

Waterfowl Stamp Exhibit Earns Appreciation

by Michael Jaffe

Introduction

Only two exhibits from throughout the world are selected to be included in the rarity vault of the Smithsonian National Postal Museum in Washington, D.C.. each year, and the current exhibit, State, Local and Tribal Waterfowl Stamps, assembled by David R. Torre, has been extended until the middle of January 1999.

Most people are aware of the Federal Duck Stamp program. It was implemented in March 1934 to provide funding for waterfowl conservation through the acquisition of wetland habitat. Federal Duck stamps represent roughly 5% of the total of waterfowl stamps issued. Well over 1,000 state, local and tribal waterfowl stamps have been issued by various government agencies. Most of these stamps are text only, with no illustration.

Unlike the federal duck stamps that are issued in quantities of more than 2 million, state, local and tribal stamps are sometimes issued in quantities of 200 or less. Due to this limited quantity, obtaining examples of many of these stamps has become very difficult.

Torre's exhibit consists of 45 extremely rare state, local and tribal waterfowl stamps displayed on six panels plus an introduction panel. The exhibit describes each rarity and gives a brief history of each section. Most of the stamps are either the only known copy, or one of two or three known.

Panel One

The first panel features the Pymatuning stamps, the first state waterfowl stamps. Pymatuning Lake is the largest man-made body of water east of the Mississippi River, straddling the Ohio-Pennsylvania border in the northern part of each state. Completed in 1934, the lake consists of 17,000 acres of freshwater and more than 70 miles of shoreline.

The 1938 stamp is unique and most probably the first state-issued waterfowl stamp. Eight examples of the Pymatuning waterfowl stamps are shown in this panel, including all known copies on license (see Figures 1, 2 and 3).

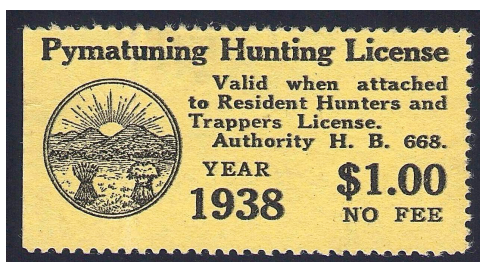


FIGURE 1. THE UNIQUE 1938 PYMATUNING WATERFOWL STAMP.

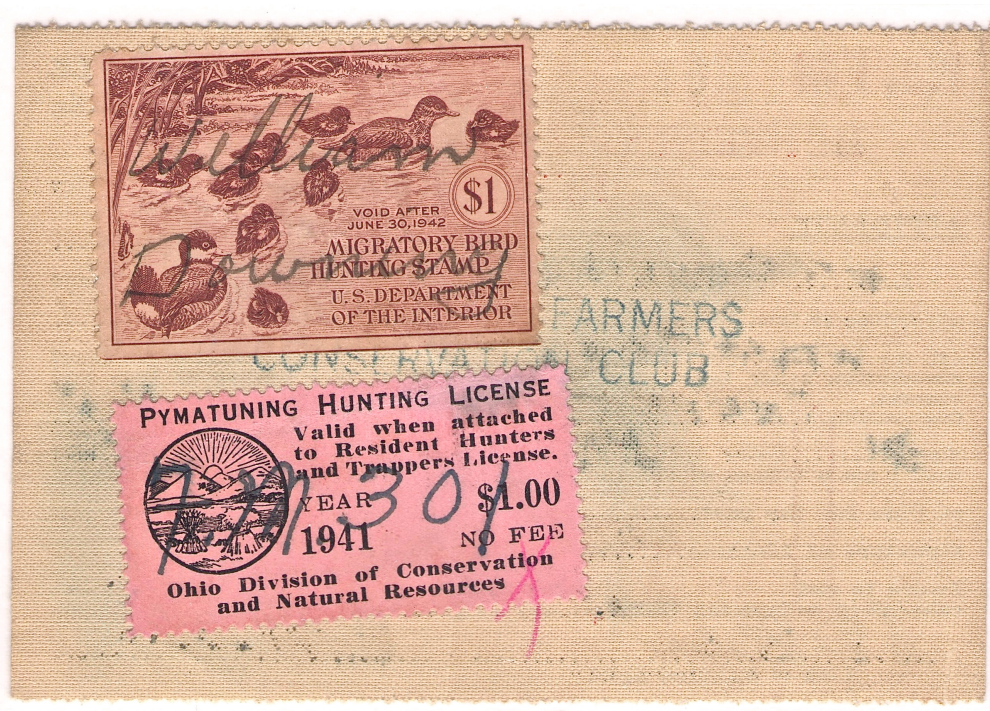


FIGURE 2. 1941 PYMATUNING WATERFOWL USED WITH 1941-42 FEDERAL WATERFOWL STAMP ON OHIO LICENSE.

