

What are Duck Stamps?



In the late 1800s and the early 1900s millions of people from around the world came to America seeking a new start. As the number of people increased so did the demand for food and land. Wetlands, which at the time were considered by many to be disease-infested swamps, were drained and filled in so that cities and farms could be built. Some people market hunted to make money, supplying food to restaurants and grocers. Market hunting and drainage of wetlands for farming and houses caused wildlife and their habitats to decline. Concerned hunters and other conservationists decided something needed to be done, and they began voicing their concerns to the public and to the government. Finally, in 1934 Congress passed the Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act, or the Duck Stamp Act. On March 16 of that same year, President Franklin Roosevelt signed the Duck Stamp Act into law, and from then on all waterfowl hunters 16 years or older were required to buy a duck stamp every year to hunt waterfowl. The proceeds from the sales of these stamps is used to purchase or lease land that becomes part of the National Wildlife Refuge System. What a success this program has been!

About 635,000 hunters paid \$1 each for the first duck stamps. Since then, the stamp price has gradually risen to \$15. These days, about 1.7 million stamps are sold each year. Ninety-eight cents out of every dollar generated by duck stamp sales still goes directly into purchasing habitat. Over the years, Federal Duck Stamps have generated more than \$670 million which has been used to conserve over 5 million acres of waterfowl habitat. More than 540 national wildlife refuges have been paid for all or in part by Duck Stamp money.

Jay "Ding" Darling designed the first Federal Duck Stamp, and until 1949, a famous wildlife artist was hired to produce a stamp design each year. Since then, however, an annual competition has taken place. The winning artwork is chosen by a panel of waterfowl, stamp, and art experts.

The Federal Duck Stamp program is for adults, but in 1989, a new program for kids was started. The Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program was started to help teach wetlands conservation through arts projects. Now children from every state in the country are learning about wetlands and waterfowl, and then drawing, coloring, and painting pictures of ducks, geese, and swans to show what they have learned. Students from kindergarten through twelfth grade can enter this annual art contest. Each year, one junior entry is chosen for the Federal Junior Duck Stamp. Junior stamps can be purchased for \$5, and the money generated from the sale of these stamps goes directly back into conservation education.

Step-By-Step Instructions for Entering the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Contest

1 Choose Your Waterfowl Species

First off, what are waterfowl? Waterfowl include all the birds known as ducks, geese, and swans. There are approximately 145 species of waterfowl in the world, 45 of which are native to North America. Only native North American waterfowl can be entered into the Junior Duck Stamp Contest. Visit www.caljrduckstamp.org for the complete list of all eligible species. Here are some tips to help you choose a species you'd like to draw for the contest:

- Look at other people's drawings and photographs in books or on the web.
- Look through bird identification guides, books, and magazines.
- Go to a nature museum or a zoo for some good close up viewing opportunities.
- Most importantly, get outdoors and watch waterfowl in their natural habitat.

Once you have chosen a species, learn as much as possible about your bird. Here are some questions to help with your research:

- In what part of North America does your species live? United States, Canada, Mexico, all?
- What type of habitat does your bird prefer? Freshwater wetlands, oceans, lakes, rivers, or somewhere else?
- What does it eat? Grasses, seeds, insects, fish?
- What sounds does it make? Does it quack, whistle, honk, or make some other sound?
- How large is the bird? How much does it weigh? What is its wingspan?
- Do the male and female look different from one another, or do they look alike?
- Where does it nest? On the ground, in a tree, near water?
- What do the young look like?

