

A LICENSE and STAMP SYSTEM for WATERFOWL CONSERVATION in the 20th CENTURY U.S.

The **PURPOSE** of this exhibit is to show how licenses and stamps played a vital role in waterfowl conservation in the United States during the 20th century. Our goal is to tell the *definitive* story by placing individual items of social, historical and philatelic importance into their appropriate context, one that has never before been fully developed. The story traces the early stages in development of the license and stamp system employed by five levels of government, whose joint responsibility it was to preserve waterfowl resources for future generations. To this end it was necessary to invent and refine an effective regulatory system as applied to harvesting this resource. Stamps perfected the system, allowing government agencies to obtain funding from the segment of society who could decimate waterfowl populations and who also stood to benefit the most from waterfowl conservation – the hunters. The **IMPORTANCE** of this exhibit is rooted in this fact: The system that was developed and perfected in the U.S. during the 20th century became the model that was subsequently adopted by nations worldwide.



1887 Delaware Game Protective Association Certificate – Created the first Game wardens in the U.S.
Conveyed the right to hunt waterfowl to protectors

ORGANIZATION/PLAN

- **Chapter One (Frame 1):** Pre-Stamp
- **Chapter Two (Frames 2-3):** Federal
- **Chapter Three (Frames 4):** Military
- **Chapter Four (Frames 5-7):** State and Local
- **Chapter Five (Frame 8):** Tribal

The most important items are matted in blue

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Exhibit Goal. Our goal is to tell the definitive story of waterfowl conservation in the U.S by placing individual philatelic items of historical, social and philatelic importance into their appropriate context, illustrating *the cooperative effort* that has never been fully developed prior to this exhibit.

Importance of the Exhibit. The importance of this exhibit is rooted in this fact: The stamp and license system developed and perfected in the U.S. during the twentieth century **produces vital revenue for conservation and has become the model adopted by nations worldwide.** Their number continues to grow and now includes Canada and Mexico. This is of particular importance to U.S. conservation efforts, as up to 70% of North American waterfowl are bred in Canada and seasonally move back and forth from Canada to Mexico with long stopovers in the U.S. via migration patterns known as *flyways*.

In addition, waterfowl stamps and their story have inspired hundreds of thousands of people worldwide **to become philatelists that would not ordinarily have done so** – hunters, conservationists and lovers of waterfowl and waterfowl art.

Exhibit Organization and How the Items Were Selected for Inclusion

We feel that telling the story in five distinct *chapters* under one title most accurately portrays the nature of the cooperative effort that existed for waterfowl conservation in the U.S. during the 20th Century.

The five levels of government discussed in each chapter operated both: 1) Independent of each other to manage waterfowl populations under their jurisdiction, and 2) Together, to achieve the most effective overall conservation policy. They independently gathered species population data. They subsequently *shared the data* to establish nation-wide season lengths and bag limits. It was this cooperative effort that effectively kept North American waterfowl populations in equilibrium.

More to the crux of this exhibit, the five different levels of government: 1) Adopted a collective method of regulation and law enforcement that developed into the backbone of waterfowl conservation policy in the U.S in the 20th Century. During this time, the *license and stamp system* evolved into a powerful and efficient regulatory tool; and 2) They shared a common approach to secure funding. Sales of licenses and stamps served principally to generate badly needed revenue for this massive undertaking.

Each chapter is organized chronologically. The first jurisdiction to issue stamps is shown altogether, followed by the second and so on – to include the State *and* Local (i.e. Marion County) issues chapter.

The story is illustrated by items of the highest degree of difficulty of acquisition and quality. If an item was important to the story but of low difficulty, it was included. Items of low difficulty that were unnecessary to advance the story *were excluded*. After the mid 1960s, with a few exceptions, the federal waterfowl stamps are very common and there is little material which advances the story so they were excluded.

The **number of examples recorded** in this exhibit is derived from an ongoing census, begun by in the 1950s by E.L. Vanderford and continued to date by David R. Torre (waterfowlstampsandmore.com). All certificate numbers are printed on the exhibit pages and the certificates themselves are located behind the exhibit pages.