

Poland (2021) – Dinosaurs issue

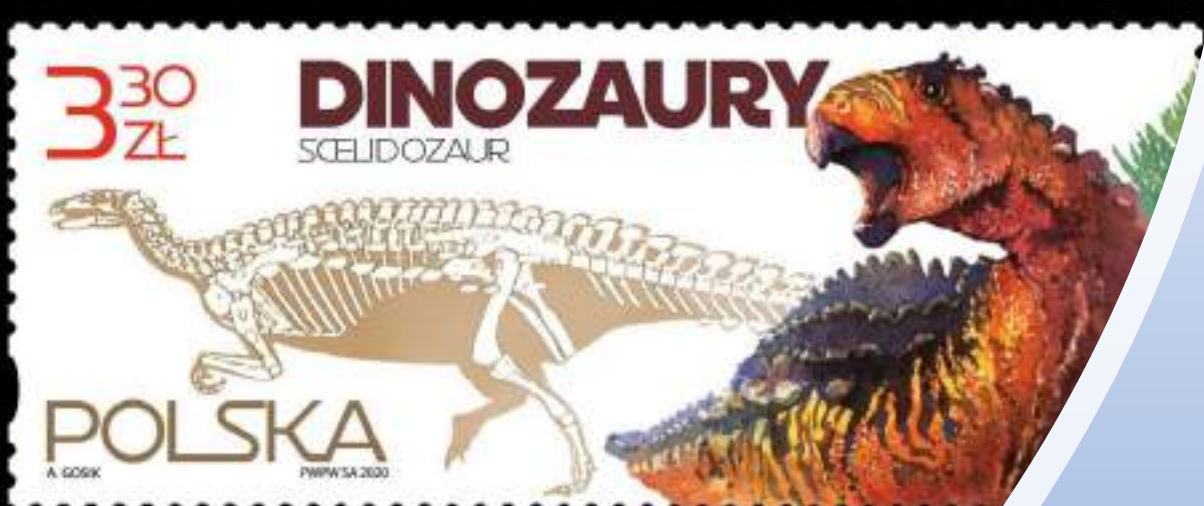
# Adventures in Collecting: Where the Paleontological Sciences meet Postage Stamps

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Unless otherwise stated, all images are from Michael's website or scanned from my collection.



# Are you tired of collecting heavy minerals, rocks, and fossils???

- Why not try collecting stamps instead?
- Stamp collecting – Most collectors focus on specific countries, topics or temporal ranges. We will focus on topical collecting in these slides:
  - Paleophilately – collecting stamps that depict prehistoric life
  - Geophilately – collecting stamps that depict geologic themes

Mongolia, 2022 Souvenir Sheet

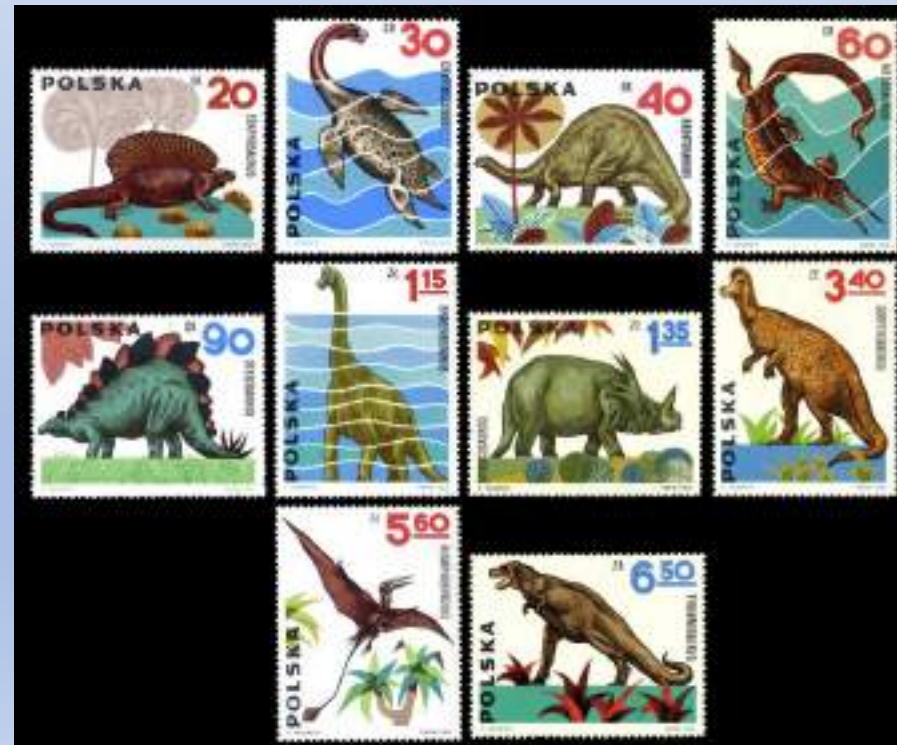


## What is a stamp?

- A piece of paper (usually) with a printed design on the front and a coating of adhesive on the back
- Used to show proof of payment for mailing an item (tied to weight of item)
- “legal” stamps – governed by Universal Postal Union



Australia (2020)  
Opalized fossils of  
Australia set



Poland (1965)  
Prehistoric  
Animals Set



Stamp Act, 1765

1847 –first official U.S. postage stamp released



1955 – 1<sup>st</sup> US stamp with fossil



1620s-1690s – development of revenue stamps (proof of taxes paid)

