

MILESTONES OF PALEO-PHILATELY

Michael Kogan, BU1863

[Ed. Note: This article is the final section of a three-part commentary on the history of stamp issues depicting Paleontology subjects by Michael Kogan, our Associate Editor for Paleontology and the creator of the Paleophilatelie website (www.paleophilatelie.eu).]

Souvenir Sheets

The first miniature sheets (or souvenir sheets) were issued before World War II, usually with a surtax to raise funds for a charity rather than for sale to collectors. They became more of a collector's item with pictorial issues around 1970.

In 1971, Manama issued the first stamp set including a miniature sheet with a prehistoric animal.



Miniature Sheet showing a Woolly Mammoth (*Elephas primigenius*)
Manama, 1971, TS#746

The set contains eight stamps showing various prehistoric animals, mostly dinosaurs, and a miniature sheet with a mammoth on a 10-riyal stamp along with some other prehistoric animals on the margin.

The animal depicted on the stamp is a woolly mammoth (*Elephas primigenius*), a species that lived during the Pleistocene epoch from 2.588 million years ago (MYA) to 11,700 years ago, and was one of the last in the line of mammoth species.

From the 1960s until the end of the 1980s, some small Middle Eastern countries (called “Sand Dunes” by philatelists) produced stamps in huge quantities for every popular topic: space, sports, famous people, etc. These stamps were aimed at stamp collectors rather than postal use and usually were never available in the country of origin to actually use on letters as postage. One such set is from Fujaira (1968).



Prehistoric animals were not really popular stamp subjects in those days. Most stamps depicting prehistoric animals were issued after 1993, when the famous *Jurassic Park* film led to huge public interest in dinosaurs. There are not many paleontology related stamps in this category.



State of Oman, 1980, unl

One of the most beautiful souvenir sheets depicting prehistoric animals, issued by the United States on 1 May 1997, shows a painting by the famous American paleo-artist, James Gurney, author of *Dinotopia*.

Distinguished from many artists who create very rough images of prehistoric creatures, Mr. Gurney worked very closely with leading paleontologists in order to create accurate reconstructions.

One of the scientific advisers with whom Gurney consulted was prominent American paleontologist Jack Horner.

Horner's discoveries have significantly advanced the world's knowledge of dinosaurs. The scientist also served as a consultant for the Steven Spielberg films *Jurassic Park* and *The Lost World*.

The World of Dinosaurs stamps were rushed for issue on 1 May, to coincide with the release of the Steven Spielberg sequel to *Jurassic Park*, *The Lost World*.

This blockbuster movie thrilled audiences with its lifelike depiction of dinosaurs.

On 10 September 1980, the first unofficial/illegal stamps with prehistoric animals appeared on the market.

These stamps, issued under the names "State of Oman" and "Dhufar," are considered illegal because they were issued by some rebel groups and used to raise funds.

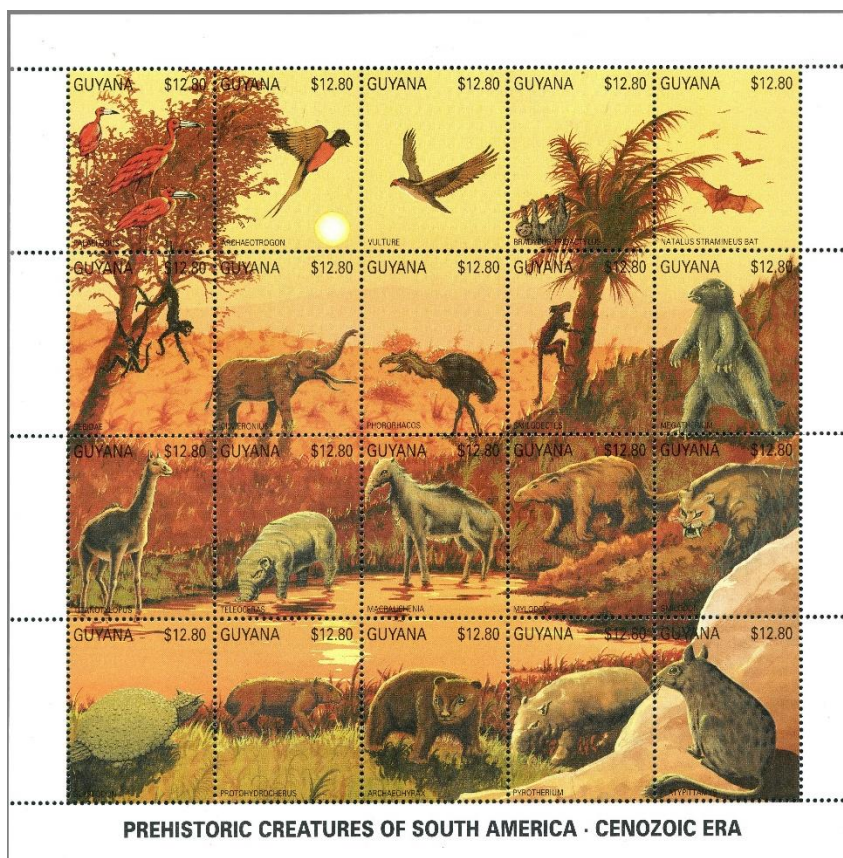
Since then many companies and individuals have printed stamps depicting various prehistoric animals, mostly dinosaurs, using the names of non-existent countries to make money from inexperienced collectors.

