Waterfowl Stamp Fee Increase Supported by Hunters

*Wisconsin waterfowlers recognize the need to invest in wetland habitat*

It’s been 23 years since the Wisconsin waterfowl stamp fee was increased to address the reduced buying power of a dollar. We were curious what our members thought about increasing the fee (on themselves) to provide for more funding to promote wetland restoration and preservation. So we asked the question.

Wisconsin Waterfowl Association (WWA), together with the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation, conducted a survey of their members from December 2019 through January 2020.  This digital survey included over 30 questions on duck hunter satisfaction with the last season, their input on waterfowl regulatory topics, and their perspective on internal organizational opportunities, among others.

One question, answered by almost 700 respondents (n=689), dealt with the Wisconsin waterfowl stamp fee:

*"****By law, the Wisconsin Waterfowl Stamp fee must be spent on wetland habitat and for producing waterfowl and ecologically related species of wildlife--67% here in Wisconsin and 33% in waterfowl production areas in Canada. The current annual waterfowl stamp fee is $7, last adjusted 20 years ago. An item purchased for $7 in 1997 would cost approximately $12 today.  Would you support increasing the waterfowl stamp fee to account for inflation?”***

**5 of 6 respondents (84.4%) said “Yes” they would support increasing the stamp fee to $12.**

This result is **very** consistent with previous surveys and so is not surprising to WWA. ***Wisconsin duck hunters recognize that money spent on wetland habitat is an investment in their waterfowling future*.**

But what is surprising to WWA: Despite broad waterfowler support for this fee increase, for the past 10 years waterfowling groups have been frustrated in gaining sufficient governmental support to do so. This means millions of dollars were not available to improve wetland habitat during that decade.

With the DNR’s recent approval of the 15-year Wisconsin Waterfowl Management Plan (which has lofty habitat restoration and preservation goals), we are hopeful to find new governmental partners that will allow us to finally get over this hurdle.

WWA continues to work with a coalition of duck hunting groups to address this challenge for the future of waterfowling in Wisconsin.