

# OWLS OF ZIMBABWE

(Series III)

Issued 8<sup>th</sup> June, 1999

(Extracted from Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 3 of 1999)<sup>2</sup>

This is the third and last set of stamps illustrating Owls of Zimbabwe, the stamps have now covered all twelve species found in the country. Like the previous two sets, three of the stamps are from artwork produced by Bob Finch, who unfortunately passed away before completing the final design.

## **\$1.20: Cape Eagle Owl**

*Bubo capensis*

This owl is large in size measuring a length of 48-53cm. It is similar to the spotted Eagle Owl with conspicuous "ear tufts" and is distributed mainly in the eastern quarter of Zimbabwe adjacent to Mozambique where it is an uncommon to rare resident. Its habitat includes rocky and mountainous country usually with dense woodland or bush nearby. It is usually solitary and nocturnal and roosts in a cave or on a ledge by day. It flushes reluctantly and is easily overlooked. It hunts from a perch swooping silently onto its prey. Its prey includes hares, cane-rats, dassies, mongooses and rodents. It also preys on guineafowl, pigeons, barn owls, lizards, insects, spiders and crabs.



## **\$5.60: Grass Owl**

*Tyto capensis*

This owl is medium size very similar to the Barn Owl. It is distributed mostly to the eastern half of Zimbabwe. Its habitat is in long grass, usually near water vleis and marshes. They are usually found in pairs or small loose groups of 4-5 birds. They normally roost on the ground in rank grass where they make and leave well-formed regurgitated pellets. This owl flushes reluctantly flying upwards with legs dangling but soon drops back into the long grass. It hunts by quartering the ground low over grassland. It rarely hunts from a perch and is mainly nocturnal. It often hunts by day and its prey is eviscerated before being swallowed. Prey consists of mainly small rodents, bats, young hares, birds, reptiles, frogs and insects.

**\$7.40: Barn Owl**

*Tyto alba*

This owl is of medium size approximately 30-35 cm in length. It is distributed throughout Zimbabwe as well as almost worldwide. Its habitat is varied but always near a suitable roosting cavity in a cliff, building, base of a palm frond or in a hole in a tree. They are fairly common in woodlands and veldt areas but not in forest. They are usually found in pairs and roost by day in a suitable cavity. When disturbed it will elongate its body and almost completely close its eyes. It hunts by quartering the ground in an alternate flap-and-glide flight. It emerges at dusk to hunt and may hover to scan the ground for its prey and often beating the bushes to disturb roosting birds. Prey consists of small rodents, birds, lizards, frogs and insects.



**\$9.90: Marsh Owl**

*Asio capensis*



This owl is of medium size 36-37 cm in length and is distributed well throughout in Zimbabwe. It is a common resident and somewhat nomadic especially during the grass burning dry season. Its habitat includes grassland, vleis and the edges of marshes solitary or in pairs except when breeding when it will appear in groups of about 40 birds. It roosts by day under dense grass tuft and hunts by quartering in flight dropping suddenly on its prey. It rarely hovers and will hunt by day, especially when it's cloudy. It is often seen perching on fenceposts along roads. Its food includes small rodents, insects and bird shrews and young hares, bats and frogs.

**The Stamps**



## Catalogue listings

SG	ZSC <sup>1</sup>	Value	Description
988	416	\$1.20	Cape Eagle Owl
989	417	\$5.60	Grass Owl
990	418	\$7.40	Barn Owl
991	419	\$9.90	Marsh Owl