1860s-1870s – various treaties develop precursor to modern UPU



1840 First postage stamp – Great Britain Penny Black



1951 – the oldest stamp to show a prehistoric animal; India

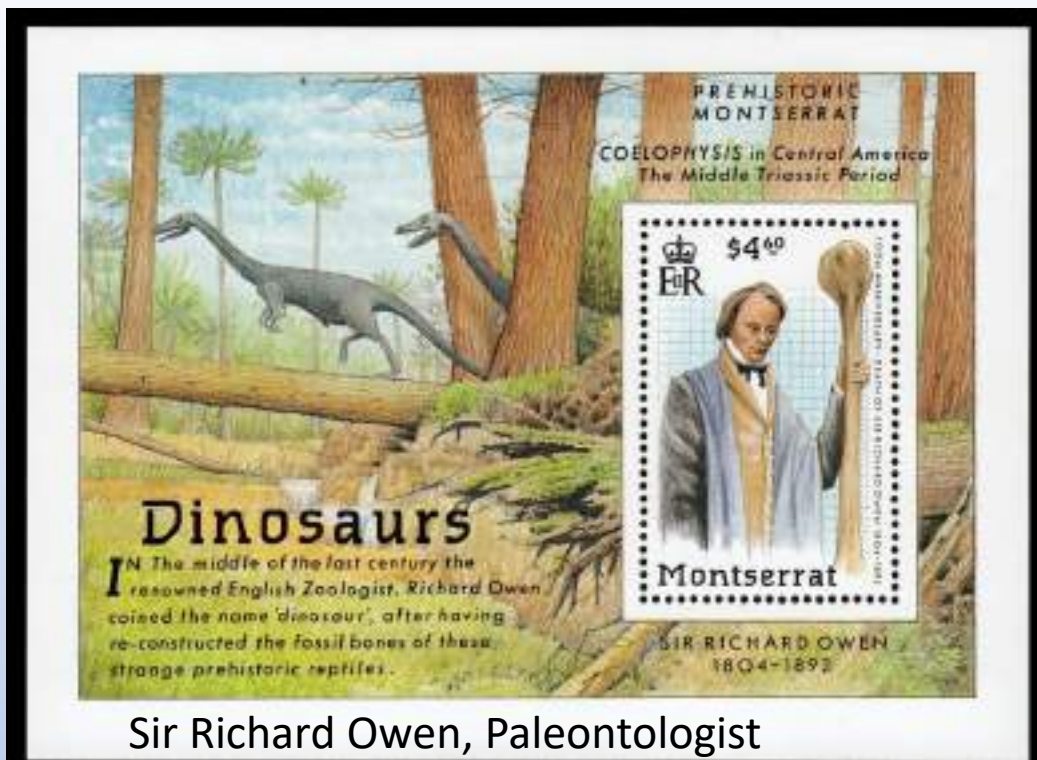
# Paleophilately – Variety of topics

- Famous paleontologists
- Reconstructions of ancient animals and plants
- Depictions of fossils
- Paleoanthropological topics
- Locations famous for fossils
- Museums or Universities with significant collections

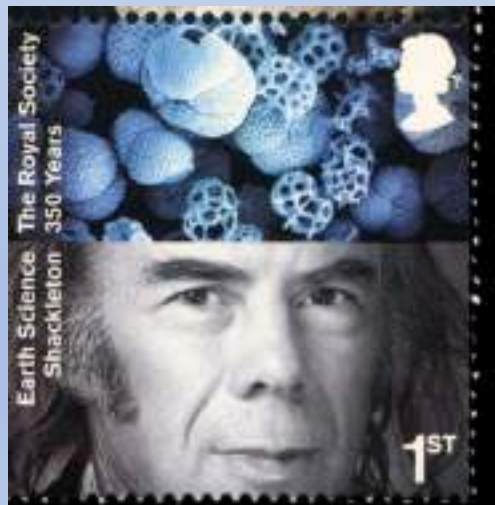




Mary Anning,  
Amateur/Commercial  
Paleontologist



Sir Richard Owen, Paleontologist



Sir Nicholas Shackleton, Paleoclimatologist



Georges Cuvier  
Father of Comparative Anatomy



Vladimir Afanasyevich Obruchev  
Geologist and Author,  
Plutonia –Obruchev’s  
version of Journey to the  
Center of the Earth



Charles Darwin, Biologist

*A bakonyi  
dinoszaurusz-lelőhely  
csodálatos világa*

200 Ft

MAGYARORSZÁG  
Hüngarobacsalikus székessal

200 Ft

MAGYARORSZÁG  
Mochlodon-vörösi

200 Ft

MAGYARORSZÁG  
Batacornie mindszentyae

200 Ft

MAGYARORSZÁG  
Atractostelus

200 Ft

MAGYARORSZÁG  
Foxemys trabanti

200 Ft

MAGYARORSZÁG  
Doratodon cacchiandense

Hungary (2020) – Reconstruction of the Late Cretaceous Bakony Site.



FIRST DAY OF ISSUE



DIPOLODOCUS CARNEGII  
Arthur Coggeshall  
& William Holland  
pose with workers at the  
Paris Museum, during the  
mounting of the cast of the  
Dipolodocus carnegii in  
1908

D. L. Malefyt

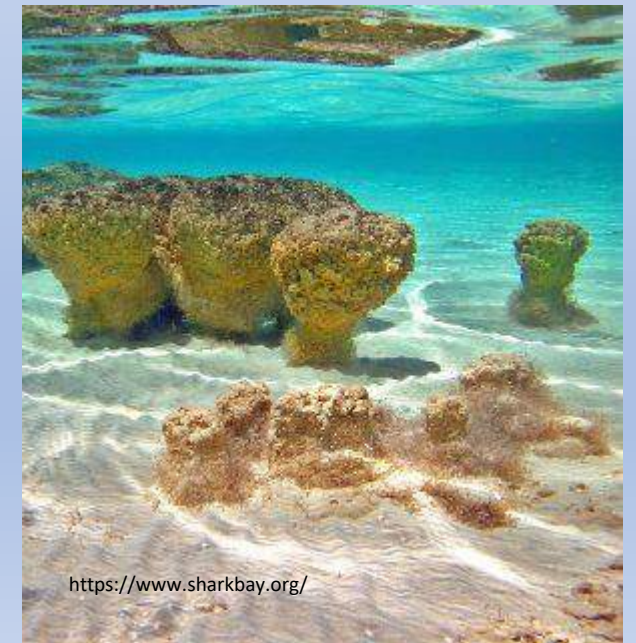




# Early life on stamps



Shark Bay Australia – site of modern stromatolites! [Australia (1996)]



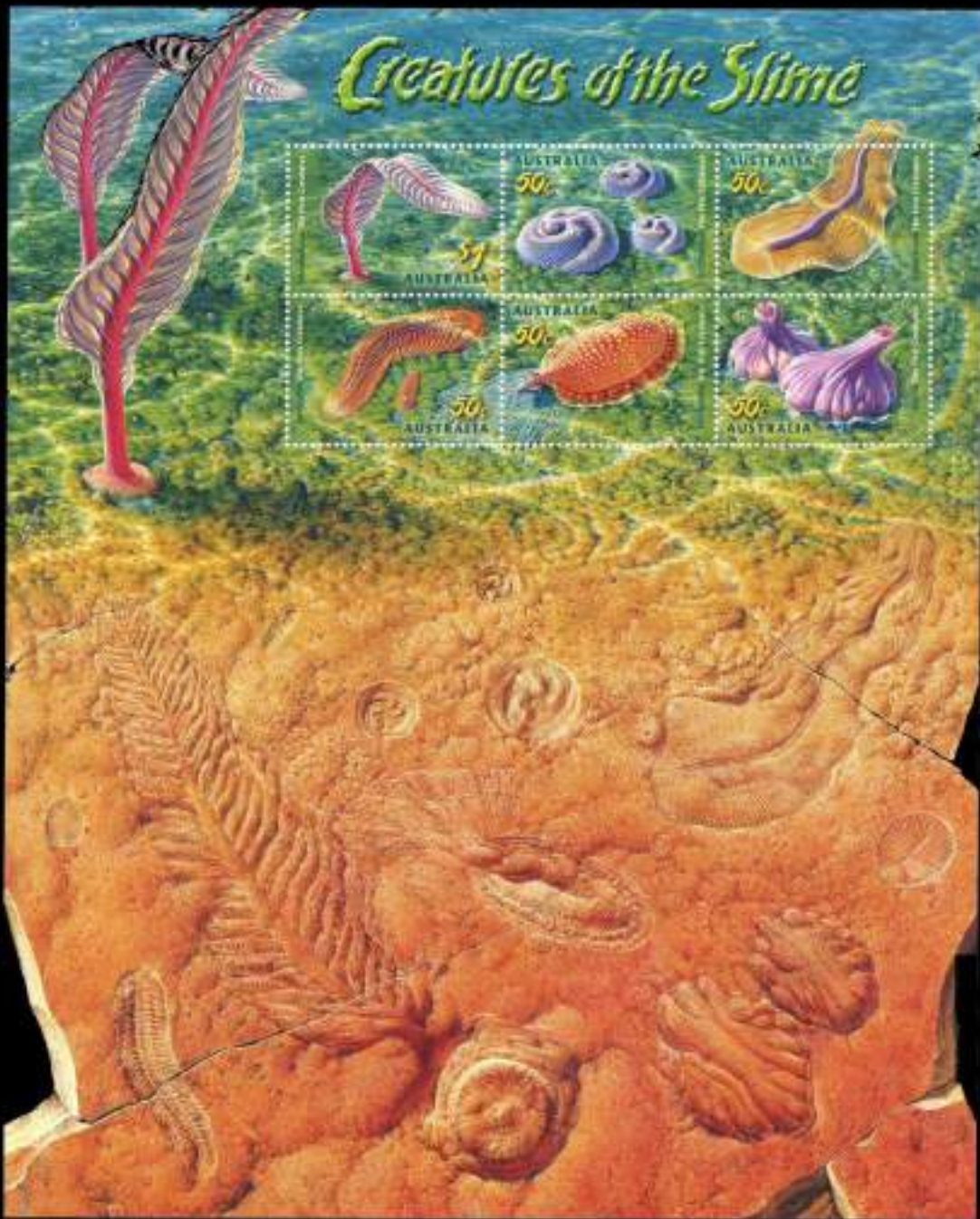
Stromatolites – layered microbial deposits from Canada (1990) and Morocco (2015)