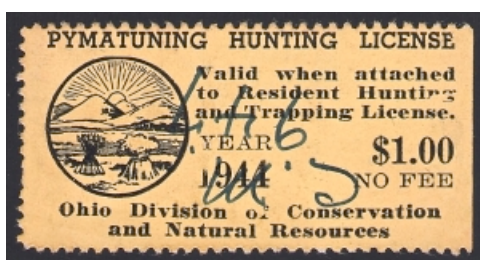


FIGURE 3. THIS 1944 PYMATUNING WATERFOWL STAMP IS ALSO THE ONLY EXAMPLE RECORDED.

Editor's note: We now know that Ohio first issued stamps for Pymatuning Lake in 1937.

Panel Two

The second panel is devoted to the stamps of Marion County, Kansas. In the early 1930s local residents became interested in building a recreational park featuring a lake. The board of commissioners selected Jerry E. Mullikin, a former peace officer with a lifelong interest in wildlife conservation, as the first superintendent.

The park opened in 1939. In 1941, Marion County became the first local government to issue waterfowl stamps. On display is a 1941 stamp on a license issued to J.E. Mullikin. This is believed to be the first stamp sold (see Figure 4).

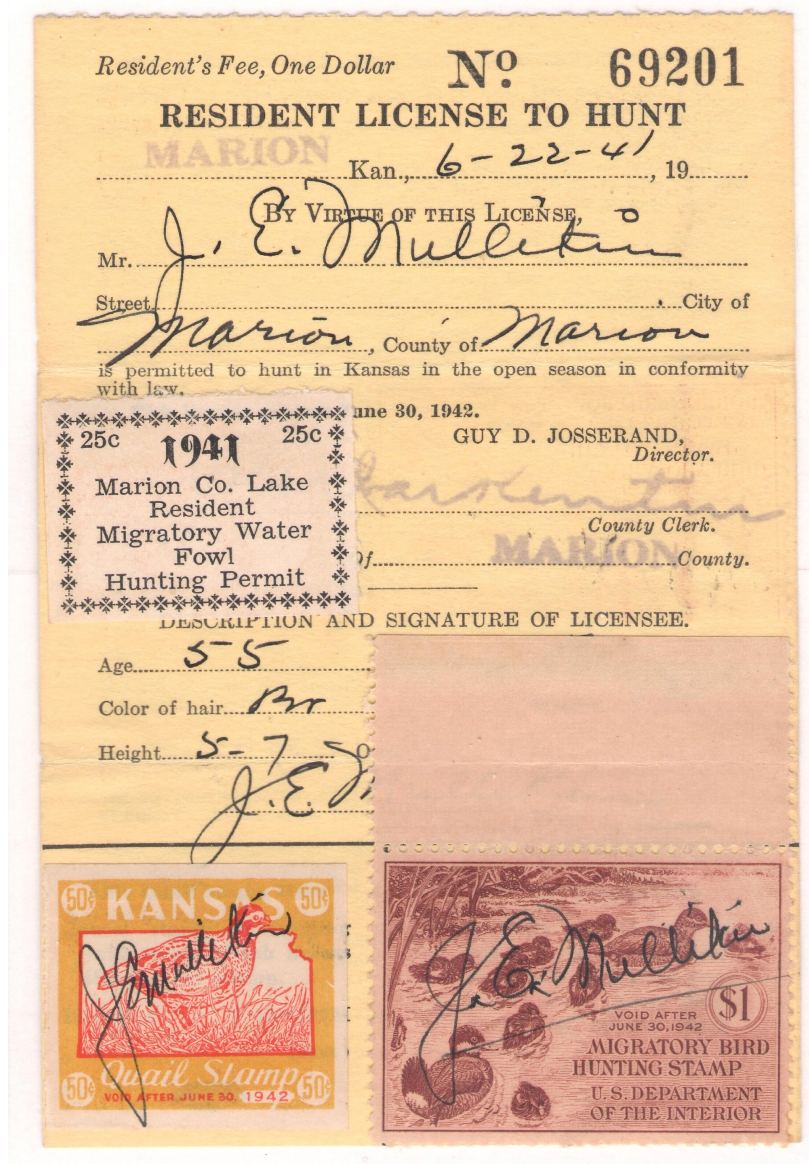


FIGURE 4. THE 1941 MARION COUNTY WATERFOWL STAMP USED ON THIS LICENSE IS BELIEVED TO BE THE FIRST STAMP SOLD. THE LICENSE WAS ISSUED TO PARK AND LAKE SUPERINTENDENT JERRY MULLIKIN.