One of the first sets of illegal stamps issued by the "State of Oman" shows a mixture of prehistoric animals:

Traditionally stamps were printed in sheets of several identical pieces. To increase sales, some postal authorities started to produce stamp sets on sheets. Such sheets were usually designed as a big picture composed of many different stamps.

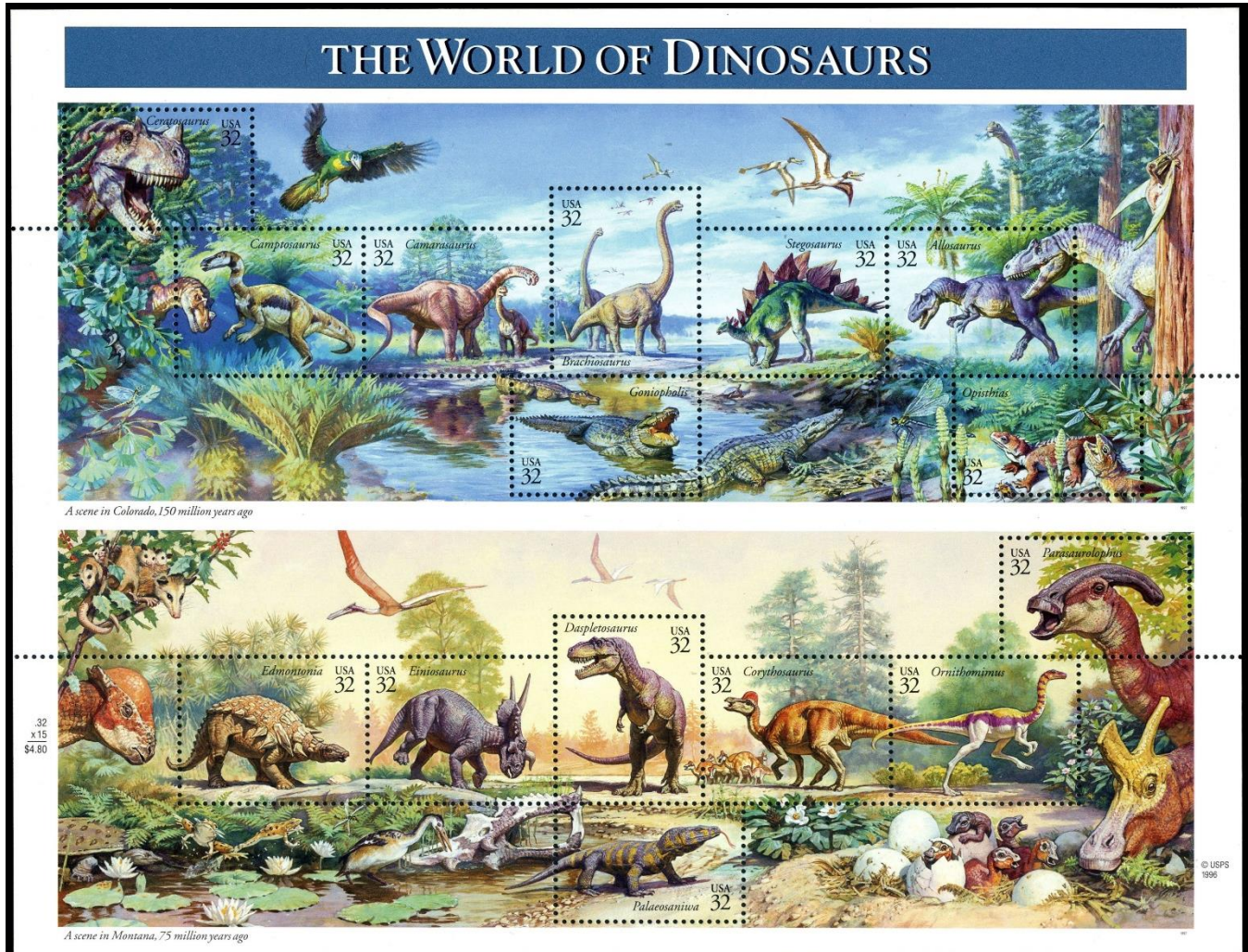
The first sheet like this with a prehistoric theme was issued on 6 November 1990 by the South American country of Guyana. It contained twenty different stamps depicting South American prehistoric animals.