# Micropaleontology



On right – Norway (2005) stamp showing a radiolarian.

Tunisia (1974) stamp in honor of a conference on micropaleontology held in Tunis that year. Several stylized microfossils around scientist's head.



Australia (2005) and Namibia (2008) show Ediacaran Fossils – enigmatic fossils dating to ~700 to 540 million years ago.



Israel (2002) - Ammonoid



Bosnia Herzegovina (2001) mollusks (Croat-Bosniak administration)



Slovenia (2001) starfish



Canada (1990) – Trilobite and Eurypterid (Arthropods)

# Fossil Invertebrates

Peru (2014)  
Insect encased in Amber

# Fossil Invertebrates



## INSECTOS PREHISTÓRICOS -Fósiles-



El ámbar descubierto en la zona de Iquitos ha guardado por más de 12 millones de años evidencia única del pasado amazónico. En su interior se encuentran finamente preservados pequeños y delicados organismos como ácaros, arañas y hasta la primera mosquita hematófaga denominada *Sycorax peruensis*. Su estudio ha permitido conocer detalles de la historia tropical de Sudamérica, crucial para entender su enorme biodiversidad actual.





Latvia (2015) Placoderm fish



Lebanon (2001) – Osteichthyeon Fish

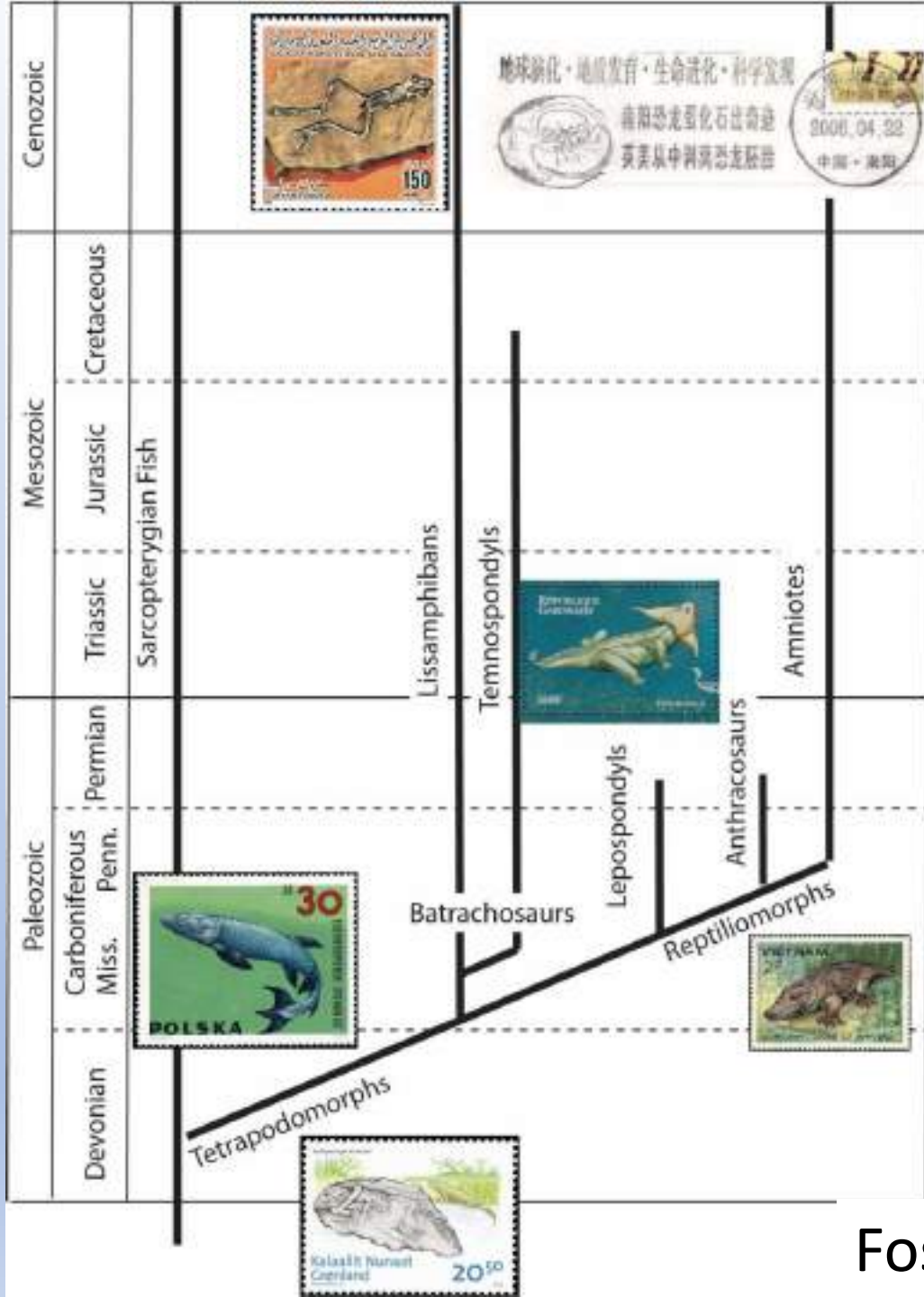
## Fossil Fish



Poland (1966) Placoderm *Dinichthys* and Sarcopterygian fish *Eustenonopteron*

→  
New Caledonia  
(1999)  
*Carcharodon  
megalodon*  
stamps  
Chondrichthyeon  
fish





