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National Duck Stamp Week Golden Anniversary Year of the Duck Stamp, 1984

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Among our most cherished wildlife resources are migratory waterfowl. The ducks, geese, and swans of North America not only fascinate us with their beauty and spectacle, they remind us of the continuing values of a clean, safe, wholesome environment. The health of our waterfowl resources depends on the well-being of their environment. If the Nation's wetlands are lost, these birds and the many other fish and wildlife resources they support cannot thrive. In recognition of the vital link between wildlife and wetlands, the United States has created an extensive system of National Wildlife Refuges. This great array of wild lands and waters provides countless opportunities for our waterfowl to nest and feed. We have so many of these refuges to enjoy today because of the farsighted practices of successive generations of Americans.

This year marks the fiftieth anniversary of the passage of the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act. To implement this law, the first Duck Stamp was issued later that year. The Duck Stamp was the creation of Jay N. "Ding" Darling, an award-winning editorial cartoonist and pioneer conservationist. It was his idea that every waterfowl hunter in this country had a vital stake in wetland and waterfowl conservation and that each should share in the responsibility to maintain that wildlife tradition they held so dear.

In the 50 years that have passed since the introduction of the Duck Stamp, it has become one of the Nation's most successful conservation programs. Almost 90 million of the stamps have been sold, generating more than \$285 million for waterfowl conservation. All or part of 186 National Wildlife Refuges—a total of 3.5 million acres—have been acquired through Duck Stamp revenues.

In the last 50 years, Americans have become increasingly aware that wetlands provide essential habitat for ducks and geese and contribute significantly to other wildlife resources including endangered species, open space recreation, commercial and sport fisheries, flood control, groundwater recharge and water purification. A recent study by the Department of the Interior concluded that the United States is losing wetlands at the pace of nearly one-half million acres every year, an area the size of the State of Rhode Island. Clearly, the Duck Stamp program is as important today as it was in 1934.

In recognition of the contributions of the Duck Stamp program, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 270, has designated the week of July 1 through July 8, 1984, as "National Duck Stamp Week" and 1984 as "Golden Anniversary Year of the Duck Stamp" and authorized and requested the President to issue an appropriate proclamation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of July 1 through July 8, 1984, as National Duck Stamp Week and 1984 as the Golden Anniversary Year of the Duck Stamp. I urge all Americans to observe these occasions with appropriate ceremonies and events, including participating in this program.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of July, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eighth.

Ronald Reagan