In 1943 Marion County issued the world's first duck stamp. It is unique and Torre's favorite waterfowl stamp (see Figure 5).



FIGURE 5. THE WORLD'S FIRST DUCK STAMP, ISSUED BY MARION COUNTY IN 1943.

What is regarded as the most important license in fish and game philately is the Waner license: a 1949 Marion County combination hunting/fishing license with four different stamps. In addition to a Federal duck stamp and Kansas quail stamp, it contains the only recorded copy of the 1949 Marion County Duck and 1949 Marion County Fishing stamp (see Figure 6).

Original Fee: THREE DOLLARS
Combination Resident Hunting and Fishing License
Marion Co. Park & Lake KANSAS
 7-5-9, 1949
 By virtue of this license
 Name: *John Waner*
 Street: *Franklin Roberts* City of: *Marion*
 is permitted to hunt and fish in Kansas during the open season, in conformity with the law until June 30, 1950. *DAVE LEAHY, Director.*
 County Clerk, _____ County
 Description and Signature of Licensee. Age: *32* Color of eyes: *Blue*
 Color of hair: *Brn* Weight: *150* Height: *5'9"* Occupation: *Farmer*
 I know game laws and never does. Signature: *John Waner*

50c Void After June 30, 1950 Marion County Lake RESIDENT Fishing Permit

50c KANSAS Quail Stamp 1949

50c MIGRATORY BIRD HUNTING STAMP U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR \$2 VOID AFTER JUNE 30, 1950

50c RESIDENT DUCK STAMP 1949 Marion County Park and Lake

FIGURE 6. THE WANER LICENSE IS GENERALLY REGARDED AS THE MOST IMPORTANT LICENSE IN THE FISH AND GAME HOBBY. IT BEARS THE THE ONLY KNOWN EXAMPLES OF BOTH MARION COUNTY STAMPS FROM 1949.

Panel Three

The third panel contains different types of the 1949 and 1950 South Dakota waterfowl stamps with horizontal and vertical safety paper. The only known full sheet of the 1950 stamp is on display (see Figures 7, 8 and 9).

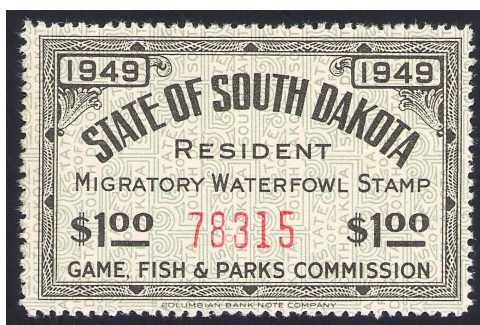


FIGURE 7. 1949 SOUTH DAKOTA WATERFOWL STAMP, TYPE I
PRINTED ON VERTICAL SAFETY PAPER.



FIGURE 8. TYPE II PRINTED ON HORIZONTAL SAFETY PAPER.



FIGURE 9. THIS PROOF BLOCK OF THE 1950 SOUTH DAKOTA WATERFOWL STAMP
IS THE LARGEST MULTIPLE RECORDED.

Panel Four

Panel four showcases the Illinois Daily Usage and California Honey Lake Stamps. The daily usage stamps were used at various public hunting grounds throughout the state for ducks, geese and pheasants. The earliest example shown is from 1953 (see Figures 10 and 11).



FIGURE 10. THE 1953 ILLINOIS DAILY USAGE STAMP WAS USED ON PUBLIC HUNTING GROUNDS.



FIGURE 11. COLLECTORS WERE TOLD THAT NO DAILY USAGE STAMPS WERE PRINTED FOR 1972.

Editors note: We now know Illinois Daily Usage Stamps were issued as early as 1951.

The Honey Lake Wildlife area is in Lassen County of northeastern California. Starting with the 1956-57 waterfowl season, seasonal permits were issued in the form of stamps. Of the three recorded examples of the 1956-57 Honey Lake stamp, only one is recorded on license. This license and the 1957-58 stamp where only four are recorded are two of the seven Honey Lake stamps (see Figures 12 and 13).