Semi-postal stamp on Maxi-card, Switzerland, 1959

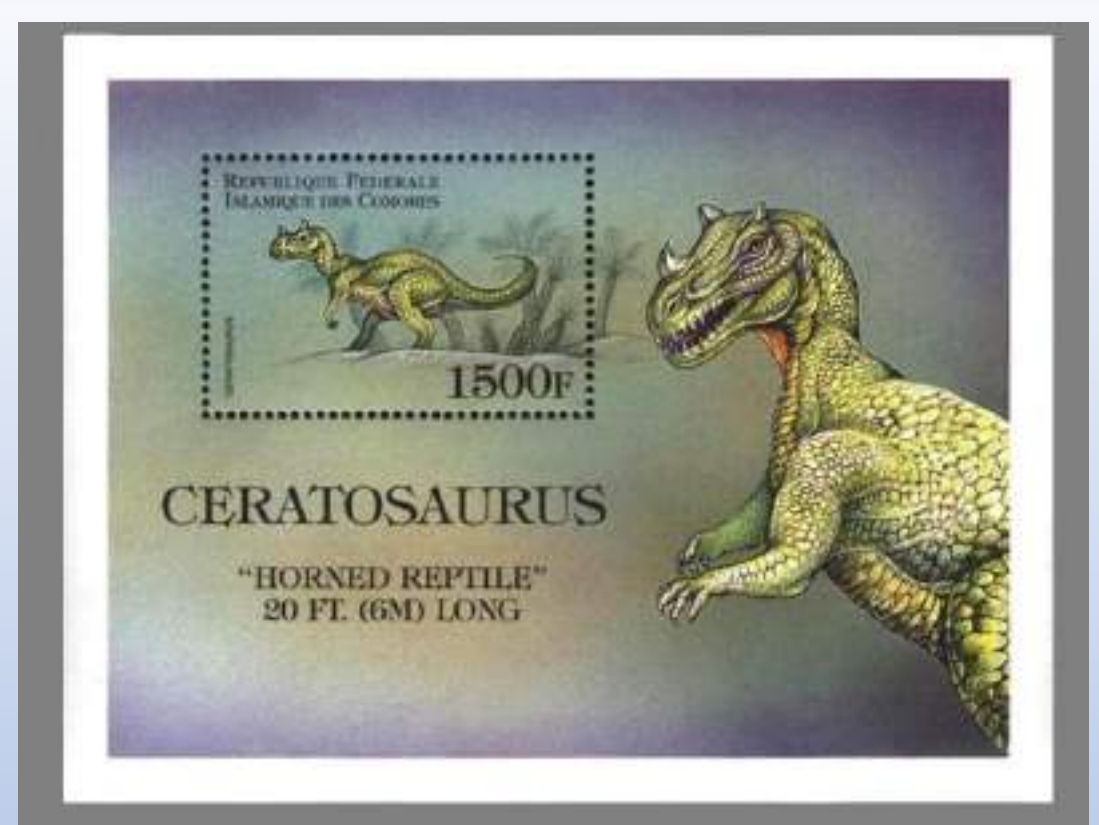
# Fossil Amphibians



Japan (1990) – Actual Dinosaurs found in Japanese rocks!

## Reptiles

- Heavily dominated by dinosaurs followed by marine reptiles (plesiosaurs, ichthyosaurs) and mammal-like reptiles (dimetrodon)
- Big surge in numbers post Jurassic Park film
- Mostly reconstructions – with wide range of accuracy  
Common problem – dinosaurs depicted on stamps for countries where those dinosaurs never lived!



This issue from the Comoros Islands (1999) show *Ceratosaurus*, a dinosaur from Colorado (Late Jurassic) on a stamp from a country built of volcanic rocks that formed over the last 7.7 million years.





Mosasaur tooth  
Denmark (2009)

## More Reptiles!



Tajikistan (2020) fossil, reconstruction, and location where the fossil was found



Marine Snake, Yugoslavia (1985)



New Zealand (2010)

# Birds

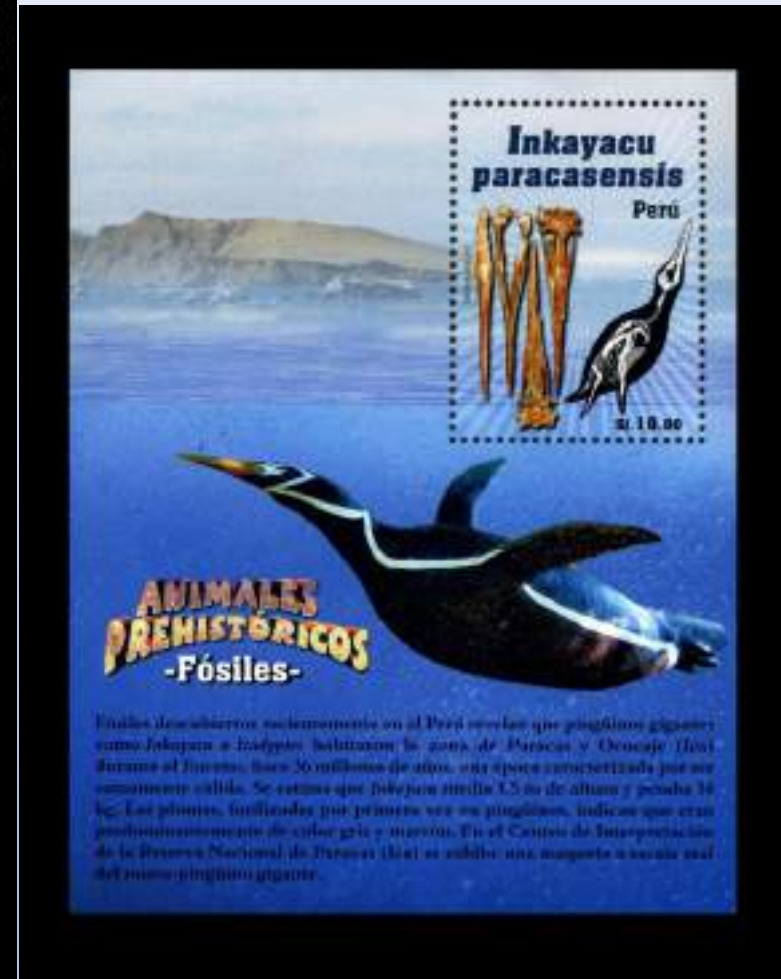
(Avian Dinosaurs)



Archaeopteryx, Germany (2011)



Archaeopteryx, Great Britain (1999)



Peru (2013) – fossil Penguin  
Laos (1994) Selection of Extinct birds

# INDIA

## GEOLOGICAL SURVEY of INDIA



1851 **CENTENARY** 1951  
Issued on  
13<sup>th</sup> **JANUARY** 1951



*Calcutta 1*

Fossil  
Mammals

First Day Cover (FDC) for 1951 India Geological Survey Centenary depicting reconstructions of the elephant *Stegodon ganesa*.



