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2010 Duck First Day Ceremony is June 25 at Md. Bass Pro Shop

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will host first day of sale ceremonies for the 2010-2011 Federal Duck stamp and Junior Duck stamp June 25 at the Bass Pro Shops Outdoor World retail store at the Arundel Mills Mall in Hanover, Md. Doors will open at 9 a.m.; the ceremony will begin at 10 a.m. The event is free and open to the public.

The new Federal Duck stamp features an American wigeon painted by wildlife artist Robert Bealle of Waldorf, Md. Last fall, a panel of five judges chose Bealle's art from among 224 paintings at the Federal Duck Stamp Art Contest, held at the Patuxent Research Refuge in Laurel, Md.

Bealle, a lifelong resident of southern Maryland, initially gained recognition as a wildlife artist after placing second in the 1983 Federal Duck Stamp Contest. Before winning the Federal Duck Stamp Contest in 2009, he also won three Maryland Duck Stamp Contests (1994, 2003 and 2008).

Rui Huang, an 18-year-old from Columbus, Ohio, created the new Junior Duck stamp that features a hooded merganser.

Huang's art was chosen from among 51 Best-of Show winners from every state and the District of Columbia at the National Junior



American wigeon by Robert Bealle



Hooded merganser by Rui Huang

Duck Stamp contest, held April 23 in St. Paul, Minn.

Bealle and Huang will both be on hand at the June 25 ceremony, as will U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service acting Director Rowan Gould; Martin MacDonald, director of conservation for Bass Pro Shops; and Mike Matousek of the U.S. Postal Service.

After a formal ceremony and the sale of the first stamps, the artists and other event participants will be available for autographs and photo opportunities.