



OHIO DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES DIVISION OF WILDLIFE

THE OHIO WETLANDS HABITAT STAMP 2026 DESIGN CONTEST



Ohio Department of Natural Resources

MIKE DeWINE, GOVERNOR

MARY MERTZ, DIRECTOR

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Division of Wildlife
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January 5, 2026

Dear Artist:

The Ohio Division of Wildlife is pleased to call for entries in the Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp juried art competition. This event is scheduled for Saturday, February 14, 2026, at 3 p.m. in Columbus, Ohio.

Judging on February 14, 2026, is to select a design for the 2027 Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp. The stamp is a required purchase for all waterfowl hunters; it can also be purchased separately by conservationists and stamp collectors. An independent panel of judges is selected each year to determine the winning design. These judges are chosen based on their expertise in a variety of fields, including ornithology, wildlife conservation and management, and art.

The contest rules, artist agreement, and other related information are enclosed. Each entry is carefully screened to ensure compliance with all contest requirements. Entries that do not meet the requirements will not be considered for judging. Please follow all instructions included in the rules.

American wigeon, bufflehead, and hooded merganser are not eligible for entry in this year's competition, per contest rules. A list of native Ohio waterfowl species that are eligible this year (Appendix A) and a list of previous design winners are included. The competition is open to all artists, age 18 and older, who reside in the United States, except for last year's winner.

Entries will be accepted from January 1, 2026, to February 1, 2026. No entries will be accepted prior to January 1, 2026, or after 5 p.m. EST on February 1, 2026, under any circumstances. Decisions of the program administrators and the panel of judges are final.

The winner of the contest will be awarded a service contract of \$4,000 to offset the costs incurred by the artist in fulfilling the contract with the Ohio Division of Wildlife. As part of the contract, the artist is required to submit an invoice in the exact amount of \$4,000. Any limited edition stamp prints sold are required to include the state wetlands stamp.

All original entries are returned to the artists following the competition. The winning artist, as part of the contract with the Ohio Division of Wildlife, retains the original entry and the right to negotiate their own print publishing contract.

If you have any questions regarding the Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp competition, please email Ohio-WildlifeStamps@dnr.ohio.gov.

Thank you for your interest in the Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp competition and the important role it plays in wildlife conservation.

Sincerely,

Kendra S. Wecker
Chief



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OVERVIEW

The Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp program includes the following goals:

1. To result in an attractive, collectible wetlands habitat stamp.
2. To provide a program that will enhance, promote, and help finance wetlands, wildlife, and habitat conservation.
3. To enter into a partnership with the winning artist and/or publisher so that each may contribute to the above efforts.
4. To provide qualified artists an opportunity to display and market their talents, contribute to wetlands conservation in Ohio, and realize a fair financial reward if selected as the contest winner.

CONTEST RULES

CONTEST ELIGIBILITY

The juried art competition for the Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp is open to all artists 18 years of age or older who are residents of the United States. The winner of the previous year's competition is not eligible to submit artwork the following year.

SUBMISSION PROCEDURE

Entries will be accepted from January 1, 2026, to February 1, 2026. No entries will be accepted prior to January 1, 2026, or after 5 p.m. EST on February 1, 2026, under any circumstances. Entries postmarked after February 1, 2026, will be returned to the sender unopened.

Those intending to submit their design will find the official entry form, contest rules, and additional information in this packet. The entry form should be attached to the back of the design. Participating artists must include a check or money order with a \$20 entry fee, made payable to the ODNR Division of Wildlife, with their design. No cash will be accepted.

Required documents and the artist's design should be mailed to: Ohio Wetlands Stamp Contest, Ohio Division of Wildlife, 2045 Morse Road, Bldg G, Columbus, Ohio 43229-6693. Each artist may only submit one entry.

It is the contestant's responsibility to obtain property insurance for their entry. The Division of Wildlife will exercise all reasonable care with each entry but will not insure any entry and will not assume responsibility for any damage, loss, or theft of any entry.

Any entry that fails to comply with all contest rules will be disqualified and will not be judged.

STAMP DESIGN

The artwork design should feature a natively occurring Ohio waterfowl species, as listed in Appendix A. Species featured on the preceding three annual wetlands stamp designs are ineligible. The ineligible species for the 2026 competition are hooded merganser, American wigeon, and bufflehead.

Artwork must be full color. No signatures or lettering may appear on the artwork. The design should be a minimum of 16 inches wide by 11½ inches high and cannot exceed 18 inches wide by 13 inches high. Artwork is to be displayed on a white 2½-inch mat (frame) and protected by a clear film cover that can easily be removed before judging. The frame dimensions are not included in the maximum size of the artwork.

Entries should not be in a frame or covered in glass. Velcro hook strips may be used on the back of the entries for display purposes during judging.

The design must be of the artist's own original creation and neither copied nor duplicated from previously published art, including photographs. Violation of this rule will disqualify the entry.

The actual wetland stamp will measure 2 inches by 1⅜ inches, which includes a ⅛-inch white margin on all four sides. The image size on the stamp will be 1¾ inches by 1⅛ inches.

