



GREAT BIRDING PROJECTS



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

15 February 2014

A Gem of a Message *But is it enough?*



From the original CCC - 1934-1942

Last month, Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, Sally Jewell, invoked the legacy of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps to launch a "21st Century Conservation Service Corps" that could give tens of thousands of young people and veterans the opportunity to serve their country and enhance their lives through work in the outdoors.

Jewell made [the announcement](#) at the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C., in recognition of the Civilian Conservation Corps that FDR created 80 years ago, part of his first 100 days in office.

Eighty years ago, FDR saw the power in combining two threatened resources - millions of unemployed young men during the Great Depression with our lands beset by drought, neglect, and soil erosion. The original CCC put more than three million young men between the ages of 17 and 26 into productive service for over a decade with impressive results: The work included three billion trees planted, 97,999 miles of Forest Service fire roads built, 800 parks constructed, and roads and impoundments for National Wildlife Refuges created. FDR also understood that the transformation ran deeper - not only in helping support young men and their families, but "the moral and spiritual value of such work."

Jewell had first outlined her perspective in a speech at the National Press Club in October where she emphasized the need to bridge the growing disconnect between young people and the great outdoors. The goals of the Interior Department's youth initiative for the next four years include efforts in the area of learning, serving, working, and, yes, playing. This is what she has called a "CCC 2.0."

Given the enormous needs of the day, with high youth unemployment, seven million young people disconnected from school and work, two million veterans returning from two wars, and with public lands and waterways in desperate need of attention, there is an opportunity to combine vulnerable resources once again.

Jewell's goals are to raise \$20 million in private funds by 2017 to recruit these young Americans for a [21st Century Conservation Service Corps](#) (21 CSC).. She is trying to raise those funds from private sources. Eagle outfitters was the very first to make a pledge, putting up a million dollars.

Details are still sketchy, but the effort would be oriented toward supporting those organizations that deploy current corps members. Currently, about 20,000 young people and veterans participate in such programs yearly. (Various state-based programs have been run in a number of states, including California, Texas, Montana, Washington, Minnesota, and Vermont.)

But is this really enough?

The original Civilian Conservation Corps was highly ambitious, and rightfully so. The President made his request to Congress for the CCC on 21 March 1933, and the legislation was passed 10 days later. Eight days after that, the first employee was hired. On 17 April, the first CCC camp was established at the George Washington National Forest in Virginia, and by 1 July there were 1,463 working camps across the country with 250,000 junior enrollees, 28,000 veterans, 14,000 Native Americans, and 25,000 locally enrolled (experienced) men. Maximum enrollment at one time was 300,000 young men, and in nine years there were three million Americans who went through the program.

Each enrollee working on conservation projects was provided shelter, clothing, food, together with a modest stipend of \$30 a month, \$25 of which had to be sent home to the family.

Things are different today. Fundamentally, there is not the political will to get Congressional support for such an important and far-reaching program. Federal budget woes only exacerbate the problem.

A number of other differences between the original CCC and today's circumstances make using those old CCC standards improbable: the compensation would have to rise (today's equivalent of the \$30 and \$25 would be \$538 and \$448 per month, respectively); the very first CCC units were integrated, but the program succumbed to segregation after 1935, and, yes, no women whatsoever were enrolled.

The original program was also multi-departmental - Labor, Agriculture, War (now Defense), and Interior. A multi-departmental effort would still be appropriate beyond the Department of the Interior, to include Agriculture and Labor (with a simultaneous ramp-up of AmeriCorps, for example).

Still, the original CCC has been called the most successful innovation of the New Deal, and appropriate lessons should be learned from that experience.

One thing that is certainly not different today is the need. There is a need to repair national and state parks, wildlife refuges, reconstruct urban parks and public spaces, remove invasive plants, and restore habitat for birds and other wildlife. There is also a crying need to bring back that spirit, to create jobs and to create a new generation of

committed conservationists with real hands-on experiences.

In the face of these needs, Americans should really be thinking big.

Secretary Jewell has raised the issue and has presented a gem of an idea. That vision needs to be fully discussed and implemented... and expanded.

More on the Stamp 80th Anniversary, Price, and Birder PSAs

Here is another American conservation concept that is proven and that is 80 years old.

In the mid-1930s, in the midst of the Great Depression, after years of debate and disappointment, forces for wetland and waterfowl conservation were finally able to make major headway to save wetlands and their wildlife, particularly waterfowl. A successful set of three factors combined to make it possible: a Congressional bill to pass a "Duck Stamp," a sweeping Presidential Commission proposal for wildlife conservation, and important changes in the Bureau of Biological Survey (predecessor of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service). The bill to establish the Stamp was promoted by Senators Peter Norbeck (R-SD) and Frederic C. Walcott (R-CT). In the House of Representatives, Congressman Richard Kleberg (D-TX) took the lead.

Finally, the bill passed in March, 1934, and it was signed by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt on 16 March. For background on this history, see [here](#).

Next month will mark the 80th anniversary of that signing. That event will be recognized a number of ways and at a number of places. The lessons therein ought to be appreciated.

Meanwhile, things are starting to move on modernizing the Stamp. In late December, U.S. Senators Mark Begich (D-AK), Max Baucus (D-MT), Chris Coons (D-DE), and Jon Tester (D-MT) introduced a bill (The Migratory Bird Habitat Investment and Enhancement Act, [S.1865](#)) to raise the Stamp price from \$15 to \$25. The proposal, which was reported out of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee would allow the Secretary of the Interior, in consultation with the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission (MBCC), to raise the price. The Congressional Budget Office has determined that because the Stamp is a user fee, such a price increase would have no net impact on federal spending.