On one hand, it is nice to have a whole picture, but on the other hand, these occupy a large space in an album and are not useful for non-philatelist customers.



Guyana, 1990, Sc#2378

The First Day of Issue ceremony for the stamps was held at the Dinosaur Valley Museum in Grand Junction, Colorado, located in the heart of the world-famous "Dinosaur Triangle." This area, which extends from western Colorado to northeastern Utah, has produced a wealth of dinosaur excavation sites.



The World of Dinosaurs, United States, 1997, Sc#3136

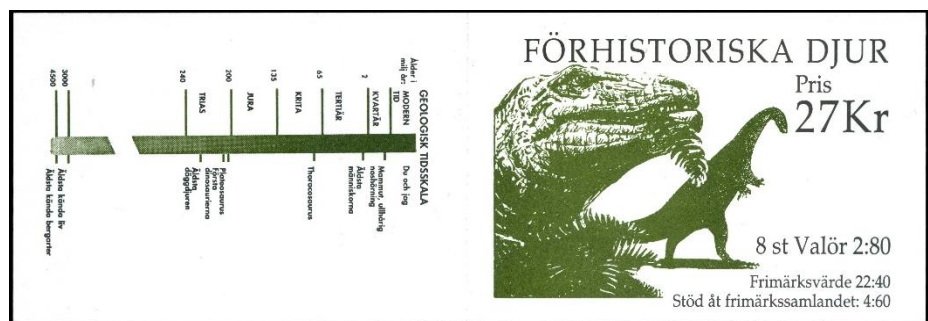
The upper part of the sheet shows some scenes of Colorado 150 MYA. The lower part shows life in Montana 75 MYA.

Booklets

Another way to sell many stamps at once is in stamp booklets, widely accepted in many countries of the world. The first booklet with fossils was issued in Thailand on 1 January 1992. The booklet contains five mint stamps showing a dinosaur excavation and dinosaur skeletons. These stamps are part of set of four stamps dedicated to centenary of the Thai Department of Mineral Resources.

