

SMALL MAMMALS OF ZIMBABWE

Issued 15th January 1991

(Extracted from *Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 1 of 1991*)²

In the simplest of definitions, a mammal is described as a warm-blooded animal that has a backbone, breathes air and suckles its young. Obviously, this definition will embrace a very large number of different species of animals, yet, whenever one visualises Zimbabwean mammals one tends to think of the larger mammals such as the lion, the elephant or the rhinoceros. However, in commissioning this set of stamps which features four of the smaller mammals of Zimbabwe, it is hoped that the public will appreciate, to a greater extent, the wonderful richness and variety of mammals that are to be found in Zimbabwe. The four stamps feature two mammals (Le. the bat-eared fox and the small-spotted genet) from the order of carnivores, and two (i.e. the night-ape and the red squirrel) from the orders of primates and rodents respectively.

15c Small-Spotted Genet

Genetta

Order - *Carnivora*. Family - *Viverridae*

Shona name - *Tsimba*

Ndebele name - *Insimba*



The small-spotted genet is very similar to the large-spotted or rusty-spotted genet, but is distinguished by the large amount of black hair on its hind feet, a crest of long black hair down its spine and its long coarse haired coat. It normally lives alone and is only seen at night. It is equally at home both on the ground and in trees. Its diet consists mainly of insects, rodents and spiders, but it does also eat birds, snakes, scorpions and chickens. It is found throughout Zimbabwe, but is especially common in farming and peri urban areas where there is a plentiful supply of rodents



23c Red Squirrel

Paraxerus palliatus

Order - *Rodentia*. Family - *Sciuridae*

Shona name - *Tsindi*

Ndebele name - *Indlegu*

This squirrel gets its name from the bright auburn fur on the underparts of its body and on its tail and legs. It is found in the forest areas of the eastern highlands. It is diurnal and is essentially a solitary animal except during the breeding season when it is sometimes seen in the company of its mate. Unlike most other squirrels, this squirrel spends most of its time in the forest undergrowth and not in trees. Their diet is mainly vegetarian in nature although they do also eat insects such as grasshoppers and moths. It gives birth to one or two young and, when alarmed, gives a 'chuck-chuck-chuck' call which is repeated at irregular intervals. It is also thought that their habit of burying and hoarding the larger or harder seeds that they eat plays an important part in forest regeneration.

35c Night-Ape,

Gafago senegalensis

Order - *Primates*. Family - *Lorisidae*

Shona name - *Chinhavira* or *chidavira*

Ndebele name - *Impukunyoni*



Whilst night-apes resemble and are closely related to bush-babies they are however very much smaller and lighter and considerably more agile than this other species of galago. They live in trees and in this respect their especially adapted hind legs enable them to leap from branch to branch, often across considerable distance with ease. They are found throughout Zimbabwe but are more common in acacia and mopani woodlands where the branches and holes in the acacia and mopani trees provide an ideal construction site for the night-apes' nests. As their name implies, these animals are strictly nocturnal. Their preferred food is gum from damaged trees but they do also feed on insects, spiders, berries and fruit.



45c - Bat-Eared Fox

Otocyon megalotis

Order - *Carnivora*. Family - *Canidae*

Shona name - *Gava*

Ndebele name - *Unga*

The bat-eared fox or as it is also called, the long-eared fox — a name derived from the animal's large black-edged ears. This fox, which in build looks rather like a small jackal, is found in the western and south western areas of Zimbabwe. Whilst the animal is essentially nocturnal, it is nonetheless occasionally seen during the day. It lives in disused antbear holes or alternatively will dig its own burrow. Its diet consists mainly of insects and grubs and, in this respect, its keen sense of hearing enables it to detect the sounds of underground insects and worms which it then digs up and eats.

First Day Cover - Vervet Monkey

Chlorocebus pygerythrus

Order - *Primates*. Family - *Cercopithecidae*

Shona name – Ngedere

Ndebele name - Inkawu



One of two monkeys that can be found in Zimbabwe, the other being the rare Samango Monkey. Females remain in the same group as their mothers, while males disperse to neighbouring groups. Males must claim their dominance in the hierarchy through vocalizations and displays, while females assume a rank near that of their mothers. Vervet monkeys have a sophisticated and diverse communication system, making at least 33 different vocalizations. Their warning calls are coded to identify specific predators, including leopards, pythons, and eagles.³

The Stamps



Catalogue listings

SG	ZSC ¹	Value	Description
800	227	15c	Small-spotted Genet
801	228	23c	Red squirrel
802	229	35c	Night Ape
803	230	45c	Bat-eared Fox

