

Campaign aims to support waterfowl permit price increase

Ducks Unlimited is asking duck hunters and other waterfowl enthusiasts to “double up for the ducks” by purchasing two federal duck stamps this year.

“The federal duck stamp has been an important tool in waterfowl habitat conservation for 77 years, but its ability to purchase and conserve important waterfowl habitat has been greatly diminished by inflation and rising land prices,” chief executive officer Dale Hall said, in announcing the campaign. “The purpose of the ‘Double Up for the Ducks’ campaign is to show that hunters support the duck stamp program and are willing to pay more for the duck stamp in order to conserve waterfowl habitat. We view the duck stamp as an investment in conservation, not as a tax on hunters.”

This effort is part of a larger campaign currently being led by Ducks Unlimited to increase the price of the stamp. Since 1934, the Federal Migratory Bird Hunting and Conservation Stamp, commonly known as the federal duck stamp, has added more than 5.3 million acres of waterfowl habitat to the National Wildlife Refuge System. The program

is a highly efficient way for waterfowl hunters to invest in the future of their sport by conserving habitat; 98 cents out of every dollar is spent to acquire land and protect waterfowl habitat. Additionally, acquiring land under the National Wildlife Refuge System not only expands habitat protection but also expands hunting opportunities and access.

While the federal duck stamp has proved a valuable conservation tool, its buying power has not kept pace with inflation. The cost of the stamp has not increased since

1991 — 20 years — marking the longest period in the program’s history without a price increase. Simply put, \$15 is not what it used to be. Based on the Consumer Price Index, the stamp would need to cost \$24.26 today to have the same buying power that \$15 had in 1991. The total buying power of the duck stamp has decreased by 64 percent since 1991.

In 1991, revenue from the duck stamp enabled the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to acquire 89,000 acres of habitat for the National Wildlife Refuge System at an average cost of \$306

per acre. In 2010, the department was able to acquire only 32,000 acres because land values had tripled to an average of \$1,091 per acre.

Ducks Unlimited supports efforts to ensure that the investment waterfowl hunters have made to protect waterfowl habitat over the last 77 years is sustained. And it is up to duck hunters and all who enjoy wetlands and waterfowl to continue the conservation legacy of the federal duck stamp. For these reasons, Ducks Unlimited supports legislation that would immediately increase the price of the stamp from \$15 to \$25, which would allow the program’s revenues to keep pace with inflation.

“Increasing the price of the duck stamp will take an act of Congress,” Chief Conservation Officer Paul Schmidt said. “To get Congress to act, waterfowl hunters must show their elected officials that their constituents care about conservation issues. The increased sales that will occur when hunters ‘double up’ on duck stamps will help conserve more habitat and also show Congress that hunters are serious about this issue.”



Non-profit permits available for conservation projects

The Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Commission is authorized to issue as many as seven Commission Big Game permits per calendar year. Of these, one may be an elk permit, one may be an antelope permit, and the remaining may be Either-Species/Either-Sex Deer permits.

These permits are only available to nonprofit organizations that actively promote wildlife conservation and the hunting and fishing heritage. Only one Commission Big Game permit may be issued to a qualified organization, but this limitation does not preclude more than one chapter of the same organization from being issued permits. Organizations’ chapters are not eligible to receive a Commission Big Game permit more than once in a three-year period. Organizations that oppose hunting and fishing are not eligible for these permits.

Organizations must provide a copy of their 501(c)(3) nonprofit status, articles of incorporation, and their mission statement with application. Further documentation may be required to confirm qualifying status.

Organizations receiving Commission Big Game permits must market the permit to the public in order to receive the

maximum financial benefit available to both the organization and the Kansas Department of Wildlife, Parks and Tourism. Organizations awarded permits by random draw must pay the department the price established by rules and regulations for the highest value for the type of permit awarded. For most organizations, at least 85 percent must be remitted to the department for use on jointly-approved projects. The remainder may be spent at the organization’s discretion.

The application deadline for Commission Big Game Permits is Jan. 1, 2012. To apply, write Sheila Kemmis, Commission Secretary, KDWPT, 512 SE 25th Ave., Pratt, KS 67124.

On Jan. 5, 2012, the Kansas Wildlife, Parks and Tourism Commission will conduct a random drawing from the pool of applicants during its scheduled public meeting at Kansas Wesleyan University in Salina.

Permits and prices are as follow:

DEER — Either-Species/Either-Sex permit, available to resident or nonresident, valid statewide during any season with legal equipment at a cost of \$322.50;

ELK — Either-Species/Either-Sex Elk permit, available to resident or nonresident and valid anywhere within elk management units during any season with legal equipment, including Fort Riley during seasons and restrictions established by Fort Riley, at a cost of \$252.50; and

ANTELOPE — Either-Species/Either-Sex Antelope permit, available to resident or nonresident and valid anywhere in antelope management units during any season with legal equipment at a cost of \$202.50.

Successful organizations will be issued a voucher signifying the type of permit awarded. The buyer must present the voucher to the department’s Licensing Section, and a permit will be issued in the buyer’s name. After a Commission Big Game permit is issued in the name of the final recipient, it may not be transferred to any other individual for any reason. Any Commission Big Game permit is subject to the restrictions of the season, sex, equipment type, or hunt units issued on the permit.

For more information, phone 620-672-5911, ext. 102.



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