

FIRST SAPOA JOINT ISSUE

NATIONAL BIRDS

Issued 11th October 20004

(Extracted from a flier produced by Namibia Stamps Centre)²

Southern Africa Postal Operators Association (SAPOA) is a SADC regional body responsible for the postal sector. It was created in 2001 under the SADC Protocol on Transport and Communication and Meteorology.

The mandate of SAPOA is derived from Article 11 of the SADC Protocol on Transport and Communications and its role is to ensure that every sector of the community has access to modern, efficient and diversified range of mail, financial and e-products.

The Association is composed of 14 Designated Postal Operators with the Secretariat located in Maseru, Lesotho. It has a Management Board which is supported by a Chief Executive Officers' Forum and an Operations Directors Forum, providing technical expertise in the implementation of projects and programmes within the region.³

The postal operators are the postal administrations of the various southern African countries, and include Zimbabwe Post.

This is the first joint issue with eight participating countries – Angola, Botswana, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Each country issued a miniature sheet, with hexagonal stamps showing each country's national bird. Only Botswana issued one of the stamps as a sheet stamp. First day covers were released in each country but only showing the stamp depicting that country's national bird.

All stamps were printed by lithographic process by Enchedé of The Netherlands. The stamps were designed by Anja Denker, who was also responsible for many Namibian stamps.

(The following was extracted from a leaflet produced by Namibian Stamp Centre, and distributed by Zimpost)²

African Fish Eagle (*Haliaeetus vocifer*) (National Bird of Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe)



The Fish Eagle, characterized by its gleaming black, white and chestnut plumage, has become the best-known bird of prey in Africa. These birds prey mainly on live fish which they catch by swooping down at a shallow angle, grasping the fish in their talons and then lifting off to carry it to their perch to devour there. The females are larger than the males and the immatures are a mottled brown splashed with white, often showing a brown streak through the eye. The evocative cry of the fish eagle is probably the best known of any African bird and is heard most frequently at dawn and at dusk.

Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)
(National Bird of Angola)

Peregrine falcons are distributed almost worldwide, with no less than 3 recognised races. The race in Africa is the smallest and is named *Falco peregrinus minor*. The peregrine falcon has a black crown, heavy black moustachials, bluish grey upperparts and underparts that are white with black bars. It is an extremely powerful, agile and fast raptor in flight, with recorded speeds of more than 200km per hour. Their preferred habitat are steep cliffs and high gorges, but nests may also be found on low cliffs and in arid areas like the Namib desert.



Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)
(National Bird of Botswana)

The cattle egret is a small, stocky bird which is often seen following cattle or game. They are a species of ibis and belong to the heron family. They are common birds found almost throughout the African savannah country and Asia, northern Australia and central America. They feed on insects and even small fish and aquatic species. Their overall colour is white and the head carries plumes. The iris and space between the eye and beak are both yellow; legs and feet are olive-brown. When breeding, the plumes on head, throat and mantle are a buff (brownish-yellow) or tan colour, legs are a dull yellow to red colour, the iris turns red and the beak orange-red.



Blue Crane (*Anthropoids paradisea*)
(National Bird of South Africa)

South Africa's national bird is found only in southern Africa and neighbouring territories, including Etosha and adjacent areas. This beautiful greyish-blue bird has an unusually large head and long, slender neck and the drooping, dark feathers are elongations of the inner wing feathers. It is usually found in small groups and during breeding season mainly in pairs in freshwater areas and open grasslands and has also adapted to agricultural lands.



Purple-Crested Lourie (*Tauraco porphyreolophus*)
(National Bird of Swaziland)

Louries are unique to Africa, and in the southern continent, four species, of which the purple-crested lourie is one, occur. They have a purplish-bluish crest back, and tail, which appear black in poor light. The heavy beak and the red around the eye are characteristic to this particular species. It has red flight-feathers and the whole wing is red when seen in flight. These birds are shy and furtive and prefer dry forests and open woodland. They occur in pairs and family parties and large numbers may gather in fruiting trees.



Bar-tailed Trogon (*Apaloderma vittatum*)
(Bird of choice for Malawi, which apparently has no national bird)

Trogon are brilliantly coloured birds which live in forests. The Bar-tailed Trogon is a fairly common resident in Malawi. It is similar to the Marina Trogon with emerald green upperparts and throat, yellow bill, bright red breast and belly, but has silvery undertail feathers which are barred black. They are found in montane and sub-montane evergreen forests where they live in holes in trees and hawk aerial insects.



