

The Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp: Waterfowl Hunters Put Their Stamp On Conservation!



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FACT SHEET

Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp



The “Stamp” and Wildlife Habitat Canada

- The Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp (“Stamp”), and Wildlife Habitat Canada were created in 1984/85, with the support of federal, provincial and territorial governments, conservation and hunting organizations, and waterfowl hunters.
- Since 1985, the federal Migratory Birds Hunting Regulations have required hunters to validate their Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit (“Permit”) by purchasing the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp (current price: \$8.50), which must be affixed to the Permit (currently also priced at \$8.50). The Permit is purchased primarily by waterfowl hunters. Approximately 200,000 Permits are sold annually generating \$1.7 million in Stamp revenue.
- Through a legislative arrangement with Environment and Climate Change Canada, the revenue derived from the sale of the Stamp is transferred to Wildlife Habitat Canada (WHC), a charitable, not-for-profit NGO, to fund wildlife habitat conservation projects across Canada. This “earmarked” funding approach is popular with waterfowl hunters as it ensures that their Stamp contributions are used to support wildlife and habitat conservation.
- WHC’s grant program and conservation leadership supports Canada’s role in conserving wetlands and waterfowl populations under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, as well as contributing to national climate change objectives through protecting wetlands to sequester carbon

Benefits of the Stamp

- Since 1985, Wildlife Habitat Canada has provided grants of more than \$55 million to over 1,500 habitat conservation projects.
- Each Stamp grant dollar leverages about \$7 in partner funds/contributions (based on 5 year average, 2011-16).
- Stamp funds are also used to support and increase waterfowl hunting participation, which will help to maintain or increase migratory bird hunting permit sales and federal revenues.
- WHC strongly supports and promotes Canadian wildlife artists and their art. Each year (since 1985) a painting created by a Canadian wildlife artist is selected to appear on the Canadian Wildlife Habitat Conservation Stamp. Stamps and prints are purchased by waterfowl hunters, individuals and collectors to raise critical funds for wildlife habitat conservation.

Hunters Contributing to Conservation

- The hunting community is a strong supporter of Canada's conservation efforts.
- When waterfowl populations were in severe decline across North America in the 1980's, Canadian hunters supported the creation of Wildlife Habitat Canada and the creation of the Stamp as a method of contributing to the conservation of wetlands and waterfowl populations. They continue to do so today, realizing that the cost of conservation has increased.
- Many conservation organizations rely on hunters heavily for support. For example, hunters are large supporters of Ducks Unlimited Canada, Delta Waterfowl, the Ontario Federation of Anglers and Hunters and the Fédération québécoise des chasseurs et pêcheurs. All four groups receive grants from Wildlife Habitat Canada that actively support and assist with governmental and private conservation initiatives.

The Case for a Stamp Increase

- The price of the Stamp (\$8.50) has not changed since 1991. Inflation and a reduction in the number of waterfowl hunters over this period have significantly reduced the impact that Stamp funds have on the conservation of wetlands and migratory game bird habitat.
- The price of the U.S. Duck Stamp (\$15.00) had also not changed since 1991. However in 2015, Congress approved an increase of \$10 to the U.S. Duck Stamp to its present price of \$25 U.S. In the first year of the sale of the \$25 Duck Stamp, the number sold in 2015-16 (over 1,595,500) was higher than the average number sold during the "\$15 cost years" (1991 to 2014 (1,512,841). (Source U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service).
- Based on the comments and positions of the provincial wildlife federations and non-governmental conservation organizations across Canada, there is strong support for a greater investment in habitat conservation to ensure healthy migratory game bird populations.
- In December, 2014, all 25 national and regional organizations that were members of the federal Hunting and Angling Advisory Panel (HAAP) unanimously supported a \$2/stamp increase for each of two years, followed by annual increases to adjust for inflation. Note that these increase levels were recommended prior to the \$10 increase in the U.S Duck Stamp.
- After 2 years, at present Stamp sales levels, implementing HAAP's recommended \$4 Stamp increase would result in an additional \$840,000 annually to support Wildlife Habitat Canada's conservation efforts. This Stamp increase can generate approximately \$6.7 million annually in leveraged "on the ground" conservation investments.

- If Canada matched the U.S. with an equivalent \$10 Stamp increase, the “on the ground” conservation investment would increase to \$16.8 million annually.
- The additional Stamp revenues will further the federal government’s ability to meet its objectives for conserving wetlands and waterfowl populations under the North American Waterfowl Management Plan, as well as contributing to Canada’s climate change objectives through protecting wetlands to sequester carbon, within its existing budget.
- An increase in the price of the Stamp is a relatively small expense for migratory game bird hunters. Canadian waterfowl hunters spend a substantial amount of money on hunting equipment, firearms and ammunition, and travel expenses, contributing \$327 million annually to Canada’s economy (2012 Canadian Nature Survey).
- The cost of the Migratory Game Bird Hunting Permit and the Stamp is low compared to the cost of provincial/territorial licenses and tags for other species of game (including small game, wild turkey, deer, moose, bear, elk, sheep and caribou). For example in Ontario, the cost of a resident Wild Turkey License with one game seal (i.e. harvest of one bird allowed) is \$31.45 including service fee.
- The Stamp is considered by the federal government to be a user fee. Recently, the federal government passed legislation (the new Services Fee Act, which received Royal Assent on June 22, 2017), which will streamline the process to enable departments to seek new, or amend existing user fees including the Stamp.
- Canadian hunters take pride in knowing that their Stamp dollars go directly to habitat conservation projects. It is likely that hunters will more readily accept the price increase to the Stamp because they would not consider it as a tax increase, but rather an update to the contribution they make toward habitat conservation in Canada.