issued to meet license needs of reservation residents, other South Dakotans, and out-of-staters, respectively (see Figure 15). Other Indian tribal authorities have issued stamps more easily obtained by collectors.



FIGURE 15. IN 1989, THE CROW CREEK SIOUX WERE THE FIRST TRIBAL GOVERNMENT TO ISSUE PICTORIAL DUCK STAMPS.

Needless to say, this collecting field is complex and covers a wide area. I was fortunate to walk through the exhibit with David Torre and Jim O'Donnell, who provided me with useful comments and much of the above background. Torre has been collecting since the age of 6, having observed his father who was an enthusiastic stamp collector. His collection is contained in some 125 albums and has won many honors. This includes 16 gold medals from U.S. competitions and the first international gold medal in this collecting area, awarded in New Delhi in December 1997. Torre has also received five APS awards for outstanding research. He is also a dealer in non-federal wildlife stamps and has published a catalog of which the third edition is expected shortly.

Summary

The exhibit consists of six frames, with subject matter organized as follows:

- 1938 Pymatuning Lake waterfowl stamp, the only known example of the issue.
- 1943 Marion county, Kansas, the only surviving example of the first stamp actually inscribed "Duck Stamp," with other county issues including a pane of 10 of the 1969 issue containing one "Dusk" error.
- A proof block of four and a sheet of fifty South Dakota waterfowl stamps.
- Stamps from Illinois and Honey Lake, California.
- Tribal area waterfowl stamps.
- Modern state and local duck stamp rarities, including one of only two unused examples known of the 1973 North Central Colorado Goose Permit, Florida 1982 Duck stamp missing red color and a rare booklet pane from North Dakota (see Figures 16, 17 and 18).

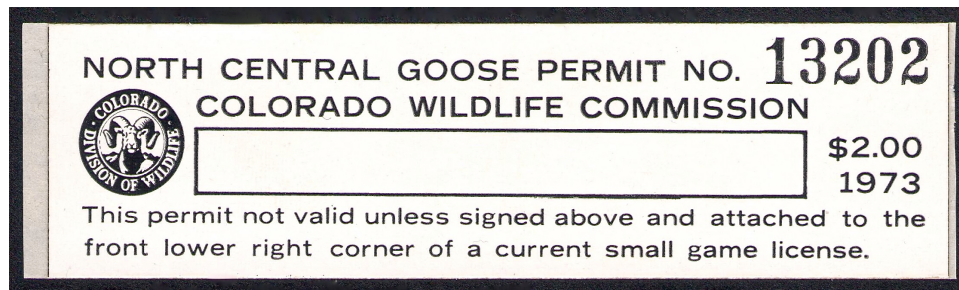


FIGURE 16. COLORADO NORTH CENTRAL GOOSE PERMIT STAMP ISSUED IN 1973. ONE OF ONLY TWO UNUSED EXAMPLES RECORDED.

<p style="text-align: right; color: red; font-weight: bold;">Nº 36505</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold;">WS</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold;">1981-82</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip _____</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">COMMISSION COPY</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: red;">FLORIDA Nº 36505</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: black;">\$3.25</p> <p style="font-size: small;">Expires June 30, 1982</p>  <p style="font-size: x-small; text-align: center;">American Widgeon</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">WATERFOWL STAMP</p> </div>	<p style="text-align: right; color: red; font-weight: bold;">Nº 36508</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold;">WS</p> <p style="text-align: right; font-weight: bold;">1981-82</p> <p>Name _____</p> <p>Address _____</p> <p>City _____ State _____ Zip _____</p> <p style="text-align: center; margin-top: 20px;">COMMISSION COPY</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: red;">FLORIDA Nº 36508</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; color: black;">\$3.25</p> <p style="font-size: small;">Expires June 30, 1982</p>  <p style="font-size: x-small; text-align: center;">American Widgeon</p> <p style="font-weight: bold; text-align: center;">WATERFOWL STAMP</p> </div>
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FIGURE 17. FLORIDA 1982 DUCK STAMP, NORMAL (LEFT) AND MISSING RED COLOR (RIGHT).



**FIGURE 18. NORTH DAKOTA 1983 STAMPS REQUIRED TO HUNT WATERFOWL.
THE STAMPS SOLD TO HUNTERS WERE PRINTED IN BOOKLET PANE FORMAT.**

The exhibit also includes selected stamps on licenses, maps, photographs and other material which provided an excellent context for the issuance and usage of these wild-fowl stamps.

The exhibit continues through December 31. The National Postal Museum is located in Washington, D.C. in the former Washington City Post Office building on Capitol Hill, adjacent to Union Station. It is open every day of the year (except Christmas) from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Admission is free.