The four stamps in this issue illustrate the larger species of owl in Zimbabwe. All were painted by Bob Finch, the artist for the first series of owl stamps in 1987.

25c: Wood Owl
*Strix woodfordii*

A medium sized owl measuring up to 36 cm in length. It inhabits evergreen and riverine forests, dense woodland and pine plantations. It is strictly nocturnal and very well camouflaged and is very hard to see when perched in a tree during the day. Its diet consists mainly of insects but also eats rodents, frogs, birds, centipedes and sometimes snakes. It breeds from August to November in Zimbabwe usually in a hole in a tree but sometimes on the ground at the base of a tree or under a log. It normally lays two eggs.

59c: Pels Fishing Owl
*Scotopelia peli*

A very large owl measuring approximately 63 cm in length. It has no 'eartufts' on the head but the crown feathers are raised when alarmed. It is largely nocturnal and rests during the day in large shady trees up to 18 m above ground. Its food consists of mostly fish of up to 2 kg weight, frogs, crabs, mussels and young crocodiles. April, May and October are the main breeding seasons in Zimbabwe when it will normally lay two eggs in a nest constructed in a broad fork, or cavity in a large tree.

90c: Spotted Eagle Owl
*Bubo africanus*

A large owl of about 47 cm in length with very conspicuous eartufts. It is nocturnal and it is a fairly common resident of Zimbabwe where it inhabits rocky areas, woodlands, forest edge, savanna, semi-desert and towns. It feeds mostly on arthropods, birds up to the size of a guinea fowl, reptiles, mammals, frogs and sometimes fish. It breeds during August to October in Zimbabwe when it usually lays two eggs in a shallow scraped nest on the ground, under a large rock, or on a cliff or building. It will also nest in a hole in a tree or on top of Hamerkop's or sociable weavers' nests.
$1.16: Giant Eagle Owl *Bubo lacteus*

A very large owl measuring up to 65 cm in length. 'Eartufts' are less pronounced than in other eagle owls. It is nocturnal and roosts by day on the ground, or in a tree. It preys on mammals up to the size of a Vervet Monkey and is very fond of hedgehogs. It also feeds on most other species of birds as well as reptiles, frogs, fish and arthropods. It usually nests on top of other birds’ nests such as Hamerkop's, sociable weavers', or in the hollow of a tree. It breeds from March to September.

The Stamps

![Stamps](image)

Catalogue listings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SG</th>
<th>ZSC</th>
<th>Value</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>850</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>25c</td>
<td>Wood Owl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>851</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>59c</td>
<td>Pels Fishing Owl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>852</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>90c</td>
<td>Spotted Eagle Owl</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>853</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>$1.16</td>
<td>Giant Eagle Owl</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Technical details

**Stamp size:** All values 28 x 42 mm

**Sheet Size:** 50 stamps (5 rows of 10 stamps), two panes per printed sheet

**Artist:** Bob Finch

**Paper:** ZSC paper type D – HS8, fluorescent front and back, with cream PVA gum.

**Print colours:** Black, magenta, cyan & yellow

~ 2 ~
Perforations: SG 14½, ZSC 14¼
Left margin: Perforated through.
Other margins: Imperforate

Printer: NatPrint, Harare, Zimbabwe

Printer’s Imprint: Bottom Margin, below Row 5 Columns 5 & 6. Imprint printed in black

Cylinder numbers: Bottom margin below R5/1. Colours from left – cyan, magenta, yellow, black

Colour register: Type TL 4– round boxed – left margin opposite R5/1. Colours reading down – cyan, magenta, yellow, black

Sheet Value: Bottom margin, below R5/10, printed in black.

Sheet Number: Type SN 4a with ‘PTC’ prefix, right margin opposite R5/10, reading down

Print numbers: 25c 1,000,000 59c 300,000
90c 200,000 $1.16 200,000

Issue date: 6th April, 1993

Withdrawal from sale:

Demonetarisation: 2nd January, 1997

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.

25c: Significant shift of perforations down and to the left, with a slight angle sloping up from left to right

(Source: eBay download)

25c: Green spot to left side of owl’s face

25c: Yellow spot to left of owl, water on plate

90c: Pale yellow area behind ‘0’ of value, probably water on plate
**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:**