It has been 23 years since the last increase to bring the price of the stamp to \$15, the single longest period without a price increase in the program's history. In the meantime, land values have dramatically increased.

As the findings for the proposed legislation state, "benefits extend to all wildlife, not just ducks."

At the same time, the [Friends of the Migratory Bird/Duck Stamp](#) has developed a set of public service announcements (PSAs) for birders. They are available in four different sizes, available for print and website use. The "medium sized" model PSA is shown below. These PSAs have been modeled after those that [Pheasants Forever](#) developed in their magazine, aiming to appeal to hunters who are not required to buy a "Duck Stamp." You can access these four model PSAs for birders [here](#).

A Birding Equipment Checklist:

- ✓ *Binoculars*
- ✓ *Field Guide*
- ✓ *Scope*
- ✓ *Camera*
- ✓ *Cell phone*
- Migratory Bird Stamp?*



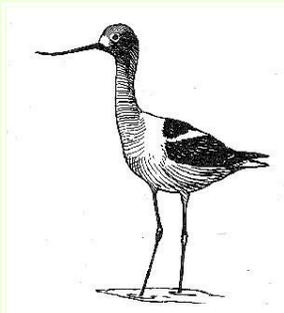
YES! Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamps have gone to fund the acquisition of over 5.5 million acres of habitat for our National Wildlife Refuge System. These lands, almost always open to birding, provide essential habitat for waterfowl, shorebirds, raptors, songbirds, and many more species.

Buy and show your stamp!
Found at Post Offices, National Wildlife Refuges, and sporting goods stores.

A Public Service Announcement in Support of the Stamp

Bob Hines Exhibit at RTPI

Wonderful Art



Sketch by Bob Hines

Bob Hines (1912-1994) was a nationally recognized wildlife artist whose work became a crucial factor in a wave of interest in nature and conservation.

There is an exhibit of his works at the [Roger Tory Peterson Institute](#) (in Jamestown, New York) running through 25 May. The [exhibit](#) takes the visitor on a tour of Hines's lifework from his start as a conservation illustrator in Ohio through a long and storied career with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. His experiences included running the Federal Duck Stamp Contest for over 30 years and working with and illustrating for the legendary 20th

century scientist and conservationist Rachel Carson.

For a time, his prolific artwork seemed to appear everywhere, especially in the 1950s and 1960s. For example, his compact and popular guide, *Ducks at a Distance*, was distributed by the millions. In fact, Hines drew birds, mammals, fish, and other wildlife that even today continue to circulate - available through the USFWS as [free clip art](#).

His simple, but inspired, sketches of American Avocet (above, left) and Greater Prairie-Chicken (right) appear here. His Roseate Terns and Willet can also be appreciated embedded in the GBP logo on the top of this newsletter!

For anyone interested in the Federal Duck Stamp program, nature-inspired art and illustration, environmental history, or art history and appreciation, the unique exhibition at RTPi is not to be missed.



Sketch by Bob Hines

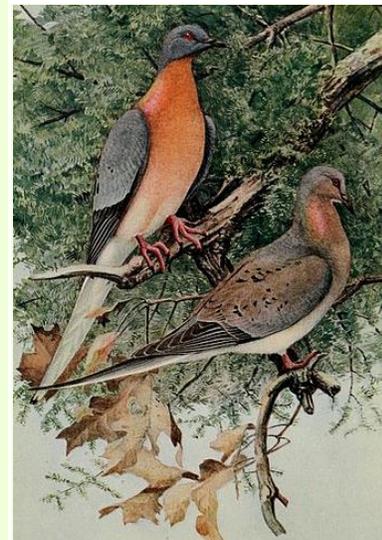
Passenger Pigeon Preparation ***A Centennial Lacking Celebration***

At one time, Passenger Pigeons were so numerous that their enormous flocks could cover the sky, and they might block out the sun as they flew overhead. With a likely population in North America of between three and five billion, this species was the most abundant bird in North America and possibly the world.

In a decades-long slaughter of epic proportions, the birds were harvested to extinction. In the words of author and naturalist, Joel Greenberg, in his *Feathered River Across the Sky* (2014, Bloomsbury), in four decades, 1860-1900, the species went from "bewilderingly vast... to virtually gone." The very last Passenger Pigeon known drew her final breath a century ago, on 1 September 1914.

Greenberg's book is skillfully written, recounting the story of the bird's demise, the victim of human excess and irresponsibility. Descriptions of the unrelenting slaughter of flocking birds is, at times, hard to take. But the gruesome narrative is all part of a teaching tool, a cautionary tale that we would do well to consider.

The only missing feature in the book is probably the absence of a deeper understanding of how a growing 19th-century population combined with a thorough telegraph system



Passenger Pigeon
by Louis A. Fuertes (1907)

and a complex of railroad lines (and the development of the refrigerated railroad car) may have doomed this species. No matter, though. The book stands on its own to tell us of the unrelenting carnage and waste and to open a discussion on the importance of this story to current conservation issues.

In the meantime, a creative effort is now underway to mark this year as the centenary of this species' passing. The activities marking the end of the Passenger Pigeon, and the lessons therein, are being coordinated through [Project Passenger Pigeon](#).

In the words of the team working on this project, "this story doesn't have to be depressing." Indeed, there are lessons to learn and modern success stories to share. Hopefully, that will take place throughout the rest of 2014.

Words to Consider:

"Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky."

- *Genesis* 1:20

Birding Demographics and Economics

Recently, the USFWS released its report on birding, called *Birding in the United States: A Demographic and Economic Analysis*. This report is intended to complement the *2011 National Survey of Fishing, Hunting, and Wildlife-Associated Recreation*. The birding report will be discussed at some length in GBP next month.

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](#).