The Stamps



Featured at 75% of actual size

Catalogue listings

SG	ZSC ¹	Value	Description
MS1143	MS9		Miniature sheet (se-tenant block of 6 designs)
		\$500	African Fish Eagle (Zambia)
		\$1,000	Purple-crested Lourie (Swaziland)
		\$2,300	African Fish Eagle (Zimbabwe)
		\$3,000	Blue Crane (South Africa)
		\$5,000	Cattle Egret (Botswana)
		\$9,000	Peregrine Falcon (Angola)
		\$12,000	Bar-tailed Trogan (Malawi)
		\$17,000	African fish Eagle (Namibia)

Technical details

Stamp size:	Miniature sheet, 170 x 95 mm, with eight hexagonal stamps with 20 mm sides	
Artist:	Anja Denkar	
Paper:	Paper provided by Joh Enschedé. Fluorescent front and back	
Perforations:	SG 14, ZSC 14	
	Left and right margins:	Perforated through
	Other margins:	Imperforate
Printer:	Joh. Enschedé Security Printers of Haarlem, the Netherlands	
Printer's Imprint:	None	
Cylinder numbers:	None	
Colour register:	None	
Sheet Value:	None.	
Sheet Number:	None	
Print numbers:	Miniature sheet	15,000
	First day covers	3,000
Issue date:	11 th October, 2004	

Postal Rates

Three of the values represent postal rates that were applicable from 14th July 2004 - \$2,300 (local), \$12,000 (Africa) and \$17,000 (Europe). Unfortunately, the postal rates increased on 10th October 2004, the day before the release of the miniature sheet. None of the new postal rates were represented by the new stamps.

As the stamps can only be found in the miniature sheet, it was probably assumed, except for philatelists, stamps were unlikely to be used by the general public. In which case it really didn't matter what the stamp values were.

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.

		
<p>\$500: Alongside bottom left corner, magenta mark (<i>Courtesy Narendhra Morar</i>)</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 issue and was used by the Philatelic Bureau. The first day cover and canceller were not produced locally. Other first day cover cancellers continued to be used at main post offices.





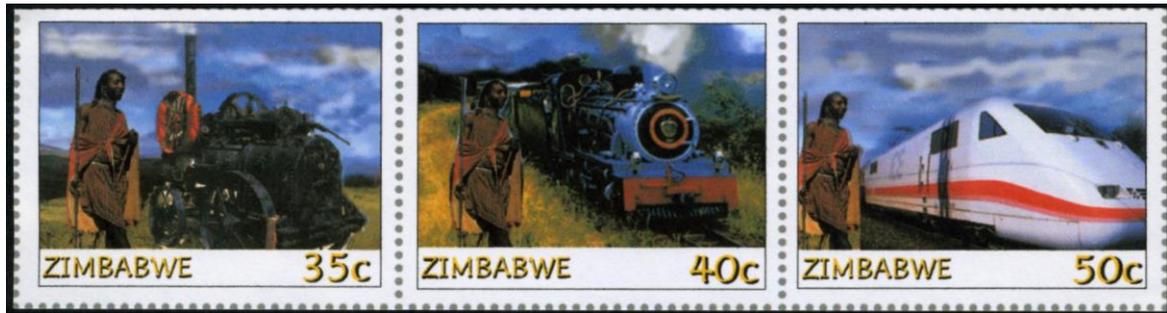
Related Material

These items come from the collection of Franco Frescura who was the chairman of the South Africa Philatelic Committee for some years during the 1990's. During that time, printers from around the world would occasionally submit essays of work done by their artists for consideration by the Philatelic Committee, and if accepted, the printers would be assigned the job of printing the stamps. These laser-printed essays were submitted to the South Africa Philatelic Committee by PHILART, a German company as a proposal for a series of joint issues for the Southern African Postal Operators Association (SAPOA). These essays were sent by Philart and considered by the Philatelic Committee for issue, but were not adopted. The idea was to show scenes and/or people from the various Southern African countries and have each country issue the same stamps around the same time as a large joint issue.

The miniature sheet is a copy of the proposed artwork, and the two strips of designs were laser printed copies with simulated perforations. These are examples relating to Zimbabwe.



(Source – eBay)



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. Leaflet produced by Namibian Stamps Centre, Windhoek
3. SAPOA website – www.sapoa.info