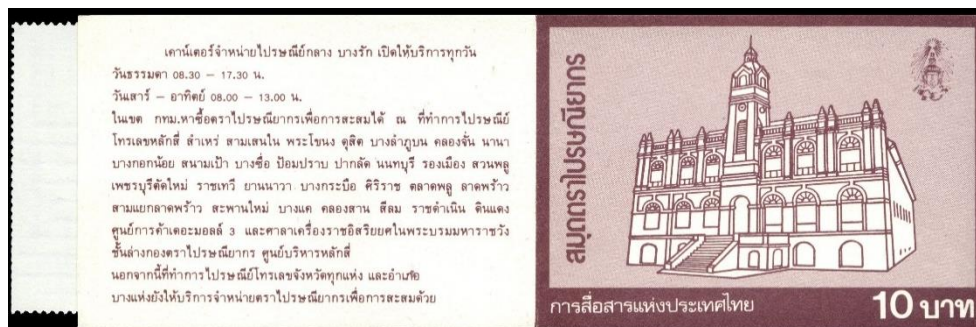


*Locating Fossils
Thailand, 1992, Sc#1430*





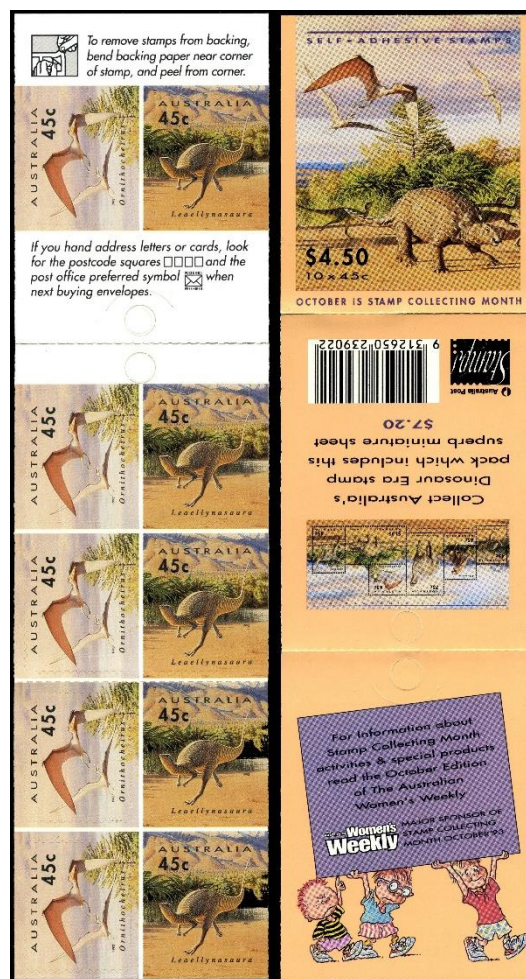
The same year, on 9 September, the Swedish postal service issued a booklet with stamps of prehistoric animals consisting of two blocks of four stamps each. The booklet also contained some information about the animals.



Prehistoric Animals
Sweden, 1992, Sc#1972a

On 1 October 1993, three British Commonwealth countries (Australia, Canada, and New Zealand) simultaneously issued some sets of stamps showing dinosaurs and other prehistoric reptiles. All three sets were sold with a thematic stamp book, *The Stamp of the Dinosaur*, which also told the story of dinosaurs.

Two stamps from the Australian set were issued as self-adhesive and sold as a booklet of ten and in rolls. These stamps are the first self-adhesive stamps of prehistoric animals.



Prehistoric Animals
Australia, 1993, Sc#1349a

ATM Stamps

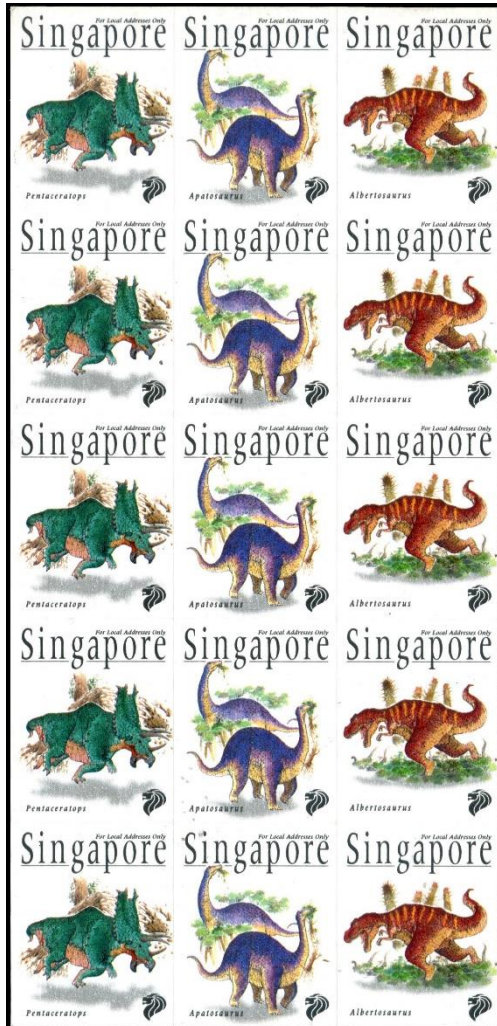
On 22 April 1998, the Singapore Post introduced the first automatic teller machine (ATM) stamps depicting dinosaurs.

The sheet of 15 stamps was sold exclusively via OCBC (Oversea Chinese Banking Corporation) bank terminals for a limited period of time. The sheets were designed with exactly the same dimensions (156×74 mm) as the SGD 50 currency note and very thin (less than 0.13 mm) so that they could be issued through the same aperture. These stamps are also the thinnest stamps related to Paleontology.