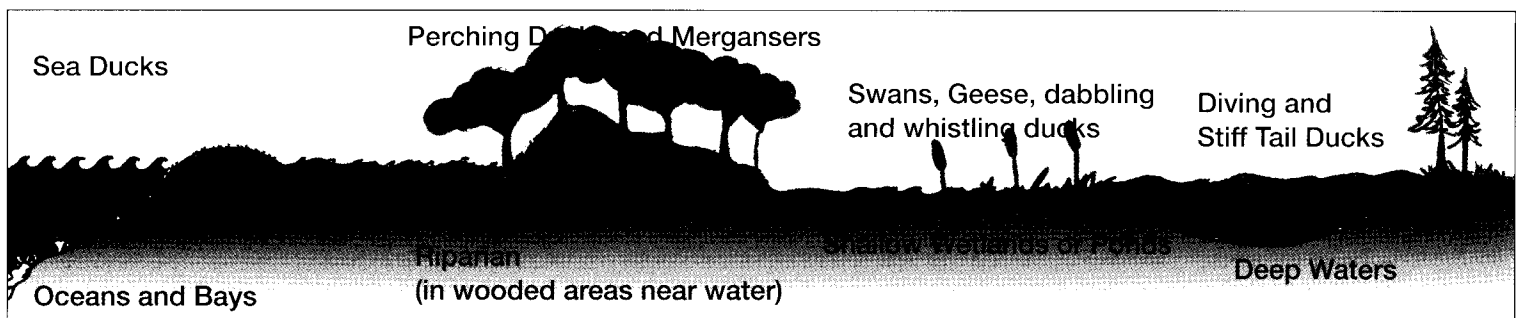
You can find the answers to these questions in books, magazines, and on the internet. A great place to start is to look at a field guide to North American birds. Field guides show pictures of each bird, both male and female; they provide maps to show where birds live and migrate, and they give average body measurements such as wingspan, weight, etc. Sometimes field guides even include information about diet and habitat. When watching wildlife, field guides are great tools to help figure out what you are seeing.

2 Get Outdoors to See Waterfowl

Get to know your subject by studying it in its natural habitat. Watching wildlife is one of the best ways to learn about behavior and feeding habits. If the species you have chosen spends any part of the year in California, take a trip to a local wetland area to see it up-close in nature. Seeing waterfowl in their natural environment can be as simple as walking around a city pond, or going to a river or lake. However, before you head outdoors, do some research to find out where to find your species.

As their name suggests, waterfowl live in and around water or aquatic habitats. However, not all waterfowl live in the same aquatic habitats. Sea ducks, such as eiders, live in oceans and bays, and very seldom use freshwater habitats. Geese such as brant also spend a lot of their time in marine waters. Snow geese spend their time inland in freshwater marshes and in cultivated croplands such as corn, wheat, and potato fields. Wood ducks prefer sheltered areas with lots of trees along rivers and ponds. Learning which habitat your species lives in will help you find areas where you can go see waterfowl in the wild. It will also help you decide which plants to put in the background of your stamp design.

You will generally find these birds in the matching habitat below:



Some of the best places to view waterfowl are national wildlife refuges and state wildlife areas. These areas are open to the public and offer many chances to view wildlife. Find one near you by looking on a map or on the internet and call to find out what waterfowl are in the area at different times of the year. During the winter, take a trip to a wildlife refuge or area, and you will have a chance to see thousands of ducks and geese in one day.

To find a national wildlife refuge near you visit <http://pacific.fws.gov/refuges/>.

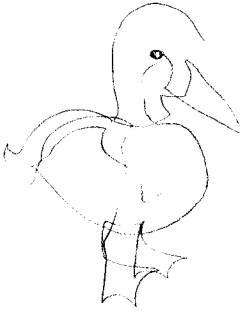
To find a state wildlife area visit <http://www.dfg.ca.gov/lands/lands.html>.

Make Learning Fun!

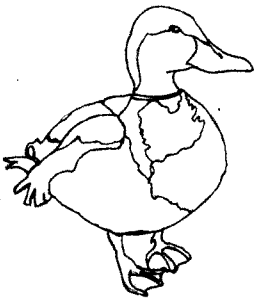
Use nature's palette to inspire discovery and creativity

3 Drawing - Practice, Practice, Practice

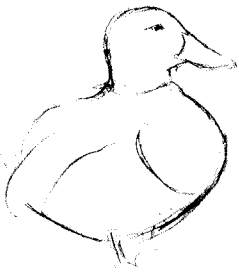
Learning to draw well takes practice. Just as exercise makes your body stronger, drawing exercises can make your art stronger! Here are a few exercises to get you started.



Blind Contour Drawing – Sketch an object of your choice while looking only at the object and NOT at the paper. Draw one continuous line for the entire sketch – don't lift your pencil or pen off the paper. Your sketch may or may not look like the object you are drawing when you are done. Don't worry... that's the way the exercise works.



Contour Drawing – Now you get to peek! Draw an object using the same style of continuous line, but this time look at the paper occasionally.



Gesture Drawing – Practice drawing quickly (because birds don't sit still for very long when you see them in the wild!) Draw an object or bird of your choice in 30 seconds or less. Again, you may not think it looks like much, but it is great practice!



John Muegge



Upside Down Drawing – This helps you draw what you see, not what you think you see. Try this exercise to shake up your perceptions. Find a photo or a picture in a magazine of a simple object (like a duck?). Turn it upside down and draw it.