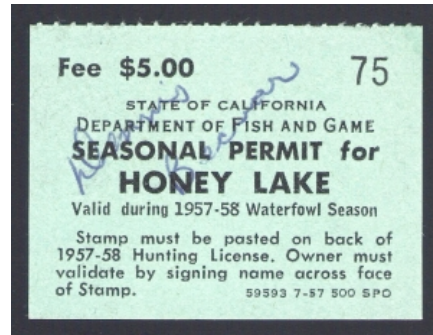


FIGURE 12. ONLY FOUR EXAMPLES OF THE 1957-58 HONEY LAKE STAMP HAVE BEEN RECORDED.



FIGURE 13. RELATIVELY FEW 1981-82 HONEY LAKE STAMPS WERE SOLD TO HUNTERS AND THE EXAMPLE SHOWN HERE IS THE ONLY ONE CURRENTLY KNOWN USED ON LICENSE. ALSO, ALL UNUSED REMAINDERS WERE DESTROYED BY ACCIDENT.

Panel 5

Panel five is devoted to tribal waterfowl stamps or Indian Reservation stamps as collectors refer to them. Indian Reservation stamps did not exist until the late 1950s. At that time, the Rosebud Sioux Tribe in South Dakota became the first tribal government to require the purchase of stamps before hunting waterfowl on the reservation.

By the early 1980s, only six reservations had issued stamps, and most fish and game collectors were unaware of their existence until the early 1990s.

Two examples of the first Rosebud stamp are included in this exhibit. One is an unused copy of the 1959 issue. These very ornate stamps were actually used for 10 years. Even though the stamps were in use for a long period of time, only three unused examples have been recorded (see Figure 14).



FIGURE 14. THE UNUSED 1959 ROSEBUD GAME BIRD STAMP.

Once issued, the date was filled in on the stamp. Although intended to be placed on a tribal-hunting license, occasionally hunters affixed the stamps to their state hunting license in error. An example of one of only two known Rosebud stamps issued in 1961 affixed to a state-hunting license is shown (see Figure 15).

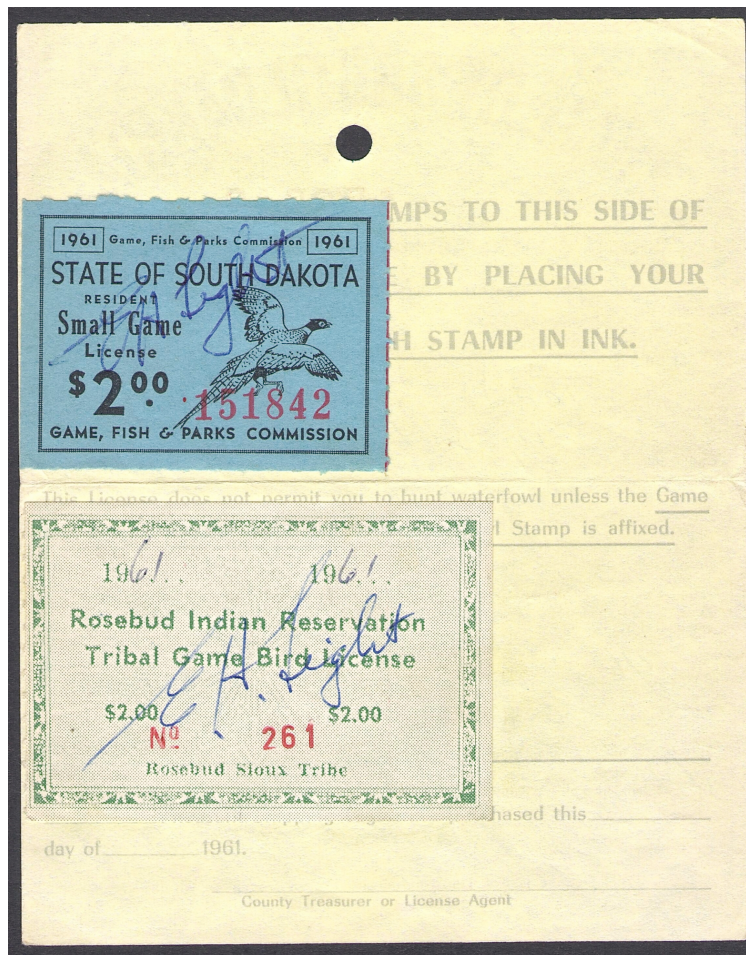


FIGURE 15. THIS ROSEBUD TRIBAL GAME BIRD STAMP WAS ISSUED IN 1961. THE HUNTER SHOULD HAVE PURCHASED A SEPARATE TRIBAL HUNTING LICENSE. HOWEVER, HE WAS GOT AWAY WITH AFFIXING THE TRIBAL STAMP TO HIS SOUTH DAKOTA STATE HUNTING LICENSE.