In November 1999, the Postal Services of Portugal introduced a new set of Frama machine labels titled "Dinosaurs of Portugal."

[Ed. note: Frama labels are variable value stamps issued by a machine similar to an ATM. The user chooses the value at the time the stamp is dispensed. They are very similar to meter stamps.]

The four different labels showed some dinosaurs and some of their footprints. Fossilized remains of all the dinosaurs depicted on the stamps as well as their footprints are found in Portugal. These stamps had seven predefined values from PTE 50 to PTE 350.

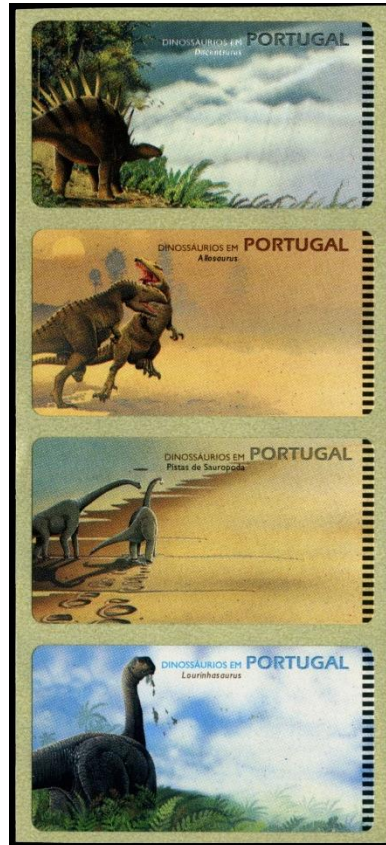


Dinosaur ATM Stamps
Singapore, 1998, Sc#831-33

The first postage stamps had no perforations at all. Postal clerks had to cut them with scissors from the stamp sheets. Nowadays, stamps used for postage are perforated to enable easy and quick separation from a sheet or booklet.

Usually perforations are uniform, but in recent years some postal authorities have created perforations in odd forms to prevent imitation of their stamps.

On 5 August 2010, Korean Post issued a stamp set titled "The Age of Dinosaurs Series Stamps (1st)" with perforations in the shape of a dinosaur.



Dinosaur Frama Labels
Portugal, 1999, unlisted

Special Effects

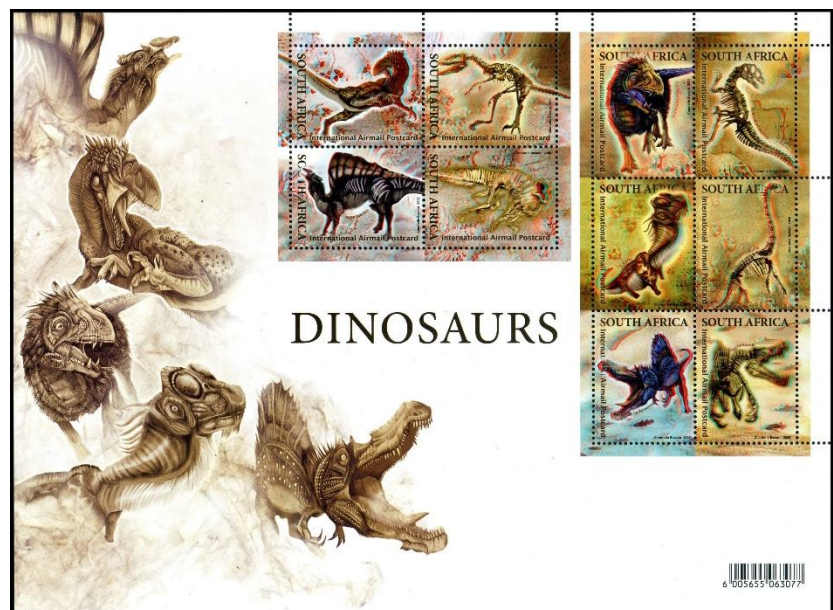
The first three-dimensional (3D) stamps showing dinosaurs and their fossils were issued in a souvenir sheet of ten by South Africa on 2 November 2009.

The South African Post Office combined pre-history with modern technology by using the anaglyph method to create a 3D effect.

