

**The Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp and
The Virginia Ducks Unlimited Conservation Print Program**

2026 General Rules and Guidelines:

A competitive process will be employed for the selection of original art for the 202 Virginia Migratory Waterfowl Conservation Stamp and the Virginia Ducks Unlimited Conservation Print programs. The attached documents explain the basics of the program, with some recent history, and include an Artist Competition Agreement.

A panel represented by Virginia Ducks Unlimited, the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources, and other waterfowl conservation organizations deemed appropriate by the VDWR will judge all submitted art as to its technical and esthetic merit.

Rules and Guidelines:

1. All U.S. citizens are eligible to participate. However, all entrants must be 18 years of age by January 1, 2026. Contest judges and their immediate relatives are ineligible to submit entries.
2. The immediately preceding year's winning artist is ineligible to participate.
3. Only the species identified below will be eligible for the specific year.
4. Judges are instructed to look for scenes depicting live birds in their natural habitat. The eligible species must be the dominant feature in the design. This means it should be noticeably larger than any other elements you may wish to include such as decoys, dogs, or lighthouses. Judges will also be looking at images that will reproduce well as a stamp.
5. Each artist may submit no more than two original works.
6. Each submission must be an original work and not previously printed or copied.
7. Each submission must be "flat-art" and may be in the medium of the artist choice. Artists must declare if Artificial Intelligence (AI) was used at any point in the creation.
8. Artwork should be submitted unframed and may be as large as 18" x 13" keeping in mind that the final printed image will be 9" x 6.5" (with a height to width ratio of 1.4). Artwork should be loosely covered with a protective overleaf, although not framed or covered with glass.
9. Each submittal must be accompanied with a completed and signed 2026 "Artist Competition Agreement."
10. All entries must be received by Virginia Ducks Unlimited or the Virginia Department of Wildlife Resources before 5 PM on February 20, 2026. Additionally, entries postmarked by February 20, 2026 will also be accepted. Any entry not received by or postmarked by February 20, 2026 is not required to be accepted.
11. Notification to Virginia Ducks Unlimited of intent to submit is requested by January 31, 2026 to vaduckstamps@gmail.com.
12. All non-winning entries will be returned to the submitting artist upon completion of judging. Each artist should include **pre-paid FedEx return label** with their entries.

How do I prepare my entry?

Each artist should have a working knowledge in three major areas of special interest to Federal Duck Stamp Contest judges:

- Basic Waterfowl Biology—for example, if you choose to depict a spring scene, is the bird's plumage correct for that season?
- Artistic Composition—is the image artistically interesting; does it "pop" when you look at it?
- Suitability for printing at a reduced size—the image provides the design for a 1 3/4" L x 1 1/2" W stamp. Considering the amount of detail you wish to include, do you think it will show well in this reduced size?

What are the eligible species for this year?

2026 Diving Ducks, Sea Ducks, Mergansers and Stiff Tails species

1. Ring-necked Duck
2. Scaup (either Greater or Lesser)
3. Long-tailed Duck
4. Surf Scoter
5. Canvasback
6. Merganser (Hooded or Common)
7. Common Goldeneye
8. Ruddy Duck

2027 Geese, Brant and Swan species

1. Snow Goose
2. Ross' Goose
3. Canada Goose
4. Brant
5. Tundra Swan

2028 Dabbling Duck species

1. American Widgeon
2. Mallard
3. Northern Pintail
4. Blue / Green -winged Teal
5. Northern Shoveler
6. American Black
7. Wood Duck

Mailing Address:

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Duck Stamp Art

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