Ice Age Mammals  
Great Britain (2006)

## Mammals



Prehistoric Life in Canada 4: The Age of Mammals, 1994



Geological Museum,  
Egypt, 1979



Cave Bear (*Ursus speleaus*),  
Slovenia, 2016



*Megaloceros* sp. (Giant Deer)  
Isle of Man, 1986

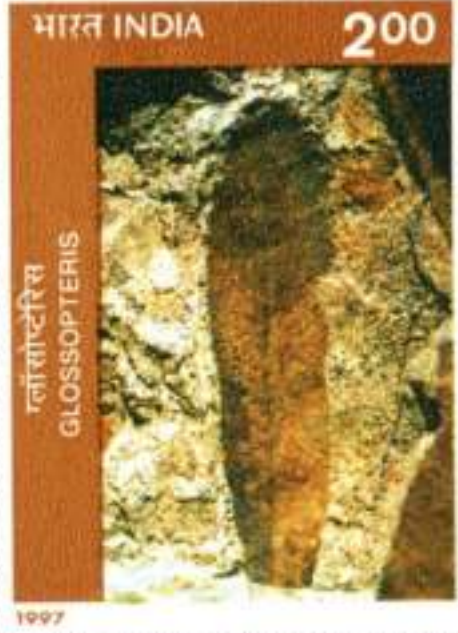
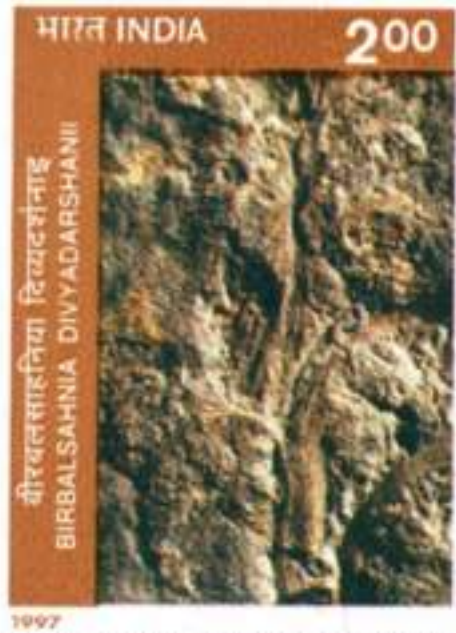
# Plants

Germany (2003) – Petrified Forest

India (1997) – Gondwanan Plant fossils and reconstructions



Fossil Ferns, British Antarctic Territory (2008)

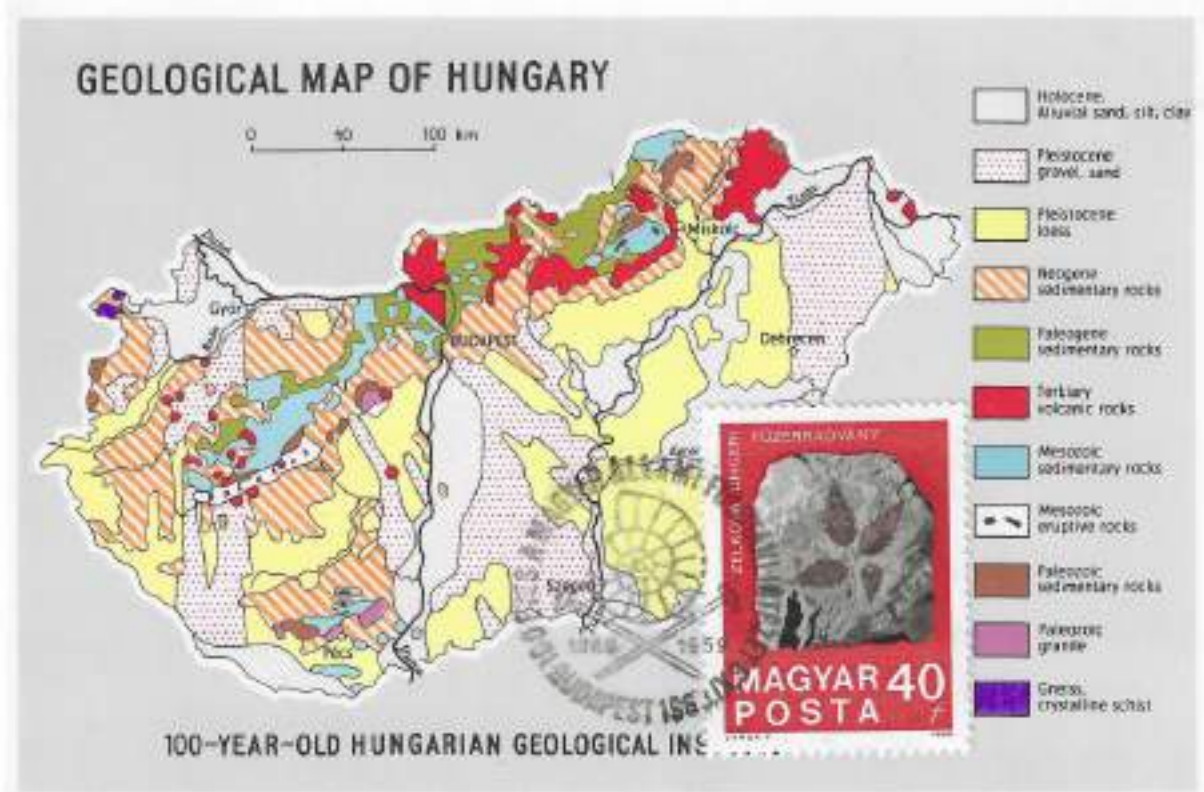




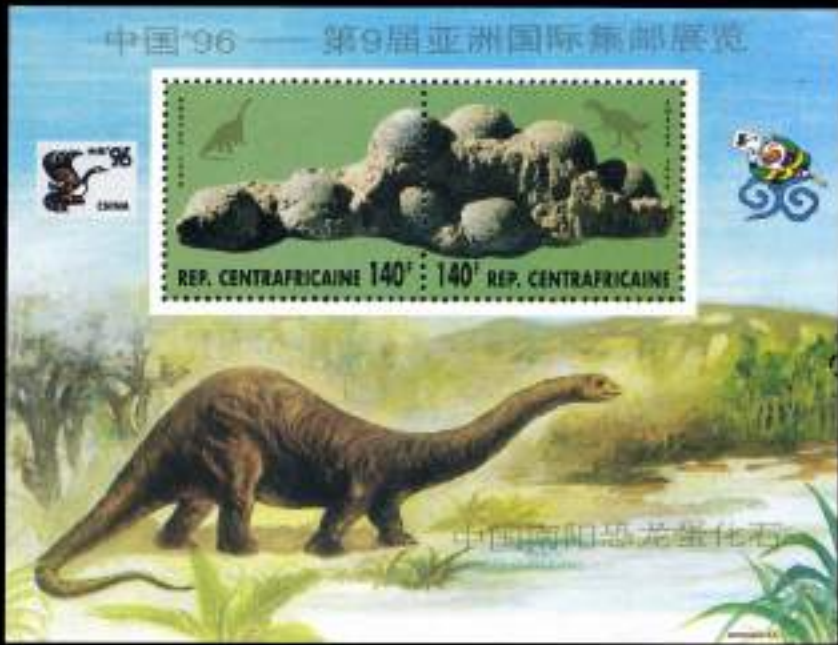
U.S. (1974) – Mineral Heritage Stamps – Petrified wood on postcard from Petrified National Forest

## Maxi-cards for Plant fossils

Hungary (1969) 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Hungarian Geological Institute on postcard showing a geologic map of Hungary.