This set of stamps is the first ever with a 3D effect to be issued by the South African Post Office and are the first dinosaur stamps with 3D effect.

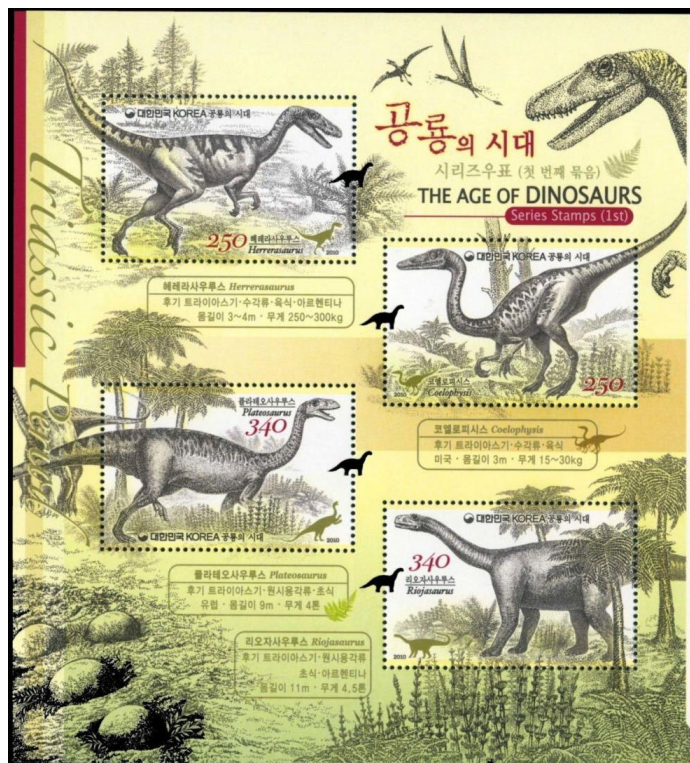
An anaglyph is a stereo image that requires special glasses with red and green (or blue) lenses for 3D viewing. To achieve the effect, two views of a picture are printed in two colors, usually red for the left eye and blue or green for the right eye.

Five of the stamps depict skeletons of different types of dinosaurs, while the other five stamps show images of what scientists believe these creatures most probably looked like. All the dinosaurs depicted on the stamps have an African connection.



Dinosaur 3D Stamps
with viewing glasses
S. Africa, 2009, unlisted





Dinosaur-shaped Perforations
South Korea, 2010, Sc#2340



Odd-shaped Perforations
Switzerland, 2015, Sc#1559

On 5 March 2015, post of Switzerland issues the first stamp of prehistoric animal (Ammonite) with odd shaped perforations along the image:

On 5 June 2012, the Post Authority of Turkey issued a mini-sheet of four stamps titled “World Environment Day (Dinosaurs).” Additionally, there is a souvenir book with one more plastic lenticular (3D hologram) stamp and several post cards.

The lenticular stamp shows a running T-Rex and is the first lenticular stamp to depict a dinosaur. Even though it sold with the booklet only, it is a valid stamp and can be used for postage.



Lenticular Stamp
Turkey, 2012, Note

On 20 February 2014, Post of Hong Kong issued a set of six special stamps of “Chinese Dinosaurs” printed with a luminous effect that makes the unique features of the Chinese dinosaurs glow in the dark.



Luminous Stamps
Hong Kong, 2014, Sc#1630a

References:

http://www.paleophilatelie.eu/stamps_milestones.html

<http://www.stampedout.nl/code/histframe.html>

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ANOTHER BONE

[Ed. note: I received a response from Director Fred Skvara regarding the previous part of Michael Kogan's article.]

Hi Jack,

I thoroughly enjoy the issues of *Biophilately*. Your inclusion of articles in addition to the checklists is really welcome and I think that many of our members will enjoy them no matter what their biology subtopic. They read well.

In “Milestones of Paleo-Philately,” by Michael Kogan in the December 2015 issue, he mentions the mastodon bone and a turkey to be stuffed in the 1955 United States commemorative showing Charles Wilson Peale in his museum. There is another bone depicted in the stamp and I have included a blowup of the case in the lower left of the stamp showing a turkey furcula.

Regards,
Fred Skvara

Among the items in the case is a furcula from a turkey, the fused clavicles which form the V-shaped bone (wishbone) that lies between the neck and breast in birds.

