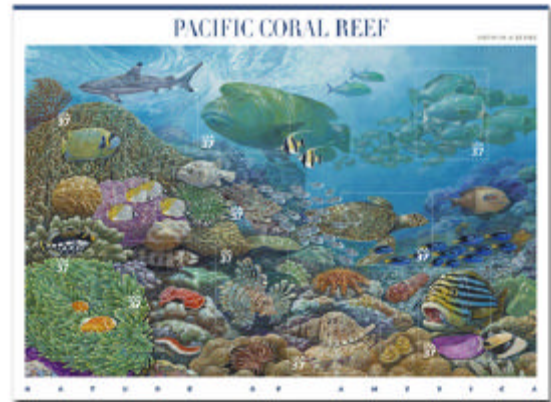


FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
December 10, 2003

Contact: Media Relations (202) 268-6160
Postal Service Web Site: www.usps.com
Stamp News Release Number: 03-066

Pacific Coral Reef Stamps to Reveal Life Beneath the Ocean Surface

WASHINGTON – Starting Jan. 2, the colorful images of more than 30 sea creatures will give a panoramic glimpse beneath the water's surface of life on a Pacific coral reef. The clown triggerfish, prickly red sea cucumber, wedge picassofish and blacktip shark are just a few of the magnificent creatures shown on the spectacular Pacific Coral Reef pane of stamps to be issued by the U.S. Postal Service.



Postmaster General John E. Potter will introduce the Pacific Coral Reef pane of 10 stamps at the Waikiki Aquarium in Honolulu, Hawaii, on Jan. 2, 2004. The stamps will be available at Honolulu Post Offices starting that day and at Post Offices in other areas of the country beginning the following day.

“The Nature of America series helps us gain appreciation and understanding of the wonder of life,” says Potter. “This newest addition to the series, the Pacific Coral Reef stamps, reveals the beauty of life on a coral reef.”

The Pacific Coral Reef stamp pane is the sixth in this educational series to promote appreciation of major plant and animal communities and the first to show the beauty and complexity of an aquatic ecosystem. Previous issues in the series were Sonoran Desert (1999), Pacific Coast Rain Forest (2000), Great Plains Prairie (2001), Longleaf Pine Forest (2002) and Arctic Tundra (2003).

Artist John D. Dawson portrays more than 30 different marine animals in this colorful painting of a coral reef typical of the western Pacific Ocean near Guam. In the scene, a large humphead wrasse eyes its neighbors as a blacktip shark prowls in the distance. Meanwhile, a spectacular lionfish forages among the coral for shrimps, crabs and small fish.

The text on the back side of the stamp pane identifies the following species:

1. Blue Coral (*Heliopora coerulea*)
2. Mound Coral (*Porites* sp.)
3. Antler Coral (*Pocillopora eydouxi*)
4. Clown Triggerfish (*Balistoides conspicillum*)
5. Magnificent Sea Anemone (*Heteractis magnifica*)
6. Pink Anemonefish (*Amphiprion perideraion*)
7. Reef Blacktip Shark (*Carcharhinus melanopterus*)
8. Emperor Angelfish (*Pomacanthus imperator*)
9. Threadfin Butterflyfish (*Chaetodon auriga*)
10. Black-spotted Puffer (*Arothron nigropunctatus*)
11. Staghorn Coral (*Acropora* sp.)
12. Snowflake Moray Eel (*Echidna nebulosa*)
13. Spanish Dancer (*Hexabranhus sanguineus*)
14. Humphead Wrasse (*Cheilinus undulatus*)
15. Lionfish (*Pterois volitans*)
16. Moorish Idol (*Zanclus cornutus*)
17. Triton's Trumpet (*Charonia tritonis*)
18. Hawksbill Turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricata*)
19. Crown-of-thorns Sea Star (*Acanthaster planci*)
20. Bumphead Parrotfish (*Bolbometopon muricatum*)
21. Palette Surgeonfish (*Paracanthurus hepatus*)
22. Prickly Red Sea Cucumber (*Thelenota ananas*)
23. Orangeband Surgeonfish (*Acanthurus olivaceus*)
24. Oriental Sweetlips (*Plectorhinchus vittatus*)
25. Bluestreak Cleaner Wrasse (*Labroides dimidiatus*)
26. Mushroom Coral (*Fungia* sp.)
27. Wedge Picassofish (*Rhinecanthus rectangulus*)

To see the 2004 U.S. commemorative stamp program, visit the Postal Service's Web site at http://www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/2003/sr03_065stamps.htm.

Current U.S. stamps and stationery, as well as a free catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 1 800 STAMP-24. In addition, a selection of stamps and other philatelic items are available at the online Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop. Custom-framed art prints of original stamp art are available at www.postalartgallery.com.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits more than 141 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$68.9 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mailing and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The U.S. Postal Service delivers more than 46 percent of the world's mail volume — some 202 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year — and serves seven million customers each day at its 40,000 retail locations nationwide.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Issue:	<i>Pacific Coral Reef</i>
Item Number:	457100
Denomination & Type of Issue:	\$3.70 Souvenir Sheet
Format:	Pane of 10 (10 designs)
Series:	<i>Nature of America</i>
Issue Date & City:	January 2, 2004, Honolulu, HI 96820
Artist:	John D. Dawson, Hilo, HI
Designer:	Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Art Director:	Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Typographer:	Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Modeler:	Avery Dennison, SPD
Engraver:	Keating Gravure
Manufacturing Process:	Gravure
Printer:	Avery Dennison, (AVR)
Printed at:	AVR, Clinton, SC
Press Type:	Dia Nippon Kiko (DNK)
Stamps per Pane:	10
Print Quantity:	7.6 million panes
Paper Type:	Nonphosphored, Type III, Block tagged
Adhesive Type:	Pressure-sensitive
Processed at:	AVR, Clinton, SC
Colors:	Yellow, Magenta, Cyan, Black, PMS 294 (Blue), PMS 5635 (Green)
Stamp Orientation:	Horizontal and Vertical
Orientation 1:	Horizontal
Image Area (w x h):	1.410 x 1.075 in./35.814 x 27.305 mm
Overall Size (w x h):	1.410 x 1.075 in./35.814 x 27.305 mm
Orientation 2:	Vertical
Image Area (w x h):	1.225 x 1.560 in./31.115 x 39.624 mm
Overall Size (w x h):	1.225 x 1.560 in./31.115 x 39.624 mm
Full Pane Size (w x h):	9.125 x 6.75 in./231.775 x 171.45 mm
Plate Size:	80 stamps per revolution
Catalog Item Number(s):	457140 Full Pane of 10 — \$3.70 457162 First Day Cover Full Pane — \$6.20 457164 Canceled Full Pane — \$6.20 457184 Press Sheet — \$29.60 457193 Full Pane w/First Day Cover — \$9.90

HOW TO ORDER THE FIRST DAY OF ISSUE POSTMARK

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first day of issue postmark by mail. They may purchase the new stamps at their local post office, by telephone at 800-STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store Web site at www.usps.com/shop. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others), and place them in a larger envelope addressed to: PACIFIC CORAL REEF STAMPS, POSTMASTER, 3600 AOOLELE STREET, HONOLULU HI 96820-3670.

After applying the first day of issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by February 1, 2004.

Stamp Fulfillment Services also offers first day covers for new stamp issues and postal stationery items postmarked with the official first day of issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by writing to: INFORMATION FULFILLMENT, DEPT 6270, US POSTAL SERVICE, PO BOX 219014, KANSAS CITY MO 64121-9014, or by calling 1 800 STAMP-24.

First day covers remain on sale for at least one year after the stamp's issuance.

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