4 Take it Outside

It's easy to get out and begin doing field studies. Grab an unlined notebook or sketchbook and a pencil, and you are ready to get started. Go sit on your porch, in your backyard, or outside your classroom and draw a leaf, a flower, a rock, or a bird. When you are ready to try more, use pens, colored pencils, charcoal, paints, or even crayon to add color to your drawings. Save all of your drawings so you can use them as references when you create your duck stamp entry.

Use your notebook to write down everything you discover – the sights, the sounds – when you are in the field.

Trust your own eyes and ears, and spend time watching birds and their behavior. Your field notebook should have enough information that you'll be able to remember all those details when you get home and are working on your own duck stamp design.

Ideas for Using Your Field Notebook

Every time you use your field notebook write down the date, time, location, and weather conditions.

Location: Wetland by American River
my house!
River
wetland

Date: August 1st, 2004
98° sunny and hot!

Plants I've Seen!
- willow
- Alder
- cat tails

Alder leaf
The alder tree has tiny acorns:

* The river was very quiet. we sat by the shore and looked for birds. These are the birds we saw

*** male mallard**
- green head
- blue stripe

*** Great Blue Heron**
- Long legs
- white head
- black mohawk

* Herons have a wing span of 7 feet!

Bird Labels:
- bright green head
- yellow beak
- white stripe on collar
- black feathers
- grey and tan body!
- grey beak

Written Notes -
Write about colors, behavior, habitat, and other details you observe. Label important features on your sketches.

Habitat Studies -
Draw all the types of plants you see in one square foot. Draw a tree you see in the distance, then draw the details of the bark of a tree near you.

Gesture Drawings -
Do several quick sketches when you see a bird in the field. Start by drawing two circles - one for the body and one for the head. Notice the size and position of the head relative to the body before starting. Then add the tail, beak, and legs.

Focus on the details too -
Draw a feather . . . an acorn . . . a leaf.

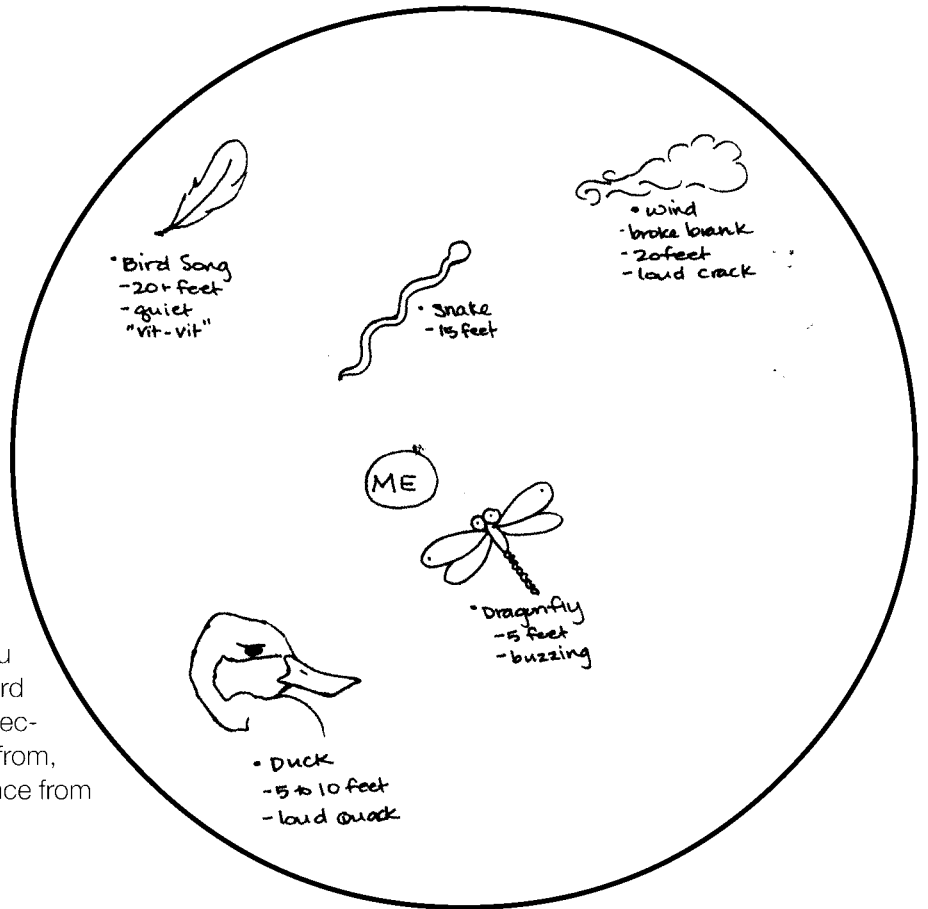
More Field Notebook Ideas . . .

