



GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS



An approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing

25 June 2012

Time for a New Stamp

The next opportunity

A simple \$15-purchase could be the easiest thing you can do to support a legacy of wetland and grassland conservation for birds. That purchase consists of a Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp - sometimes called the Federal Duck Stamp. The Stamp's proceeds overwhelmingly go to secure valuable grassland and wetland habitat in the National Wildlife Refuge System.



All waterfowl hunters over the age of 16 are required to buy a Stamp for each hunting season. The Stamp also allows purchasers access to all units of the National Wildlife Refuge System that charge entry fees. While the Stamp currently costs \$15, that price has been in place since 1991. Land costs - all from willing sellers - have nearly tripled since that time, causing Stamp proponents and agency officials to urge Congress to

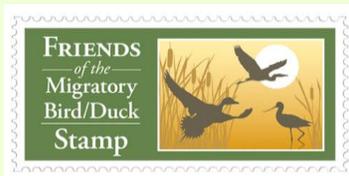
increase the price of the Stamp.

The Stamp is easy for everyone to purchase - nearly all Post Offices carry them. The purchase of a Stamp, however, is not something that benefits just ducks. Among scores of other bird species, numerous species of shorebirds, long-legged waders, and wetland and grassland songbirds benefit from habitat derived from Stamp purchases.

You can find more information [here](#) on the 2012-2013 "Duck Stamp" that goes on sale starting Friday, 29 June, with a kick-off celebration at the Bass Pro Shops in Hampton, Virginia.

New Pro-Stamp Group Website

Earlier this month, a new website for the Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp was launched. This Friends Group has defined its role as the promotion, preservation, sales, and better understanding of the Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp (commonly called the Duck Stamp). The group fosters an appreciation of how the funds collected through sale of the Stamp and deposited into the Migratory Bird Conservation



Fund build the National Wildlife Refuge System, and it emphasizes the conservation of habitat and the many wildlife species (waterfowl and much more) that benefit from Stamp sales.

Just like the "Duck Stamp" is not just for ducks, this Friends Group is not just for waterfowlers. It's also for other hunters, for birders, wildlife photographers, environmental educators, anglers, refuge friends, and, ultimately, for any people who value wildlife and wild places.

You can find out more about the group, its mission, and how to engage in activities through the new [website](#).

Rice and Birds

Experiences growing in California

More than 13 dozen California rice growers have recently signed up for an innovative program to improve bird habitat on their land. These Sacramento Valley farmers, from six counties in the state, recently signed up for a new Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) program, that offers almost \$3 million in incentives to manage their land in ways that will benefit wetland birds.

The effort is being launched in cooperation with the Migratory Bird Conservation Partnership, involving Audubon California, PRBO Conservation Science, and The Nature Conservancy. You can find more information on that alliance [here](#).

The NRCS program should significantly increase the acres of farmland improved for migratory birds and allow California rice farmers to make some real conservation investments. The habitat is actually being enhanced for waterfowl, shorebirds, long-legged waders, gulls, terns, wetland associated songbirds, and other birds.

You can find more information on this entire effort [here](#).

Since rice is the most bird-friendly mass-produced crop grown in the United States, the implications are great for California and provide even more examples for other states with rice production (e.g, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas).

While the NRCS effort is another great way to advance conservation, what may be missing now is an organized appeal to consumers, essentially marketing rice as a valuable bird-friendly and "green" product.

There may also be lessons to be learned here from another bird-compatible crop, one from outside the U.S., and that's shade-grown coffee. Indeed, opportunities abound.



Long-grain rice grown in the U.S.

Words to Consider:

"I'm learning one thing the hard way... you have to re-educate the public mind about every 15 or 20 years or it forgets everything learned a while back."

- J. Norwood 'Ding' Darling (artist, conservationist, birder, hunter, head of the U.S. Biological Survey - 1934-35)

GBP Bulletin Archives

Great Birding Projects is a vehicle to promote a creative approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing. It is not "strictly birding," and it is not "strictly conservation." Instead, GBP functions as a bridge to an innovative engagement between people and birds.

You can access all previous issues of this GBP Bulletin on the GBP website [here](#).