The Crow Creek Sioux Tribe, also of South Dakota, was the second Indian Reservation to issue stamps. Stamps were issued from 1961-64, and very few examples exist. The only recorded copy of the 1963 small game stamp is on display (see Figure 16).

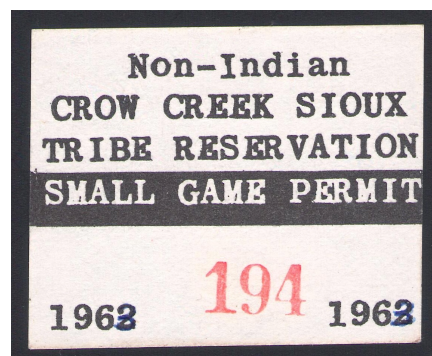


FIGURE 16. IN 1963, UNUSED REMAINDERS OF 1961 CROW CREEK SMALL GAME STAMPS WERE ISSUED AND THEIR DATE CHANGED MANUALLY WITH A BALL POINT PEN.

In 1989, the Crow Creek Sioux Tribal became the first tribal government to issue pictorial waterfowl stamps. Just 200 stamps were issued in three categories for hunting waterfowl on the Reservation: members of the reservation, residents of South Dakota and non-residents. The resident stamp almost sold out. Only 21 examples have been recorded (some of those have staple holes in them). The exhibit contains a complete pane of five, the only known multiple (see Figure 17).



**FIGURE 17. THE ONLY RECORDED COMPLETE PANE
OF THE 1989 CROW CREEK RESIDENT WATERFOWL STAMP**

Major errors (missing colors or perforations) on duck stamps are extremely rare. They are almost non-existent on Indian Reservation stamps. In 1990, a pane of the non-resident waterfowl stamp was found in a book of stamps with the red serial numbers missing. It is quite striking when compared to a normal numbered pane. The pane was acquired by Torre, and this is the first time it has been on public display (see Figure 18).



**FIGURE 18. TOP TAB SINGLE FROM THE ERROR PANE
(THE PANE HAS SINCE BEEN BROKEN).**

Many philatelists familiar with the exhibit, including National Postal Museum Director James Bruns, feel that the Crow Creek error pane is the highlight of the entire exhibit.

Another type of major error is a printing error. In 1994 the Crow Creek daily usage waterfowl stamps were distributed with a \$25 face value in error. Within a week they were recalled and replaced with the corrected \$30 face value stamps. Five error stamps have been reordered. A pair, the only known multiple, is in the exhibit along with a pane of the normal stamp (see Figure 19).



**FIGURE 19. PAIR OF 1994 CROW CREEK WATERFOWL
STAMP ERRORS. THE LARGEST MULTIPLE RECORDED.**

Lower Brule began issuing stamps in 1962. These stamps were used for many years through 1972. The license agent would fill in the year issued and the amount depending on whether the purchaser was a tribal member or non-resident. No stamps used by tribal members have been recorded. Only one stamp used in 1972 has been recorded. It is on a license and in this exhibit (see Figure 20).