100-YEAR-OLD HUNGARIAN GEOLOGICAL INSTITUTE



Dinosaur Eggs,  
Central African Republic (1996)

## Trace Fossils



Spain (2019) Tourism ↓ Lesotho (1970) Fossil footprints



Amniotic Egg Postmark, China (2006)





## Fake or Semi-official stamps

Isle of Pabay – Carriage stamps – stamps used by private companies to deliver mail to Post office on larger island.

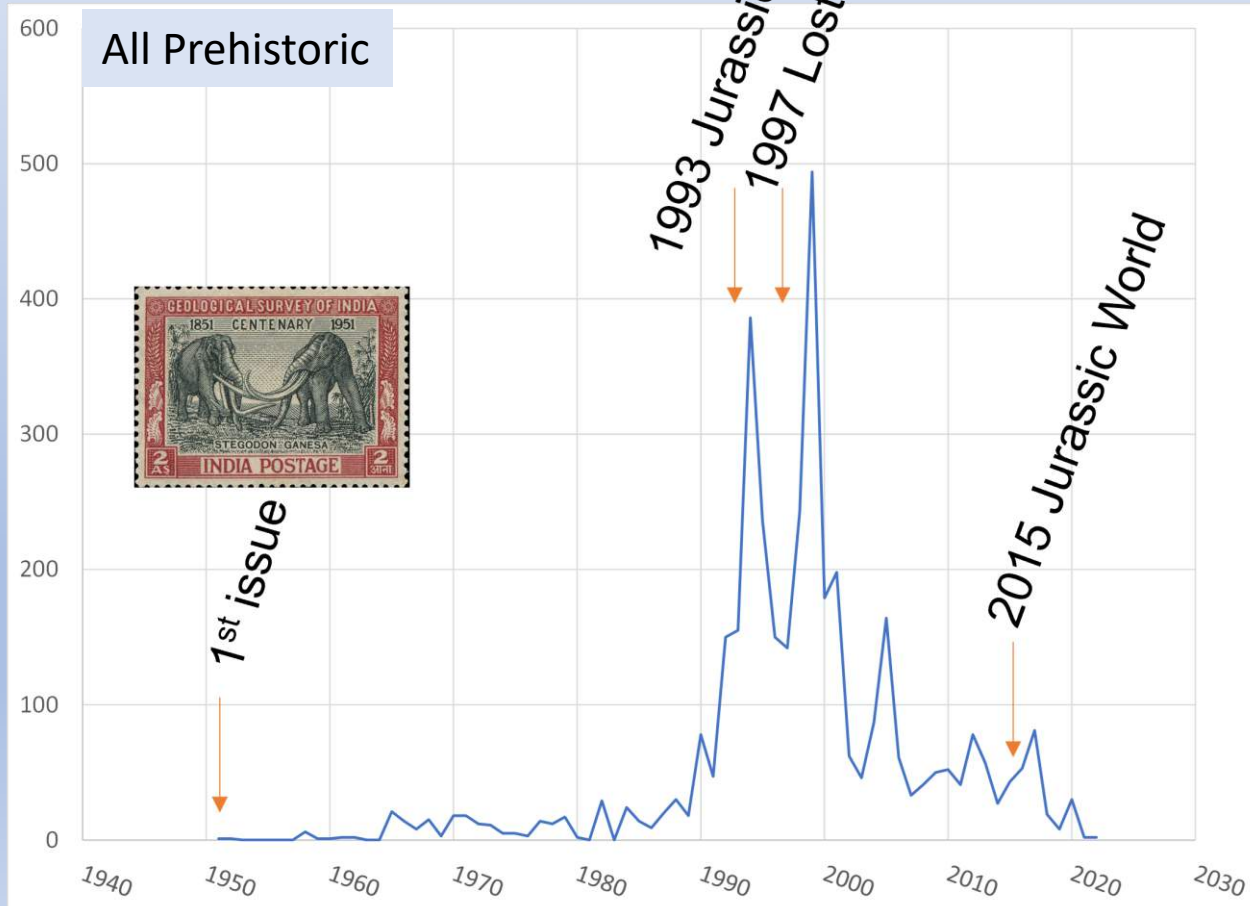
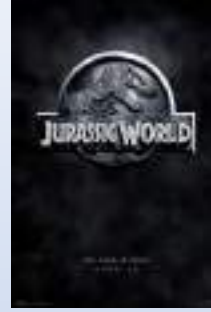
Transnistria – semi-official Abkhazia and Donetsk – used to raise money for independence movements

