

# Montana Migratory Bird Stamp Art Contest | MONTANA FWP

The annual Montana Migratory Bird Stamp Art Contest helps Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks and partners bring attention to the importance of wetlands and their associated upland habitats to wildlife, landowners, and communities across the state. The winning artwork will be featured on promotional items including a print other digital products designed to promote wetland conservation and restoration in Montana. Each year about 35,000 hunters purchase a Montana Migratory Bird License. In 2026, each of these hunters will have the option to receive a sticker sheet with the 2026 Montana Migratory Bird Stamp design. The sale of other promotional items will help fund wetland restoration and conservation. efforts across Montana.



2025 Winner | John Nelson Harris

**Contest Deadline:** Art entries will be accepted through Feb. 27, 2026.

**Contest Rules:** Art entries must feature a waterbird (shorebird, waterfowl, or wetland dependent passerine) species in its natural habitat setting. The species must be found in Montana and identified per the Montana Field Guide: <https://fieldguide.mt.gov/>. **Preference will be given to birds in an obvious Montana setting.**

**Prize:** All eligible entries will be displayed on the Montana FWP website and may be featured in FWP social media. The winning artist will receive a \$2,000 award.

## Contest submission details:

- Artist depictions must be lifelike and identifiable as an eligible species or will be disqualified from the competition. Cartoon or cartoon-like images will not be eligible.
- **Image shall be landscape-oriented and formatted to a 3:4 ratio.** Minimum size shall be 6 inches x 8 inches, and maximum size shall be 12 inches by 16 inches.
- Artwork shall be full color and may be in any of the following media: acrylic, oil, watercolor, pen and ink, or tempera. No photographs, sculptures, fabric art, stained glass, computer-generated or computer-enhanced art, pyrography, or carvings will be accepted.
- Artwork must be the artist's original creation. A direct copy of another person's artwork or photograph is not acceptable.
- Artwork must be unsigned by the artist. No scrollwork, lettering, or other design element other than species itself and habitat can appear in the artwork.
- All entries must be submitted as a high-resolution photo uploaded to FWP for review. Minimum file size should be 12 inches wide JPEG at 300 ppi. The winner's artwork may be required to be packaged and physically delivered to FWP.
- Artwork will be returned to the artist in the same packaging as originally submitted. FWP will not be liable for a loss or damage during shipment to or from the department's offices. It is the responsibility of each entrant to obtain adequate property insurance coverage for their contest submission. FWP assumes no liability for damage, loss, or theft of any entry.

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## Contest submission details continued:

- Artists may submit more than one entry.
- Artists must submit a completed Migratory Bird Art Contest Entry Form with each entry. FWP reserves the right to use this information for publicity and promotion.
- Department employees are not eligible to participate in the contest.

## Judging Criteria:

Art will be judged based on digital files submitted online. The contest winner will be chosen by a panel of judges comprised of the Wetlands Protection Advisory Council, a seven-member citizen council that advises FWP on wetland protection and enhancement projects.

The panel will score:

- Artistic composition
- Anatomical accuracy of the species
- Habitat accuracy
- Montana scene
- Background
- Overall appeal

## Art show:

Winning artwork may be displayed in the Montana capitol by the Governor's Office. Location of the display will be determined by the governor's staff. Indicate on the Art Competition Entry Form whether you authorize the department to provide your contact information to members of the public who may be interested in purchasing your entry if you do not win the contest.

## Winning Entry and Rights:

The winning entry becomes the shared property of the artist and Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks. FWP shall retain all reproduction rights of the winning entry for two years. The original artwork shall remain the sole property of the artist, and will be returned to the artist within 6 months of the conclusion of the contest. Limited edition prints of the winning art will be signed by the artist and available for purchase from the Montana's Outdoor Legacy Foundation with all proceeds going toward wetland conservation in Montana. Any refusal of the winning artist to sign the release, to challenge the rules or regulations concerning release of rights, or otherwise take any action that would delay the reproduction of the art as a state migratory bird stamp and or any related use, shall be grounds for that art being disqualified for payment of purchase award and use of the design for the state migratory bird stamp or other related usage. In the event a disqualification should occur, the art receiving the next highest number of points in the voting shall be then declared the winner and shall be used to reproduce the state waterfowl stamp and/or promotional items. The winner artwork will appear in an issue of Montana Outdoors magazine.