The design must allow for printing in compliance with the established specifications.

The winning artist will be required to title and sign the work after selection is made, prior to production of the stamp.



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PRE-SCREENING

A contest coordinating committee, including a printing expert, will pre-screen all entries before judging to ensure each complies with all rules and regulations.

PERFORMANCE BOND

The winning artist may be required to post a performance bond to ensure delivery of the required work as set forth in the rules, specifications, and agreement related to the Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp design competition.

JUDGING

The Chief of the Ohio Division of Wildlife will select five judges and one alternate judge. They will be recognized experts in ornithology, conservation, and/or art. Judges will receive no compensation. Their identities will be revealed following completion of the design competition. The judges will serve in a voluntary capacity at the request of the Chief of the Ohio Division of Wildlife.

Entries will be judged on, but not limited to, anatomical and ecological accuracy, originality, artistic composition, and general rendering. All eligible entries will be judged on February 14, 2026, and a winner will be announced. All voting by the judges will be done silently, in writing. Tabulation of the judging scores will be conducted by the contest coordinating committee.

WINNING ENTRY

Following the contest, a final agreement (contract) shall be negotiated and signed by the artist or representative and the Ohio Division of Wildlife no later than April 1, 2026, to ensure compliance with the contest specifications.

The artist shall retain the original art and the right to publish and market limited edition prints. The artist will receive 100 copies of the 2027 Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp from the Ohio Division of Wildlife for personal use.

The winning artist will provide the Ohio Division of Wildlife with fifty (50) special edition, signed, numbered, and re-marqued prints. Remarques can be in color or black and white. Remarques can also be a print etching or a printed remarque in the margin.

The artist or publisher will purchase and resell an Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp for each limited edition print sold.

The artist or publisher is required to provide the Ohio Division of Wildlife with a color transparency, high-resolution digital file, or original artwork of the winning art design for the production of the Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp. The Division of Wildlife will produce and publish, from the original art, Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamps.

The Division of Wildlife retains the right to reproduce the original design only for promotional and/or educational purposes.

CONTACT

For additional information or questions about the juried art competition, please email us at

OhioWildlifeStamps@dnr.ohio.gov



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APPENDIX A

What are the natively occurring Ohio waterfowl?

Only natively occurring Ohio waterfowl may be depicted as entries for judging in the annual Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp juried art competition, except those species depicted on the previous three Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamps. Eligible species for the design competition to be judged on February 14, 2026, include:

American Black Duck	Gadwall	Redhead
**American Wigeon	Greater Scaup	Ring-necked Duck
Black Scoter	Greater White-fronted Goose	Ross's Goose
Blue-winged Teal	Green-winged Teal	Ruddy Duck
Brant	**Hooded Merganser	Snow Goose (blue/white morphs)
**Bufflehead	Lesser Scaup	Surf Scoter
Cackling Goose	Long-tailed Duck	Trumpeter Swan
Canada Goose	Mallard	Tundra Swan
Canvasback	Northern Shoveler	White-winged Scoter
Common Goldeneye	Northern Pintail	Wood Duck
Common Merganser	Red-breasted Merganser	

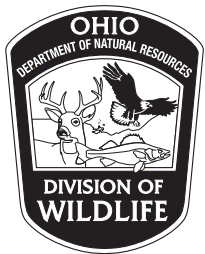
****American wigeon, bufflehead, and hooded merganser are NOT eligible as entries in the 2026 Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp Competition.**

ARTIST'S AGREEMENT

Each artist submitting a design agrees to submit a twenty-dollar (\$20) entry fee via check or money order, made payable to the ODNR Division of Wildlife, and further;

The artist whose original design is selected as the winning entry agrees to the following conditions:

- The contest winner will have exclusive rights to reproduce the winning subject matter as art prints and to market said prints in limited editions.
- The contest winner will purchase and resell, at a price of \$15 each, an Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp for each limited edition print sold.
- Fifty (50) special edition signed and numbered prints will be donated to the Ohio Division of Wildlife. This special edition must be remarkeded and/or printed with additional art or design provided by the artist and approved by the Ohio Division of Wildlife. Specific requirements within these parameters may be negotiable.
- The winning artist may be required to post a performance bond to ensure compliance and delivery of art as set forth in the specifications and agreement. The bond shall be determined by the Ohio Division of Wildlife and the winning artist.
- The artist or a designated agent is required to provide to the Ohio Division of Wildlife a color transparency, or high-resolution digital file, or original artwork of the winning art for the production of the Ohio Wetlands Habitat Stamp.
- The artist will retain possession of the original painting.



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OFFICIAL ENTRY FORM

DESIGNER'S NAME

STREET ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

()
PHONE #1:

()
PHONE #2:

EMAIL

CHECK No. / MONEY ORDER No.

SCENE DEPICTED OR TITLE

TO QUALIFY AS AN OFFICIAL ENTRY,
THIS FORM MUST BE INCLUDED WITH THE \$20 ENTRY FEE.
PLEASE DO NOT USE A P.O. BOX FOR YOUR RETURN ADDRESS