## Transnistria



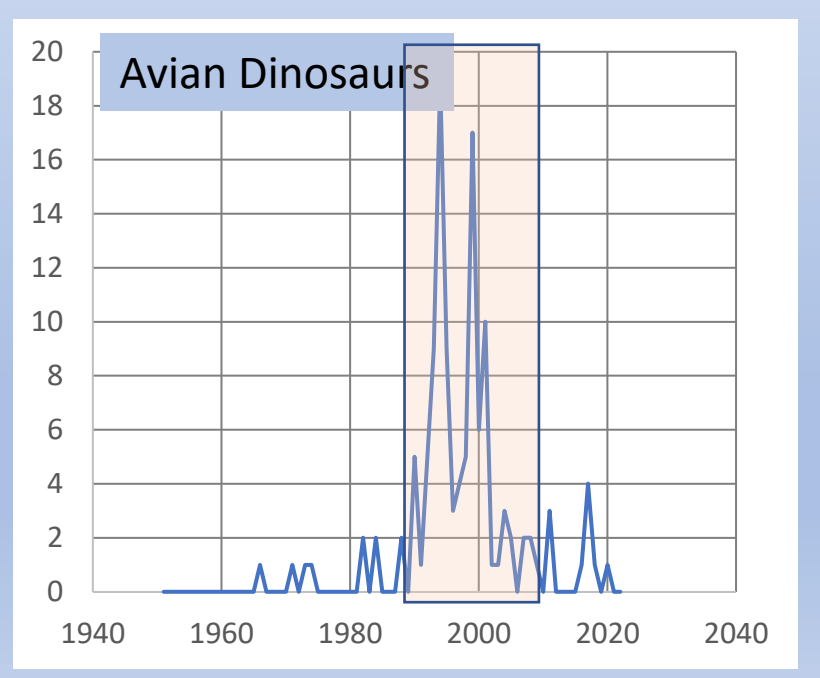
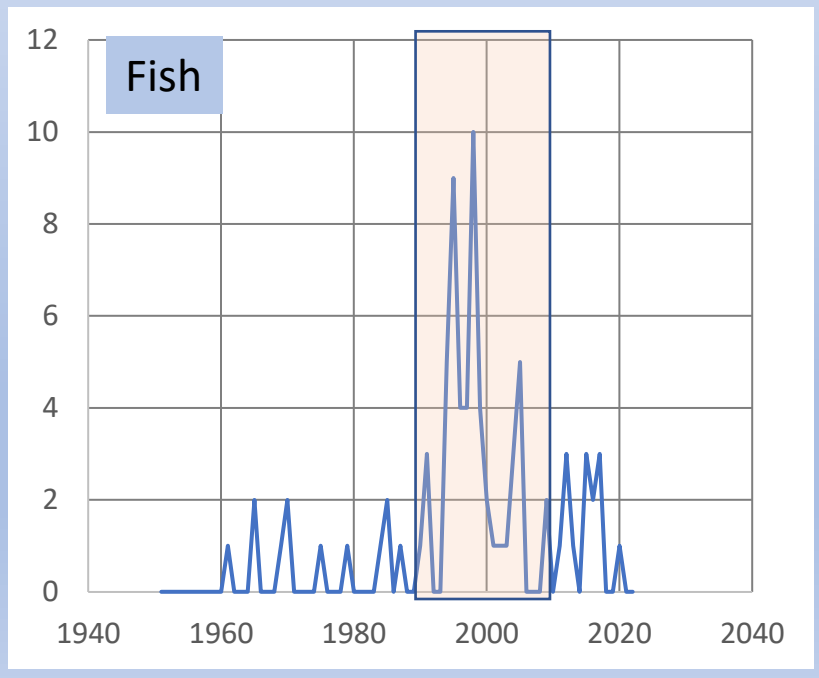
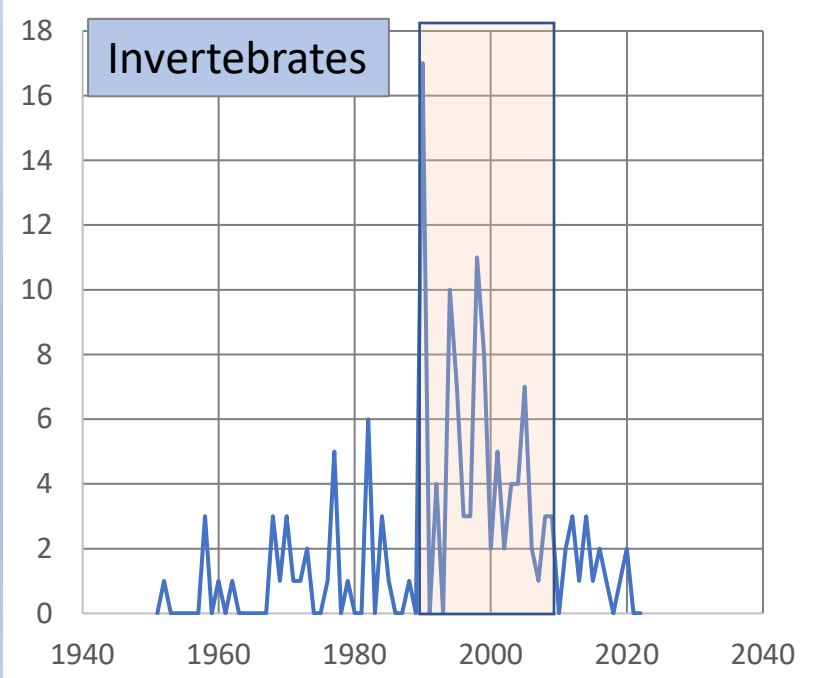
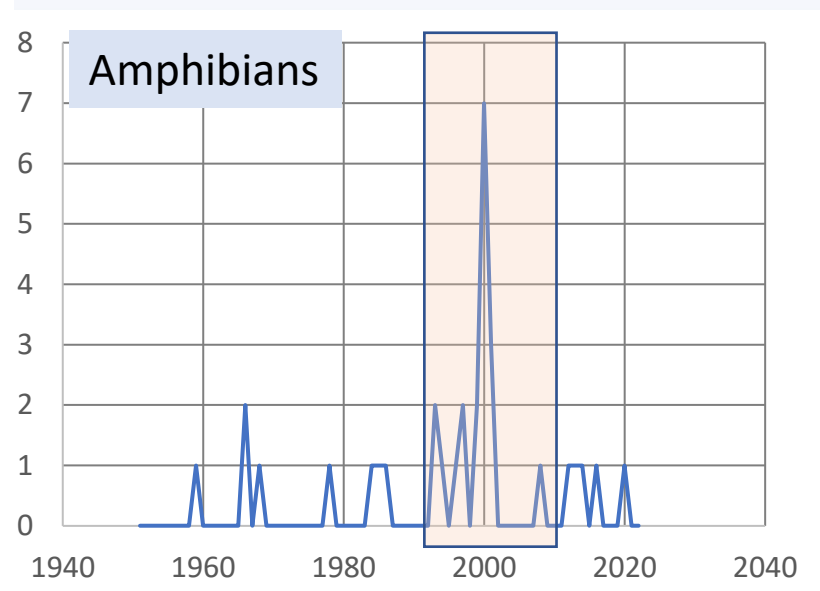
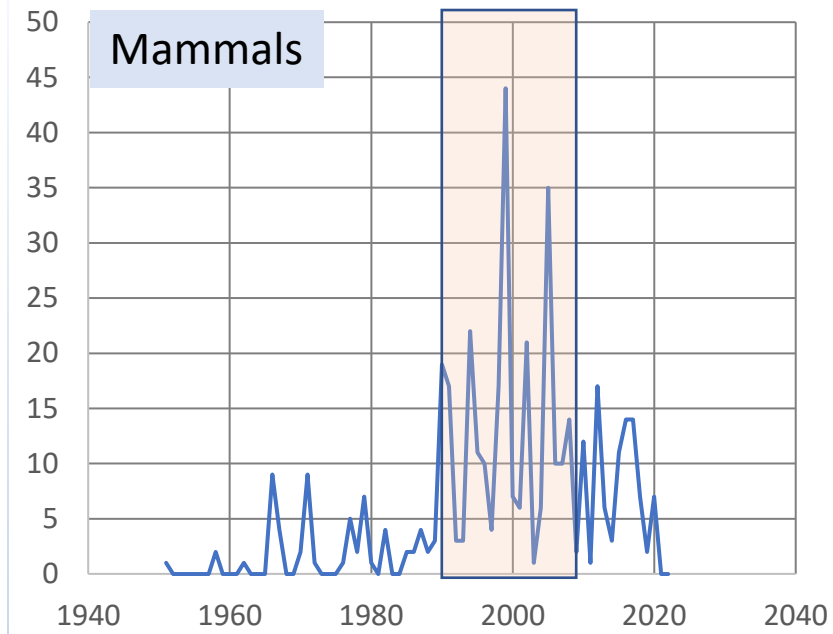
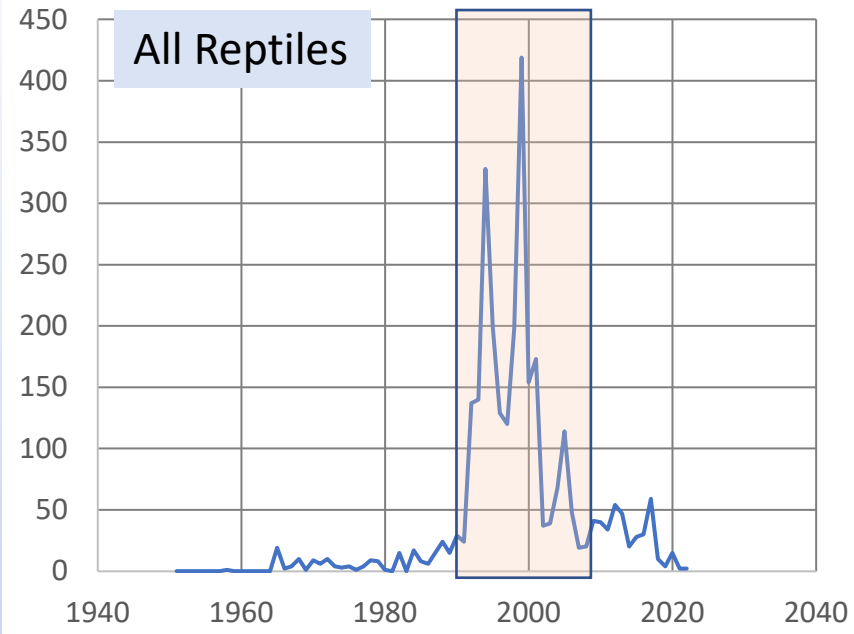


