



GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS



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

25 November 2013

"Banking on Nature" Makes a Case Refuges are measured as economic engines



A "Banking on Nature" report was released in early November by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). This 365-page report, the latest in a series, showed that for every \$1 appropriated by Congress to run the National Wildlife Refuge System, nearly \$5 has been generated in local economies.

Even during the greatest recession since the Great Depression, the overall return on investment increased substantially for the Refuge System as well as every other major indicator. Some of the summary highlights are illustrated in the graphic above, prepared by the Cooperative Alliance for Refuge Enhancement ([CARE](#)), a national coalition of 22 wildlife, sporting, conservation, and scientific organizations dedicated to National Wildlife Refuge System funding. These include visitors (46.5 million), jobs created (35,000) associated tax revenue (\$342.9 million) and a substantial total economic output (\$2.4 billion).

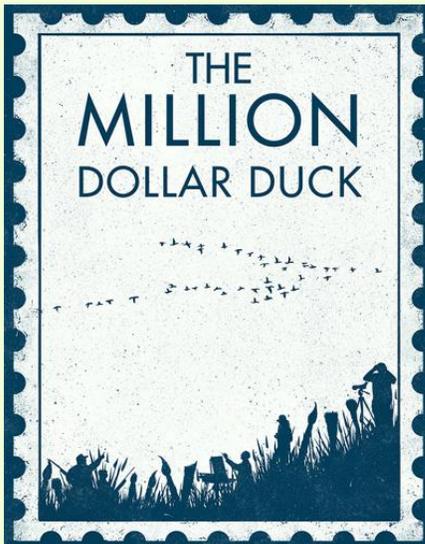
Other highlights of the report include the following:

- About 72 percent of total expenditures are generated by non-consumptive activities on refuges. (Fishing accounted for 21 percent and hunting 7 percent.)
- Local residents accounted for 23 percent of expenditures while visitors coming from outside the local area accounted for 77 percent.
- Birding accounts for 11.9 million individual visits.

You can access the full report [here](#).

Documentary on the Duck Stamp

Explaining the Stamp; Expanding the Stamp Appreciation



The Million Dollar Duck is a feature-length documentary film in the works. It centers on the Federal Duck Stamp Contest. The film follows creative wildlife artists from around the country as they take reference photos, design their entry, paint their waterfowl, and submit their choice paintings in the hope that the artwork will grace the following year's Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation [Duck] Stamp. The film follows the history of the stamp, its role in conservation, its varied constituencies, and the future, all the while exploring the culture that the stamp has created.

"Why I am making this film" says Davis, "is directly related to my personal experience. After hearing about the stamp, the artists, and everything the stamp does for conservation I knew that I would buy one every year for the rest of my life. I say this being a very novice birder and I have never been waterfowl hunting before. To me the purchase of the duck stamp goes beyond birders and waterfowl hunters, I think every U.S. citizen should know about it and have a chance to take part in U.S. conservation, but they can only do this if they actually know about it. It is

my hope by telling the entertaining story of artists and the juried art competition that I introduce the world of the Duck Stamp to a very large audience."

The creative production team, led by Brian Davis, is filled with award-winning talent, people dedicated to getting the story of the Stamp out into the world. Davis and his team have released a preview of the film and are raising money through a "Kickstarter" effort. You can view the preview - a virtual trailer - and other details [here](#).



Photo: Sasha Kopf

Thanksgiving's this week! ***Lessons from the Wild Turkeys***

As we approach the fine ritual of carving up our Thanksgiving turkeys, we might just consider the impact of that bird, the wild version at least, over our American centuries.

Yes, the idyllic image of the Pilgrims sharing a Wild Turkey feast in New England, with the help of local Native Americans, is a classic one, but we should also appreciate that the bird in the

wild began to suffer greatly thereafter.

By the mid-19th century, the Wild Turkey was essentially extirpated from New England, primarily a victim of massive land-clearing, exacerbated by hunting. It did survive in areas of the Appalachian and Cumberland plateaus, Ozarks, and Gulf States where the large birds became restricted to sparsely populated areas along streams, swamps, and mountains.

Populations continued to drop into the 20th century. But it was the successful campaign of introductions by sportsmen and state wildlife agencies, especially over the past 40+ years, that has made the Wild Turkey such a wildlife success story. In the 1970s, we had an estimated 1.5 million Wild Turkeys in North America; today that number is closer to 7 million.

This has even been verified, witnessed, and supplemented by backyard bird-feeding throughout much of the United States. This situation was almost unknown 30 years ago. Indeed, the picture shown here, representing a not-uncommon sight, is from suburban Brookline, Massachusetts. Notice the sidewalk! Wiped out by the mid-19th century in New England and elsewhere, the Wild Turkey can even be a fairly common backyard bird at some locations today.

Enjoy your Thanksgiving!

Words to Consider:

"Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wilderness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life."

- John Muir (1838 - 1914)

GBP Bulletin Archives

Great Birding Projects is a vehicle to promote a creative approach to bird-related editing, education, tourism, and marketing. GBP functions as a bridge to an innovative engagement between people and birds. You can access all previous issues of the *GBP* bulletin on the GBP website [here](#).