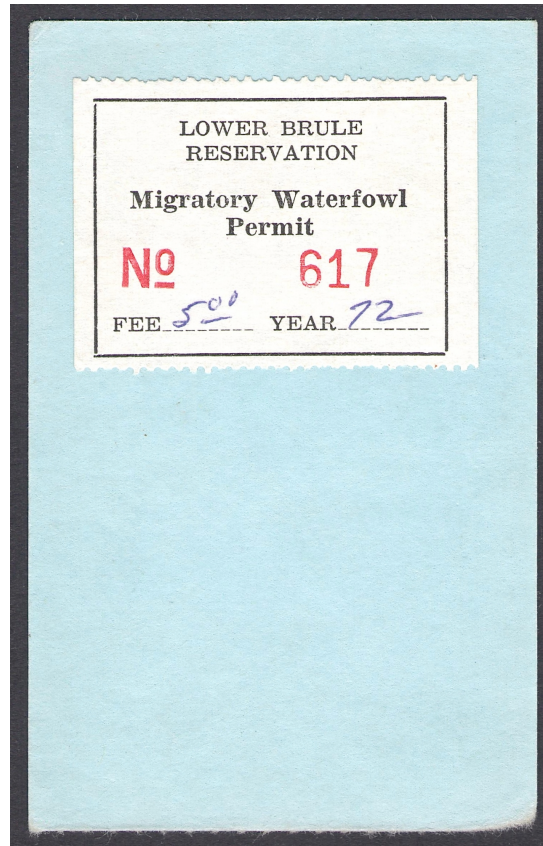


FIGURE 20. THE 1972 LOWER BRULE WATERFOWL STAMP USED ON LICENSE.

The Fort Peck Tribe began issuing stamps in the 1970s. The earliest recorded stamps are from 1975. Stamps were issued annually through 1978 in panes of 10. The exhibited pane from 1977 includes all 10 recorded examples of this great rarity (see Figure 21).

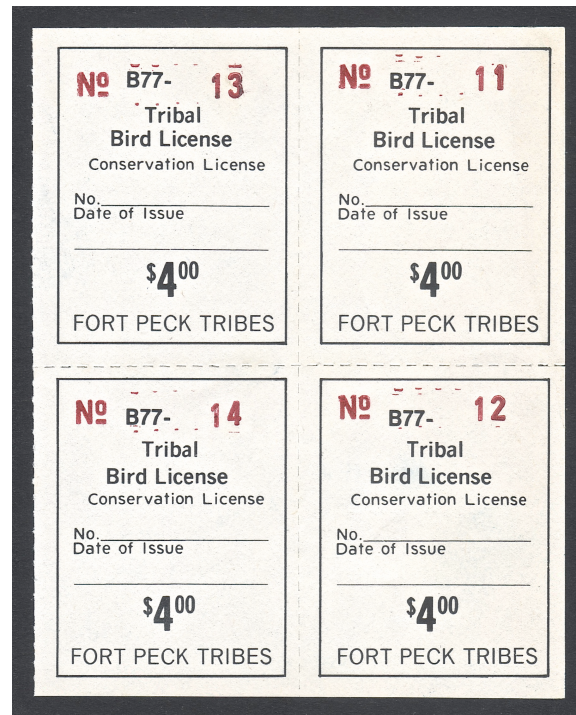


FIGURE 21. BLOCK OF FOUR 1977 FORT PECK BIRD STAMPS (THE PANE HAS SINCE BEEN BROKEN).

Panel Six

The final panel focuses on contemporary issues. The 1973 Colorado Goose stamp was on sale for a very short time and overlooked by collectors. Only two unused copies and four on a license have been recorded (see Figure 22).

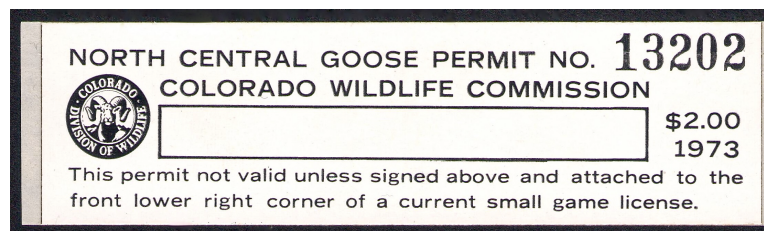


FIGURE 22. THE UNUSED 1973 COLORADO GOOSE STAMP.

Editor's note: Ten examples on license have now been recorded.

In the 1980s North Dakota became the first state to print two versions of its duck stamps, one for collectors and one for hunters. It took collectors several years to realize this, and the early booklet-type stamps (issued to hunters) are now very difficult to find in unused condition. Very few multiples were purchased, and even fewer remained intact. A complete 1983 full pane is exhibited (see Figure 23).



FIGURE 23. COMPLETE PANE OF THE 1983 NORTH DAKOTA RESIDENT SMALL GAME STAMP.

As of the Smithsonian Exhibit in 1998, Torre's exhibit has won several awards including 16 National gold medals and an International gold. His exhibit will give you a greater appreciation of the scarcity of these waterfowl stamps.

If you are unable to get to Washington, D.C., prior to the middle of January, be sure to ask your favorite revenue or duck stamp dealer to view his stock of non- pictorial waterfowl and Indian Reservation stamps next time you attend a stamp show. You may find a new collecting interest.