# Stamp Trends



Topic	# of issues through ~2019	Proportion
Other (Plants, microfossils)	46	1.2%
Invertebrates	146	3.9%
Fish	81	2.1%
Amphibians	32	0.8%
Reptiles (Total)	2949	77.9%
Reptiles – Non-Dinosaur	734	19.4%
Reptiles – Dinosaurs (non-avian)	2225	58.8%
Birds	124	3.3%
Mammals	408	10.8%
Total	3786	

Movie	Gross (in billions \$)	Worldwide Box Office Ranking
Jurassic Park	~1.1	#32
The Lost World	~0.6	#168
Jurassic World	~1.7	#7



# Some Observations

- Popular Cultural Milestones play a large role in decisions of what to portray on stamps – Prehistoric Life stamps heavily influenced by blockbuster films



Picture courtesy of Mystic Stamp Co's website



The character of T-Rex from Jurassic Park – one of the cultural milestones selected by the U.S. to represent the 1990's in their review of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Celebrate the Century Series – 1990s  
U.S. 2000

# Some more observations

Trait	Group 1 Countries	Group 2 Countries
Representative Countries	Slovenia, Australia, Canada, USA, Namibia	Liberia, Djibouti, Solomon Islands
Prehistoric artwork	New artwork from contracted Artists	Illegally copied/modified or older works that are no longer copyrighted
Reconstructions of Prehistoric Animals	Scientifically Accurate at date of release	Often out of date reconstructions
Prehistoric Animals relevant to country	Yes – usually organisms depicted found in country	No – generally focus on the dinosaurs and other animals that have entered popular culture (e.g., T-Rex, Triceratops, etc.)
Errors	Not perfect – but usually get species names right	Misspellings, wrong names or poor classification, mix species from different eras or locations together



Centenary of K. Timiryazev State Biological Museum in Moscow Russia, 2022

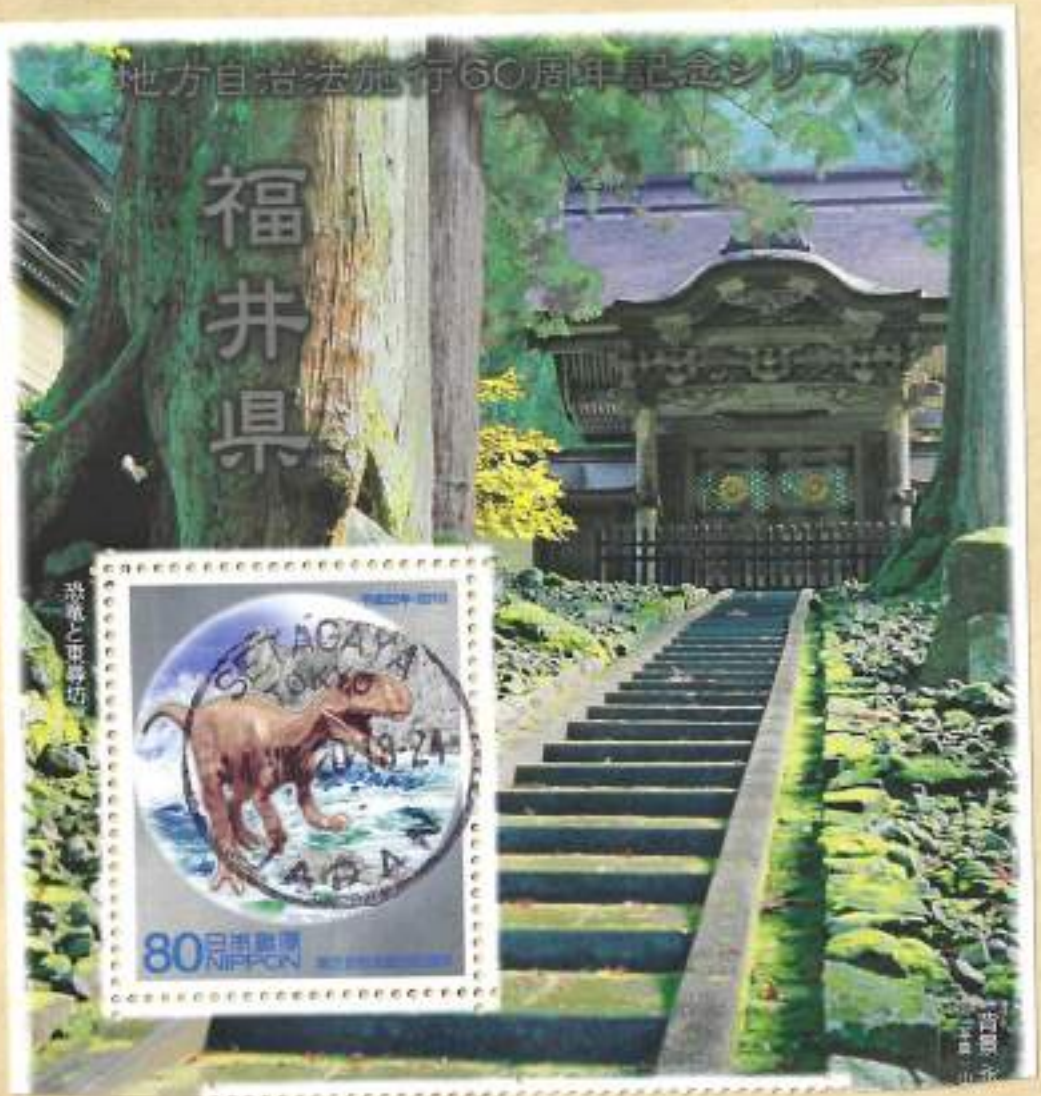


Water Dinosaurs Solomon Islands, 2013

# Resources

- Michael's excellent website:  
<http://www.paleophilatelie.eu>
- American Topical Association  
(<https://americantopical.org>)
  - ATA maintains lists of stamps for 1000's of topics – can be purchased by members
  - Biological Study Unit – issues Biophilately – Michael is the Associate Editor – Prehistoric Life
  - Gems-Minerals-Jewelry Study Unit – issues Philagems
- Books  
(<http://www.paleophilatelie.eu/media/index.html>)





Questions?

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