

Dear Alan,

You are probably right in assuming that each particular collector is interested in a particular species or family of flora or fauna. When we think of thematic or topical philately, it is within the "nature of the beast" to be the case, and I'll be the last person to deny it. It is certainly the case with me, as my primary interest is in some members of the family *Felidae*, namely the big cats. But your journal, *Biophilately*, has special merit in being neither species nor family specific. In fact it isn't even class or kingdom specific, but has for its noble mission the covering of all members of the living world, animals and plants alike.

So ask yourself in what other philatelic publication can an article like my "Hula Reserve" find a home, with its broad outlook on mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish, plants, biodiversity and ecological history? Is there any possible answer save for:

- 1) A journal dedicated to philately at large, like the British *Gibbons Stamp Monthly* (that has the rights to this article and whose good editor, Mr. Hugh Jeffries, gave his gracious permission to its publication here).
- 2) A national philatelic publication like *Shovel*, the bulletin of the Israel Philatelic Federation (where it was first published).
- 3) A general magazine of topical / thematic philately, like the ATA's *Topical Time*.
- 4) A journal dedicated to all of biology, like your *Biophilately*.

It has been true for a great many years now that a thorough checklist of all the stamps, sheetlets and souvenir sheets issued by all the countries of the world which show a biological being will be too long for any single volume book. So as serious thematicists we are faced with the question of how does one surpass this obstacle? I can think of only three possible answers:

- 1) Make the list family or species specific (and publish it in a journal dedicated to this particular species or group).
- 2) Dedicate a list or an article to only one set of stamps that has enough details in it to warrant a standalone list or article.
- 3) Make a country specific list, possibly within a time limit that can be accepted as logical (e.g. while a certain currency is used).

The two latter types of articles or lists are in my opinion those best suited for publication by a journal like *Biophilately*. Each will include information useful for or interesting to many collectors, even if none will find everything in it as either useful or interesting. But then show me even one collector who is interested in all the stamps listed in your "new issues" sections - while Jill is interested in roses, Jim is looking for orchids, John collects sharks but Jane loves goldfish, and so on and so forth ad infinitum.

It is because of the generalistic nature of *Biophilately* that it is of use to so many collectors and serve as a home for an article like my "Hula Reserve", for the listings of worldwide new issues of stamps showing so many plants and animals and, yes, occasionally, even a country specific checklist. You may have a different view of the type of items *Biophilately* should publish, and being its editor undoubtedly yours is the trump hand. But when I approached you with the news that I'll have for you the country specific listings for Israel of fauna and flora stamps, you asked for my opinion why I feel this material is appropriate for *Biophilately*, and this is my answer, as good or as satisfying as it may, or may not, be.

And by the way, since you challenged me for my opinion, let me counter with a challenge to you: Publish my letter above, and let us see how your good readers feel about this point. Will they support my views? I'll find the answers to this question to be potentially quite interesting. Wouldn't you?

Best Wishes

Ron Berger

Former chairman of *Ayelet*, the Israel Thematic Association