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PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

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Caption: James Hautman will speak, sign stamps, and exhibit his work for Art in the Wild on Oct. 29.

Caption: The 2022-23 Federal Duck Stamp features James Hautman's redhead ducks.

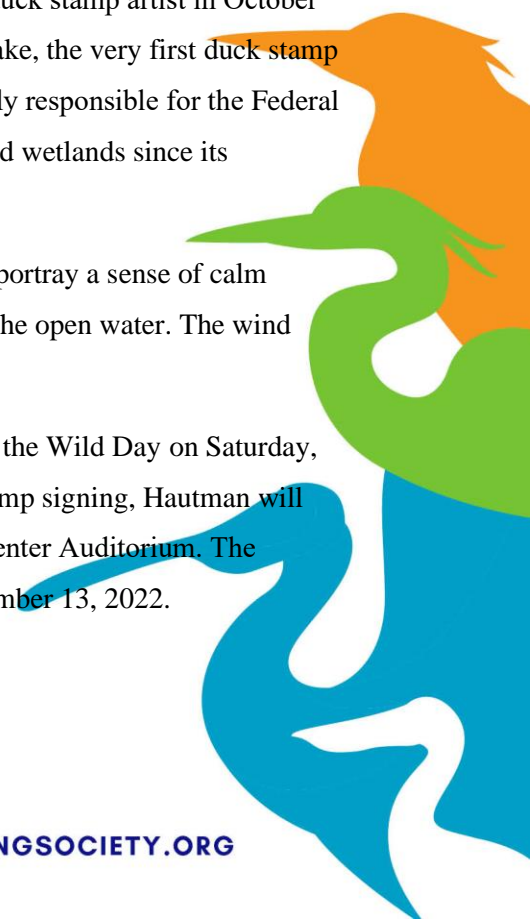
'Winningest' federal duck stamp artist to participate in 'Ding' Art in the Wild

James Hautman is the only federal duck stamp artist to have taken first place six times, most recently in 2021 during the 2022-2023 Federal Duck Stamp Contest. Considering that more than 100 typically compete each year in the contest, and that winners are not allowed to compete for the next three years, Hautman's accomplishment has made a hallowed name for him in wildlife art circles. He and his two brothers, Joseph and Robert -- also multiple duck stamp contest winners -- even made the script for the 1996 hit comedic movie *Fargo*.

Each year, J.N. "Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge hosts the winning duck stamp artist in October to celebrate National Wildlife Refuge and the birthday of the refuge's namesake, the very first duck stamp artist in 1935. Artist-cartoonist Jay Norwood "Ding" Darling, in fact, is largely responsible for the Federal Duck Stamp Program, which has purchased six million acres of now-protected wetlands since its inception.

Hautman's winning design depicts a pair of redhead ducks. "I was hoping to portray a sense of calm excitement," said the artist. "Ducks, especially diving ducks, are at home on the open water. The wind and rough water don't bother them at all."

Hautman takes his appearance a step further this year for the inaugural Art in the Wild Day on Saturday, Oct. 29. In addition to a 10 a.m. presentation that day, followed by a duck stamp signing, Hautman will debut an exhibition of his work in the "Ding" Darling Visitor & Education Center Auditorium. The exhibition will remain in the auditorium for free daily viewing through November 13, 2022.





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“It’s always such an honor and pleasure to visit with longtime friends and spend time at ‘Ding,’” said Hautman, who lives in Chaska, Minn. “It’s one of my favorite parts about winning the contest. I’m doubly honored this year to be exhibiting my work at the first-ever Art in the Wild event.”

The refuge and “Ding” Darling Wildlife Society-Friends of the Refuge (DDWS) host the daylong event from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. State and federal Junior Duck Stamp artists will also be presenting that day. The refuge’s 2022-2023 Artist in Residence Jacqui Roch will be on hand to lead plein-air demos and a workshop, plus expect other hands-on art activities, the announcement of the 2022 “Ding” Darling Amateur Photo Contest winners, treats to celebrate DDWS’ 40th anniversary, and other surprises. Admission to Wildlife Drive will be free all day.

“Jim Hautman is the rock star of the federal duck stamp world,” said Supervisory Refuge Ranger Toni Westland. “He and his brothers are the true ‘duck dynasty.’ We are beyond excited to celebrate his big win and see his art hanging in the auditorium to share with all of our visitors. It really is the crowning attraction of the day.”

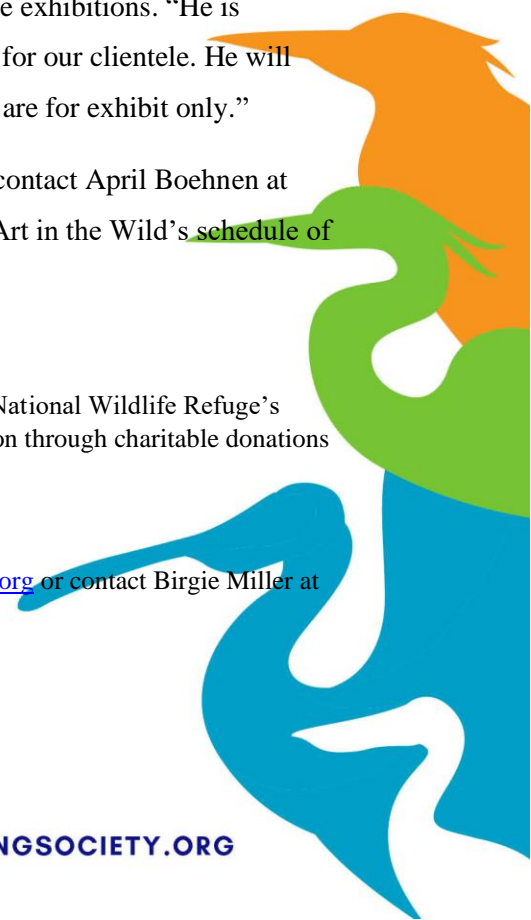
“This is a rare opportunity to acquire one of Jim’s original paintings or duck stamp prints,” said DDWS Development Impact Officer, Ann-Marie Wildman, who is in charge of refuge exhibitions. “He is painting some smaller Southwest Florida bird portraits right now specifically for our clientele. He will have around 10 to 12 originals available for sale and perhaps a few more that are for exhibit only.”

DDWS seeks sponsors for this year's Art in the Wild. For more information, contact April Boehnen at aprilb@dingdarlingsociety.org or 239-472-1100 ext. 4. To learn more about Art in the Wild’s [schedule of events](https://dingdarlingsociety.org) as it develops, visit dingdarlingsociety.org.

ABOUT DDWS

As a non-profit 501(c)3 organization, DDWS works to support J.N. “Ding” Darling National Wildlife Refuge’s mission of conservation, wildlife and habitat protection, research, and public education through charitable donations and Refuge Nature Shop profits.

To support DDWS and the refuge with a tax-deductible gift, visit dingdarlingsociety.org or contact Birgie Miller at 239-472-1100 ext. 4 or director@dingdarlingsociety.org.





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