

**UZBEKISTAN****2019 February 1** Single, type of 2017

A\*

879 1510s Thrush Nightingale, *Luscinia luscinia*

Muscicapidae

**2019 August 19** Set/4

A\*

893 3200s Golden Eagle, *Aquila chrysaetos*

Accipitridae

895 3700s Greater Flamingo, *Phoenicopterus roseus*

Phoenicopteridae

**2019 December 10** (Flora and fauna of Kyzylkum State Reserve) Sheet/6

A\*

906f 10,400s Black-bellied Sandgrouse, *Pterocles orientalis*

Pteroclididae

## OPALIZED FOSSILS

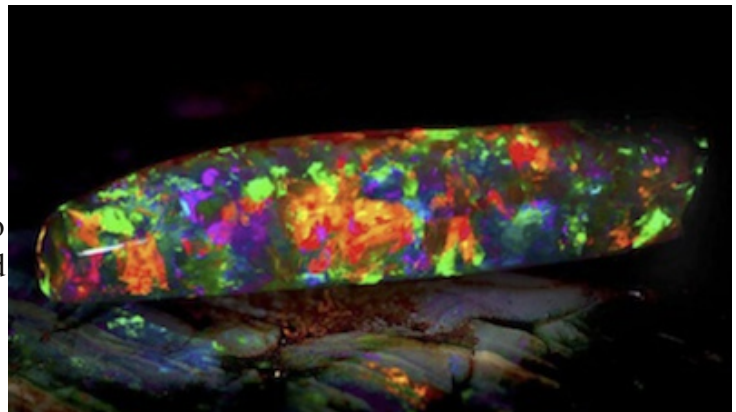
By Michael Kogan

Over millions of years, some of the plant and animal remains buried in its ancient waterways were transformed into opalised fossils. Opals are a form of amorphous hydrated silica with up to 20% water locked within the silica structure.

The opal fields of South Australia have yielded a treasure trove of opalised fossils over the century, since the first discovery of precious opal at Coober Pedy in 1915. South Australian opal occurrences are chiefly restricted to the sedimentary rocks of what is now the Great Artesian Basin.

In July 2016 Forbes magazine reported about the biggest and most expensive Opal found in Australia – the “Virgin Rainbow” [\*2]

“This extremely rare opal exhibits incredible fluorescence with a rainbow of different colors that make opal so distinctly unique. The opal was found in Coober Pedy of southern Australia by miner John Dunstan, working solo in the opal field. It is worth over \$1 million and is now owned by the Southern Australia Museum in Adelaide.” The “Virgin Rainbow” is actually an opalized fossil of *Belemnite* (ancient ancestor of today’s Cuttlefish) when the shape of the prehistoric animal replaced by opal.



[\*2]<https://www.forbes.com/sites/trevornace/2016/07/25/virgin-rainbow-is-the-worlds-rarest-opal/#6f0c32d33f19>

[Ed: See Australia "Opalised Fossils" issue of 2020 August 17 in the Paleontology section, page 212.]