## Technical details

<b>Stamp size:</b>	All values	28 x 42 mm	
<b>Sheet Size:</b>	50 stamps (5 rows of 10 stamps), two panes per printed sheet		
<b>Artist:</b>	\$1.20	Cedric Herbert	
	Others	Bob Finch	
<b>Paper:</b>	ZSC paper type F - Although still officially described as HS8, the paper properties changed in 1996. This is fluorescent front but non-fluorescent back and the gum is whitish PVA.		
<b>Print colours:</b>	Cyan, magenta, yellow & black		
<b>Perforations:</b>	SG 14½, ZSC 14¼		
	Right margin:	Perforated through.	
	Other margins:	Imperforate	
<b>Printer:</b>	NatPrint, Harare, Zimbabwe		
<b>Printer's Imprint:</b>	Bottom Margin, below Row 5 Columns 5 & 6. Imprint printed in black		
<b>Cylinder numbers:</b>	Bottom margin below R5/1. Colours from left – cyan, magenta, yellow, black		
<b>Colour register:</b>	Type TL 4– round boxed – left margin opposite R5/1. Colours reading down – cyan, magenta, yellow, black		
<b>Sheet Value:</b>	Bottom margin, below R5/10, printed in black.		
<b>Sheet Number:</b>	Type SN 4a with 'PTC' prefix, right margin opposite R5/10, reading down		
<b>Print numbers:</b>	\$1.20	2,500,000	\$5.60 190,000
	\$7.40	190,000	\$9.90 190,000
<b>Issue date:</b>	8 <sup>th</sup> June, 1999		

**Withdrawal from sale:**

**Demonetisation:**

### 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.



**\$7.40:** Imperforate proof, the width of the right margin is greater than normal,  
(Source - eBay)



**\$7.40:** Red spot near right eye.  
Cyl 1A R5/2 (may be batch flaw)  
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)

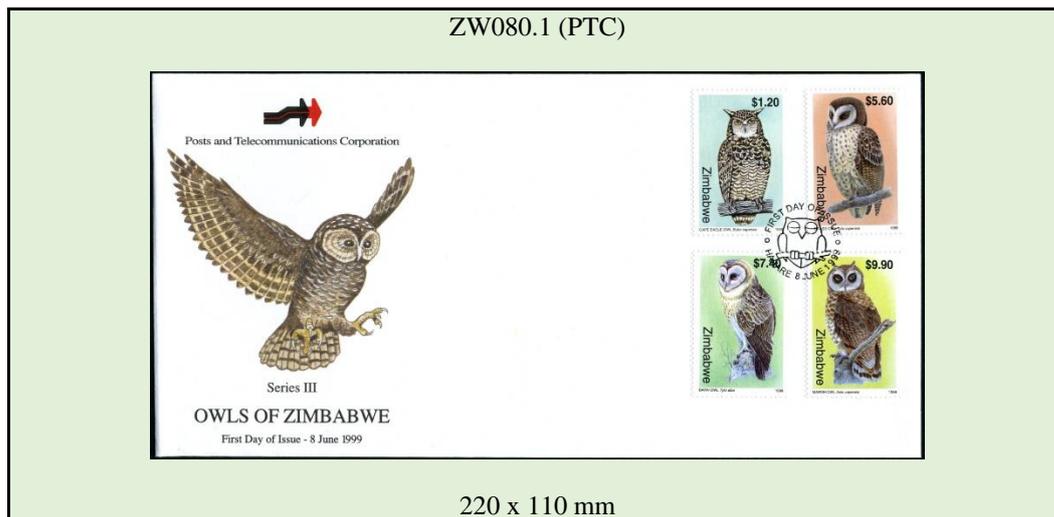
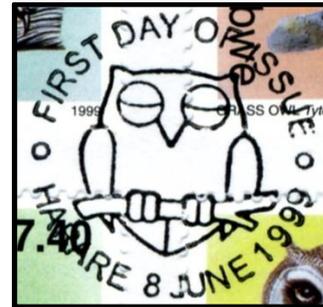


**\$7.40:** Imperforate proof  
(Source eBay November 2021)

## 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.



## Related Material



In 2003/08 a number of stamps appeared on eBay showing genuine Zimbabwe stamps, which had been rubber-stamped "Specimen".

On enquiry at the Zimbabwe Philatelic Bureau, it was advised that the Bureau did have a "Specimen" rubberstamp, but that it had not been used in years. In the past, the Bureau, on occasion, did send out pre-issue material to a few publications with this cancel on. It was done on request from the people concerned, so that the stamps couldn't be used as postage. It is hard to see by a publication would want copies of the stamps for publication with the stamps so heavily cancelled.

**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 3 of 1999.

<b>Additions/Changes since December 2020</b>	
3-2022	\$7.40 imperforate proof