

Wildlife Habitat Trust and the Wildlife Habitat Conservation Trust

UK Habitat Conservation Stamp

Introduction

The Wildlife Habitat Trust (WHT) is an organisation that dates from 1986, when members of the British Association for Shooting and Conservation (BASC) got together to create an entity that has as its aim to raise and distribute funds to acquire land for shooting and conservation. Today, the WHT provides grants to help manage sites for wildlife and more recently, has been involved in providing support for local and national biodiversity plans.¹

The Wildlife Habitat Conservation Trust (WHCT) is the charitable organisation (registered charity 1013816) that manages the UK Habitat Conservation Stamp Programme. A major part of the UK Habitat Stamp income is used to assist habitat conservation across the UK. Working with government agencies, the income from UK Habitat Stamps has helped contribute to acquisition and management of some important wetlands, some of which are Ramsar sites.²

The UK Habitat Stamps

The WHT has issued a UK Habitat Stamp annually since 1991, based on specially commissioned wildlife artwork, which generally features a waterfowl as the central image. The WHT has always priced the stamp at £5. In creating the UK Habitat Stamp, the trustees of the WHT were inspired by the success of the US Federal Duck Stamp programme, which has been raising funds for wetlands conservation since 1934, the date of the first stamp issue.³

Each stamp commissioned by the WHT is also accompanied by a range of additional artwork based on the bird depicted on the stamp and completed by the stamp artist. These artworks and associated memorabilia are also sold by the WHT to raise funds for the WHCT's conservation projects.⁴

As the WHT indicates on its website, all funds generated by the sale of the UK Habitat Stamps are distributed to deserving projects through the Wildlife Habitat Trust and the Wildlife Habitat Charitable Trusts. In the first 10 years of the UK Habitat Stamp, the proceeds from the sales have financed the purchase of over 3,000 acres of wildlife habitat in conservation areas. A number of these sites have subsequently become National or Local Nature Reserves.⁵

¹ Source: <https://wht.org.uk/the-wildlife-habitat-trust/>

² Source: <https://wht.org.uk/the-wildlife-habitat-conservation-stamp-trust-whcst/>

³ Source: Leaflet celebrating the 25th anniversary of the WHT.

⁴ Source: Leaflet as referred to above.

⁵ Source: Flight "Duck News" edited by David Cox, December 2000, Vol 15 No 2.

The WHCT also funds projects abroad from the sales of the stamps, where the projects embrace waterfowl that migrates to and from Britain. Historically, the WHCT has contributed to conservation in the Baltic States, with the latest project being a grant of €17,000 to assist sustainable management of habitat for breeding and migratory waterbirds in Lithuania.⁶ This funding builds on a previous donation in 2018 of €18,000.

Gallery of the UK Habitat Stamps

The gallery below includes the illustrations that are currently available from the WHT website. I have referred to the complete list of the UK Habitat Stamps in the inventory section of this article which appears below. This inventory was previously compiled by member Randy Shore and was published in the December 2003 edition of *Flight* (Vol 18 No 2).

In compiling the gallery, except for the 2021 issue, I have limited my commentary to the name of the bird, location and the artist. Note also that the stamps are also available in what are referred to as “decorative” or miniature sheets of six stamps. I have included an illustration of one of these at the end of this article.

2021-22 Hen Harrier (*Circus cyaneus*)



Hen Harrier on Swinton Estate (North Yorkshire) by artist Simon Turvey. The Estate is managed by the Moorland Association, which has been an active supporter of the Hen Harrier Recovery Plan which takes in the moors of Northern England.⁷ Swinton Estate is one of the country's leading landholdings for working to conserve the Hen Harrier population and this year won recognition from the conservation and sustainable life charity “Redlist Revival”.⁸

⁶ Source: <https://wht.org.uk/>

⁷ Source: <https://www.moorlandassociation.org/2019/08/moor-owners-hail-breeding-success-a-turning-point-as-they-support-hen-harrier-day/>

⁸ Source: <https://www.moorlandassociation.org/2022/04/swinton-estate-wins-conservation-award/>

2020-21 Pink-footed Geese (*Anser brachyrhynchus*)



Artist Rodger McPhail carried out the artwork for this stamp, based on Pink-footed Geese flying over Cockerham Marsh (Lancashire). Rodger McPhail previously did the artwork for the very first UK Habitat Stamp in 1991.

