

# StampWatch

## Teaching Biology Through Philately

Indraneil Das and Pui Yong Min  
Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation,  
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak  
94300 Kota Samarahan, Sarawak, Malaysia

StampWatch (<http://theherpetofaunalbiologygroup.weebly.com/-stampwatch.html>) is a content page from the website of the Herpetofauna Research Group of the Institute of Biodiversity and Environmental Conservation, Universiti Malaysia Sarawak. Its goal is to make readers aware of new philatelic release on the theme of herpetology (science of amphibians and reptiles), as well as make layfolks aware of the beauty and diversity of these animals. Stamps showing amphibians and reptiles, as primary and secondary (or as motifs on edges of sheets) themes have now been issued by scores of countries and postal authorities, from Afars and Issas (currently, Djibouti) to Zimbabwe.

Entries to StampWatch are selected on the basis of the design and appeal of the philatelic release, and associated story. Where available, Stanley Gibbons catalogue numbers are added in an accompanying box that also provides details of date of issue, value and other philatelic trivia. The page is updated when new material becomes available to us, on average of several times monthly.

Illustrated here are a few entries. Items of interest include stamps, stamp sheets, miniature sheets, first day covers and special cancellations/post marks, that depict amphibians and reptiles.



### Reptiles, Serbia

Republic of Serbia's herpetological issue from 21 May 2012 depicts four reptiles: a snake (*Coronella austriaca*), two lizards (*Podarcis tauricus* and *Lacerta viridis*) and a turtle (*Emys orbicularis*). The sheet's central gutter depicts a variety of landscape, presumably associated with these species.

SG	21 May 2012	"Fauna: Reptiles"
557	22D	<i>Coronella austriaca</i>
558	33D	<i>Podarcis tauricus</i>
559	44D	<i>Lacerta viridis</i>
560	66D	<i>Emys orbicularis</i>
557-560 printed se-tenant in horizontal strips of four stamps, surrounding a central stamp-sized label		

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## New Caledonia. Marine Life

A booklet of 10 self-adhesive stamps, entitled "Le Lagon Caledonien" (Caledonian Lagoon) was produced for priority letters up to 20 gm within Zone 2, by New Caledonia's postal authority. The byline is "Symbole de la Biodiversité marine" (Symbol of Marine Biodiversity). Apart from a *Chelonia mydas* on an 110F stamp, keen observers will also notice a *Lalafauda* species on the lower edge of the front cover. The booklet is a collaborative project between OPT-NC (l'Office des Postes et Télécommunications- Nouvelle-Calédonie) and CPS (Secrétariat Général de la Communauté du Pacifique).

SG	8 June 2013	"Marine Life"
XX	110F	<i>Chelonia mydas</i>
XX-XX	110F (x 10)	Issued se-tenant, forming a booklet pane

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## Ecuador. Lonesome George

Unidad Postal- Correos del Ecuador ([www.correosdelecuador.gob.ec](http://www.correosdelecuador.gob.ec)) issued a stamp and a sheetlet recently to mark the passing of perhaps its most famous herpetological citizen, Lonesome George. Referred to in Spanish as *El Solitario Jorge*, Lonesome George, a male *Pinta Island Tortoise*, *Chelonoidis nigra abingdonii*, was born before 1912, and is generally thought to be the **last known individual** of his subspecies. Late in his life, George achieved fame as a symbol for the **Galápagos Islands** and for conservation generally. Edwards (2012. Biol. Conserv. 157:225-228) identified 17 tortoises that are partially descended from the same subspecies, raising speculation that related purebred individuals may still be extant.

Modern Ecuador stamps show face value in US dollars, and this particular set, especially the miniature sheet, is of exceptional high value, at US\$25. A date of 24 June 2012 is indicated on the stamp, the date of death of Lonesome George. A total of 200,000 stamps have been printed, of which 150,000 will be sold in the Galápagos, the remainder sold on the Ecuadorian mainland. The high design quality of the stamps is the result of the technical skill of its French printer, Cartor ([www.cartor.com](http://www.cartor.com)), that promotes its "adventurous philatelic products".

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SG	4 July 2013	"Lonesome George"
XX	\$3.00	<i>Chelonoidis nigra</i>
XX	\$25.00	<i>Chelonoidis nigra</i>

## Sri Lanka. Yala National Park overprint

The World Stamp Exhibition 2013 was held at the Siam Paragon Shopping Mall, Bangkok, Thailand, between 2–14 August 2013. It was hosted by Thailand Post, a state enterprise, to celebrate the 130th anniversary of the launching of Thailand's first stamp. Significantly, Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn gave her personal collection to be put on display. The theme of the Exhibition was "Art and Happiness", showcasing art related to stamp collections from around the world, and over 2,400 stamp collections (worth about US\$ 32 million) were on display. Sri Lanka's three Yala miniature sheets (issued 28 July 2013) were released with the Thailand overprint, showing the dual mascots for the event, Kinnaree and Kinnom. The former is a half-woman, half-avian character from the Thai and Sanskrit literature, while the latter is the masculine equivalent, both associated with Himmapham (Himalayas, in Sanskrit) forests, and embody happiness, for which they appear in Thai architecture, especially at entrances of buildings to indicate welcome and hospitality.

SG	2 August 2013	"National Parks of Sri Lanka Stamp Series. Yala National Park" World Stamp Exhibition, Bangkok 2013 Overprint
MSxx	R5	<i>Eretmochelys imbricata</i>
	R50	-

SG	2 August 2013	"National Parks of Sri Lanka Stamp Series. Yala National Park" World Stamp Exhibition Bangkok 2013 Overprint
MSxx	R15	<i>Crocodylus palustris</i>
	R40	-

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Posted on Monday, September 23, 2013 at 10:24 am by Indrani Das

## Russia. Newt FDC and cancellation

In the April issue of Stanley Gibbons Monthly (43[11]-169), Russia's stamp issue, entitled "Newts" (issued 25 June 2012) received their SG catalogue numbers (see below details of the Belarus and Russian joint issue). Illustrated here are the Russian First Day Cover, and its cancellation mark, from a Moscow post office, issued on 25 June 2012.

SG	25 June 2012	"Newts"
7855	13p	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>
7856	13p	<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>
7855-7856 issued se-tenant in a single sheet of four (x 2 value) stamps		

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Posted on Wednesday, May 20, 2013 at 17:33 pm by Indrani Das