Bird Watching Observations - Sit for a while with your binoculars and observe birds. There are five basic clues you can look and listen for that will help you identify birds. Choose one bird and watch it for as long as you can. Record all your observations in your notebook. If the bird moves out of sight, choose another one and start over.

1. the bird's basic shape, or silhouette
2. its colors
3. its behavior
4. its habitat
5. its voice

Do a sound map:

Draw a circle on a page in your journal, and put a mark in the center that represents where you are. Then mark the location inside the circle of each sound you hear. Use sketches or symbols for bird songs and other sounds. Note the direction the songs or sounds are coming from, their loudness, pitch, melody, and distance from you.



5 Create Your Duck Stamp Entry

When you are ready, create the final composition that will become your Federal Junior Duck Stamp entry. Use any medium you want (pencil, crayon, ink, oil paint, watercolor, mosaic, etc.). Make sure to follow the size requirements of 9" high by 12" wide. Your entry may not be more than 1/4" thick; do not put any lettering, signatures, or borders on the front, and do not mat or frame.

All artwork submitted for the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Competition must be your ORIGINAL work. Your signature on the entry form is a certification that the work is not a copy or a tracing of published photos, magazines, book illustrations, or an artist's published works.

What's Plagiarism?

Copying someone else's original work is called plagiarism, and it is illegal. Teach your students to be responsible, honest, and ethical artists. Create an atmosphere that encourages students to admire other artists' work, but that also challenges them to be creative and original.

The best way to avoid copying another artist's work is to create your own references for your duck stamp entry. Here are a few tips to help create your own original piece of duck art.

- Get outdoors and draw directly from nature. Draw as many sketches as possible so you have your own references when it comes time to put all the details together for your finished work.
- Take your own photographs of waterfowl. If you use your own photos for reference, you don't need to worry about copying someone else's work. Take snapshots of habitat too. It will help when you need to know all the detail of cattails, trees, grasses, and other habitat elements.

6 Wrap-up and Reflection

Take some time to think about what your finished artwork means to you. Does it portray a feeling or idea that you have about waterfowl or wetlands? Write your thoughts down (in your field notebook, or in another journal). Do you have a waterfowl or wetland conservation message that you want to share with people? If you do, write it down in the space provided on the entry form.

Fill out the rest of the entry form. Entry forms can be printed out at <http://www.caljrduckstamp.org> or <http://duckstamps.fws.gov/junior/junior.htm>. Make sure that your entry form is signed by you, your teacher if you did the artwork as part of a class project, and by a parent. Read the entry form very carefully, and fill out every portion of it. Attach your entry form with tape or glue to the back of your artwork.

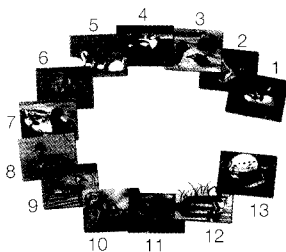
Note to Teachers:

It is helpful if teachers fill out the school and press information before duplicating and distributing entry forms to students. For California, send art entries to:

**Sacramento NWR Complex
Junior Duck Stamp Contest
752 County Road 99W
Willows, CA 95988**

**Entries must be postmarked by:
March 15, 2005**

For more information please call (530) 934-2801 or (916) 648-1406



Student artwork (counter clockwise)

1. Goldeneye, Chris Mays, age 12, Chico
2. Wood Duck, Hayden McDevitt-Kuntz, age 14, Chico
3. Lesser Scaup, Janae Dugas, age 10, Chico
4. King Eider, Joshua Ng, age 12, San Francisco
5. Trumpeter Swan, Ali Goodman, age 7, Redding
6. Mallard, Leanza Abucayan, age 11, Sacramento
7. Mallard, Michelle Conn, age 16, Sacramento
8. Wood Duck, Alan Kauffman, age 13, Chico
9. Mallard, Kara Kreissig, age 15, Sacramento
10. Mallard, Adam Morris, age 19, Sacramento
11. Koloa Duck, Jaime Salazar, age 17, St. Helena
12. Hooded Merganser, Victor Ruiz, age 13, Orland
13. Wood Duck, Josh Enos, age 13, Orland