

New commemorative postal cover marks ICS' 20th anniversary | 10 April 2021

The Seychelles Postal Services (SPS) and the Island Conservation Society (ICS) have joined in partnership to issue a new commemorative postal cover on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the foundation of ICS.

The limited-edition cover is destined to become a collector's item and features some of the colourful wildlife stamps of Seychelles overprinted ICS 2001-2021.

An overprint is an additional layer of text added to the face of an existing postage stamp. Historically, post offices throughout the world have used overprints for a variety of purposes. These include to make changes the face values when prices change, impose surcharges, raise additional tax in times of war or for the establishment of postal services in countries or territories before they had produced their own stamps. For example, the first stamps issued by British Indian Ocean Territory in use from January 1968 were actually Seychelles stamps overprinted B.I.O.T.

The most famous varieties of overprints are commemorative issues. These can command significant interest in the field of philately the world over. In 1928, the United States released an overprint issue celebrating Molly Pitcher (a legendary revolutionary war heroine) and the discovery of Hawaii. British stamps heralding the 1966 FIFA World Cup were reissued after England's victory with the overprint ENGLAND WINNERS. Not to be outdone, France's win in the same tournament was celebrated in 1998, when Guyana issued an overprint set of 32 stamps showing team pictures of all the participants.

The first post office in Seychelles opened for business in Victoria on December 11, 1861, using stamps of Mauritius cancelled B64 until April 1890, when Seychelles began to issue its own stamps even before separation from Mauritius in 1903. Face values were in British currency until 1878, when overprints were produced to change values from UK pence to Seychelles cents. Overprints for changes in value were frequently used in the early decades of Seychelles postal history.

The first commemorative overprint issue in Seychelles came in 1967, a set of four stamps overprinted UNIVERSAL ADULT SUFFRAGE 1967. Others followed including ROYAL VISIT 1972 on the occasion of the visit of Queen Elizabeth II, and VISIT OF Q.E. II to mark the call at Port Victoria of the famous cruise ship of the same name. Later Royal events and political landmarks were also commemorated with overprints. In 1986, a one-rupee stamp featuring a Madagascar Fody was overprinted LAZOURNEN ENTERNASYONAL KREOL, to commemorate International Creole Day.

This new commemorative overprint issue features six stamps, with face values ranging from a 10 cents, depicting the endemic Seychelles Warbler to R50 illustrating a Green Turtle. The

world's largest population of this warbler breeds at Aride Island Nature Reserve, managed by ICS and important populations of Green Turtles breed at the outer islands of Seychelles, where ICS has several conservation centres.

The new commemorative cover is expected to be popular with collectors in Seychelles and overseas. It will be available for sale at Seychelles Post Office from today at a price of R100.

The launch of the commemorative cover will take place at 10am today at the Seychelles Post Office, Victoria.

Joint press release from SPS and ICS