Technical details

Stamp size:	All values	35 x 30 mm
Sheet Size:	50 stamps (10 rows of 5 stamps), two panes per printed sheet	
Artist:	Barbara Chalk	
Paper:	ZSC paper type D – HS8, fluorescent front and back, with cream PVA gum.	
Print colours:	Black, magenta, cyan, yellow	
Perforations:	SG 14½ x 14, ZSC 14¼ x 14 Top margin: Perforated through. Other margins: Imperforate	
Printer:	NatPrint, Harare, Zimbabwe	
Printer's Imprint:	Bottom Margin, below Row 10 Columns 2-4. Imprint printed in black	
Cylinder numbers:	Bottom margin above R1/5. Colours from left – cyan, magenta, yellow, black	
Colour register:	Type TL 4– round boxed – right margin opposite R1/5. Colours reading down – cyan, magenta, yellow, black	
Sheet Value:	Top margin, above 1/1, printed in black.	

Sheet Number: Type SN 4a with 'PTC' prefix, left margin opposite R1/1, reading down

Print numbers: 15c 1, 500,000 23c 550,000
35c 350,000 45c 320,000

Issue date: 15th January, 1991

Withdrawal from sale:

Demonetarisaton: 17th October, 1994

Listed varieties

No listed varieties have been noted

Unlisted Varieties

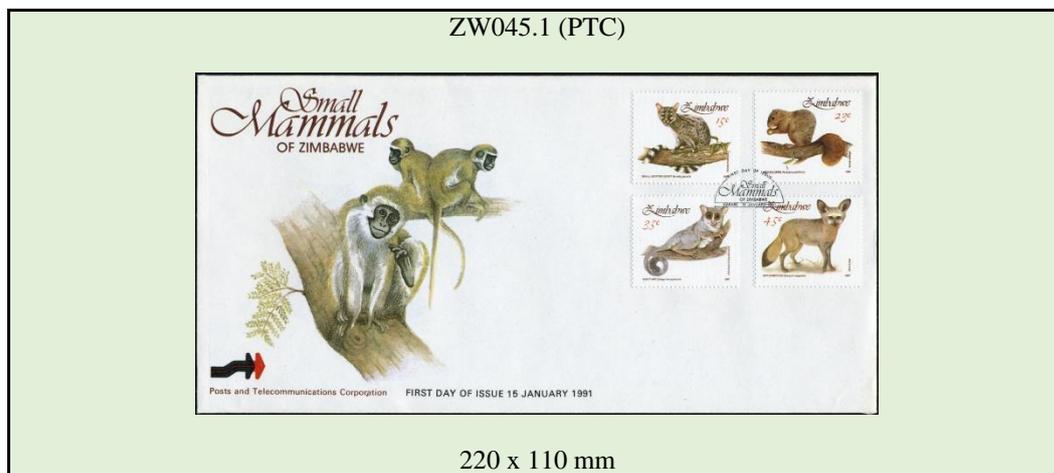
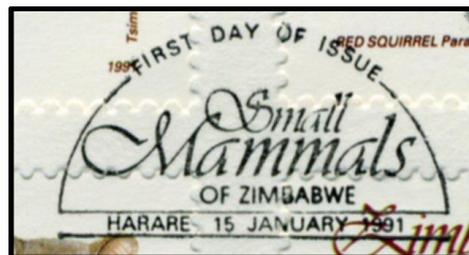
There are numerous small dots and specks in the printing of these stamps, particularly in the backgrounds. Some dots and specks shown below are a bit more distinctive, some may be constant.

 <p>15c: Stamp on left is slightly shorter in height, probably as a result of the early strike of the comb perforator. (See distance at top of Genet's head and stamp margin) (Courtesy Rob Burnett)</p>	 <p>RED SQUIRREL <i>Paraxerus palliatus</i></p> <p>23c: There has been a shift in either the black or magenta plate, resulting in the text appearing to have red outline. (Courtesy Narendhra Morar)</p>
 <p>45c: Imperforate proof (Source eBay Sept 2020)</p>	

First Day Cover

The cover numbering comes from the catalogue produced by Geoff Brakspear.

A pictorial first day of issue canceller was produced for this issued and was used by the Philatelic Bureau. Other first day cover cancellers continued to be used at main post offices.



Bibliography:

1. "The Zimbabwean Concise Postage Stamp Catalogue", published by Harare Stamp Company, edited by Ken Allanson, Mike Amos and Geoff Brakspear. The catalogue continues to be updated and expanded by Geoff Brakspear
2. PTC Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 1 of 1991.
3. Source www.mpalalive.org/field_guide/vervet_monkey