2019-20 Woodcock (*Scolopax rusticola*)



Artist Chris Lodge completed the commission for the 2019 stamp, based on a Woodcock on the National Trust's Stackpole Estate (Suffolk Heritage Coast).

2018-19 Common Teal (*Anas crecca*)



Andrew Stock was responsible for painting the image that appears on the 2018 stamp, which features a pair of Teal flying by Chichester Harbour (Dorset).

2017-18 Eurasian Wigeon (*Anas penelope*)



Jonathan Latimer completed the artwork for the 2017 stamp, illustrating a Wigeon pair on Dornoch Firth (lies between Ross and Cromarty and Sutherland, on the East coast of Scotland).

2019 Pink-footed Goose Decorative Sheet

Below is an example of the decorative sheet that is also available:



This particular sheet is also numbered, in this instance, in the top right-hand corner.

Further Reading

David Cox included a news item on the 2000 UK Habitat Stamp in *Flight*, December 2000, Vol 15 No 2 (page 78). News of other Duck Stamps is also prominent in issues of *Flight* from 2000 and 2001. Randy Shore's listings of Duck Stamps from around the world appear in *Flight* for the year 2003.

Acknowledgements

I am grateful first of all to members David Cox and Randy Shore for having stimulated my interest in Duck Stamps, from their previous coverage in Flight magazine. To complete this article, I also appreciate the background information about the UK Habitat Stamps provided on the Wildlife Habitat Trust's website: <https://wht.org.uk/stamps/>. Other sources that I have consulted include one recommended by Randy Shore: the Sam Houston Duck Company at <http://www.shduck.com/>, as well as the Moorland Association: <https://www.moorlandassociation.org>.

All images in this article are from the Wildlife Habitat Trust website.

Inventory of UK Habitat Stamps

The complete list of UK Habitat Stamps to date is as follows:

1991	UK1	Northern Pintail (<i>anus acuta</i>)
1992	UK2	Eurasian Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>)
1993	UK3	Eurasian Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)
1994	UK4	Eurasian Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>)
1995	UK5	Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)
1996	UK6	Pink-footed Goose (<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>)
1997	UK7	Common Goldeneye (<i>Bucephala clangula</i>)
1998	UK8	Northern Shoveler (<i>Anas clypeata</i>)
1999	UK9	Long-tailed Duck (<i>Clangula hyemalis</i>)
2000	UK10	Eurasian Woodcock (<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>)
2001	UK11	Black Grouse (<i>Tetrao tetrix</i>)
2002	UK12	Grey Partridge (<i>Perdix perdix</i>)
2003	UK13	Barnacle Goose (<i>Branta leucopsis</i>)
2004	UK14	Snipe (<i>Gallinago gallinago</i>)
2005	UK15	Smew (<i>Mergellus albellus</i>)
2006	UK16	Red Grouse (<i>Lagopus lagopus</i>)
2007	UK17	Gadwall (<i>Anas strepera</i>)
2008	UK18	Pink-footed Goose (<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>)
2009	UK19	White-fronted Goose (<i>Anser albifrons</i>)
2010	UK20	Curlew (<i>Numenius arquata</i>)
2011	UK21	Greylag Goose (<i>Anser anser</i>)
2012	UK22	Eurasian Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)
2013	UK23	Tufted Duck (<i>Aythya fuligula</i>)
2014	UK24	Golden Plover (<i>Pluvialis apricaria</i>)
2015	UK25	Mallard (<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>)
2016	UK26	Northern Pintail (<i>Anus acuta</i>)
2017	UK27	Eurasian Wigeon (<i>Anas penelope</i>)
2018	UK28	Eurasian Teal (<i>Anas crecca</i>)
2019	UK29	Eurasian Woodcock (<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>)
2020	UK30	Pink-footed Goose (<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>)
2021	UK31	Hen Harrier (<i>Circus cyaneus</i>)

BIRD STAMP SOCIETY

I have omitted the catalogue numbers that appear in the Sam Houston Duck Company Catalogue, though these are listed in Randy Shore's original listing for 1991-2000.