

Wildlife Art Lovers Young and Old: Celebrate the *Art* of Conservation

Lovers of wildlife, art and stamps (or all three), mark your calendars for Earth Day, April 22. That's when drawings of ducks and geese done by children across the country will be judged at the National Junior Duck Stamp Contest. All are welcome at the contest, which will be held on **Wednesday, April 22 at 10:30 a.m.**, at the Smithsonian National Postal Museum.

A distinguished panel of five judges will choose from among the top waterfowl artwork entered by students in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The judging is free and open to the public.

The winning artwork will be featured on the 2009-2010 Federal Junior Duck Stamp, which the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service sells for \$5 to stamp collectors, conservationists and the general public. Proceeds from sales of the Junior Duck Stamp support environmental education efforts and go towards awards and scholarships for contest winners.

Last year, top honors in the Junior Duck Stamp Contest went to Seokkyun Hong of Dallas, Texas. His depiction of a pair of Nene geese is featured on the 2008-2009 Junior Duck Stamp, which went on sale last June.

Head judge for this year's Junior Duck Stamp Contest will be Joshua Spies, whose art will grace the 2009-2010 Federal Duck Stamp, which debuts June 26.



Lydia Han, 2008 2nd place winner

Prior to the national competition, each state hosts a competition between February and mid-April, where more than 30,000 Junior Duck Stamp design entries are judged by people active in the local wildlife art or conservation community. Winning entries from each state are sent to the national competition.

The Junior Duck Stamp Design Contest is the culmination of a conservation curriculum used by educators across the nation. A dynamic educational program designed to teach wetlands and waterfowl conservation to students in kindergarten through high school, the Federal Junior Duck Stamp Conservation and Design Program carries scientific and wildlife management principles into a visual arts activity. It crosses cultural, ethnic, social and geographic boundaries to promote greater awareness of our nation's natural resources, benefiting not only ducks, but also all migratory birds, including neotropical migratory songbirds and hundreds of plants and animals that depend on wetlands for their survival.

After completing the activities in the Junior Duck Stamp educational program, students are encouraged to create drawings and paintings to submit to their state Junior Duck Stamp Art Contest. At the national level, students with the top three art entries and the top three conservation messages receive cash awards. Additionally, the first place national art award

winner, his or her art teacher and a parent are invited to participate in the First Day of Sale Ceremony for the Federal Duck Stamp and Junior Duck Stamp, in Washington, D.C.

All participants receive a certificate of appreciation, and 100 students in each state, the District of Columbia and the U.S. territories are awarded prizes at the state level.

Students, teachers or parents interested in participating in the Junior Duck Stamp Program should visit the Junior Duck Stamp Program Website: <http://www.fws.gov/juniorduck>.

--Rachel F. Levin, Migratory Bird Program, Washington, D.C.