

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-2309

April 14, 2016

The Honorable Daniel M. Ashe
Director
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Mr. Ashe:

Many Minnesotans have expressed their concerns about changes to the historic Duck Stamp, and I write to echo those concerns. I request that you reconsider proposed modifications to include non-waterfowl, and explore the possibility of adding a new stamp to the annual collection.

The 1934 Migratory Bird Hunting Stamp Act established the Duck Stamp as a way to help protect wetlands and the ecosystems they support. The Act requires waterfowl hunters to purchase an annual Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, or 'Duck Stamp' for short. Duck Stamp revenue supports the Migratory Bird Conservation Fund, which is used to conserve wetlands and protect the wildlife therein. Since its inception, the Duck Stamp has generated about \$800 million for these efforts.

The success of the Duck Stamp program is partly attributed to the unique artwork of the stamp itself. Every year, artists throughout the country compete for the honor of designing the waterfowl stamp. The artistic competition is important for Minnesotans, and I am proud that more winning designs have come from Minnesota than any other state. This artwork has truly made the stamp a collector's item, boosting monetary support for conservation and awareness for these birds. Unfortunately, Duck Stamp revenues have plateaued, and the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service has proposed changing the design to include birds other than waterfowl.

While I appreciate efforts to enhance revenue for conservation, I am concerned about unintended consequences from changing this historic stamp. I urge you to investigate the potential impacts of changing existing design traditions, and ask you to also consider adding a new stamp to the collection—similar to the 1989 addition of the Junior Duck Stamp Program to promote conservational efforts to children. This new stamp could bring awareness to other bird species and raise additional revenue for conservation, without jeopardizing the success of the 82-year-old Duck Stamp. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,



Al Franken
United States Senator