

# Federal Junior Duck Stamp Winner 1997-98

Canada geese are part of a large family of ducks, geese, and swans. Birds in this family range from the tiny 1/2 pound African pygmy goose to the nearly 50 pound mute swan. Canada geese are the most widely distributed and possibly best-known of all North American waterfowl. They are found from the Atlantic to the Pacific Coast and from Mexico north to the Arctic coast of Canada. Canada geese come in a variety of sizes. There are at least a dozen subspecies of Canada geese, and they can be identified by size, shape, color, and call. The giant Canada goose is the largest, at up to 20 pounds, while the smallest is the cackling Canada goose at 3 pounds.

Historically, cackling geese were the most common in California, but western Canada geese may be the most abundant today. Large western Canadas have deep, musical calls, which is why people call these birds honkers. In contrast, cacklers have high pitched, "yelping" calls.

Canada geese have powerful wings, and they regularly fly at more than 40 miles per hour. When alarmed or with tail winds, speeds of up to 70 mph have been recorded. When landing, their feet hit the water like skis, and they tuck their tails down to function as "air brakes."



Scott Rowell, 17, of Mount Shasta, California, won both the California and national competitions with this Junior Duck Stamp design.

## Canada Geese



Canada geese are highly social by nature. Large subspecies like the western Canadas remain in tight-knit family groups for up to a year, and young may reunite with their parents during winter for several years! Smaller subspecies also maintain family groups, but typically families break up during the young's first winter.

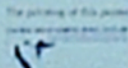
During migration, several families and individual Canada geese may flock together in a V formation, migrating by day or by night.

Canada geese are mostly grazers. They eat grasses, marsh plants, seeds, and waste grains (Wheat, Corn, Barley). Protein necessary for reproduction is obtained from green grasses, unlike ducks which obtain protein from invertebrates.

The nests of Canada geese are built near water. They nest on the ground, usually on islands, levees, and on the tops of muskrat lodges. They also use man-made elevated nesting structures. Canadas prefer raised locations to look out for predators. They lay five to six eggs on average and occasionally up to eight. The eggs hatch after 26 to 30 days of incubation, and down-covered goslings emerge ready to head to water as soon as their feathers are dry.



For more information about the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Program, contact: U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Sacramento Wildlife Corridor, 751 County Road 99N, Arden, CA 95710 (530) 834-2811, or California Waterfowl Association, 3631 Northgate Boulevard, Suite 130, Sacramento, CA 95834 (916) 842-1406.



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