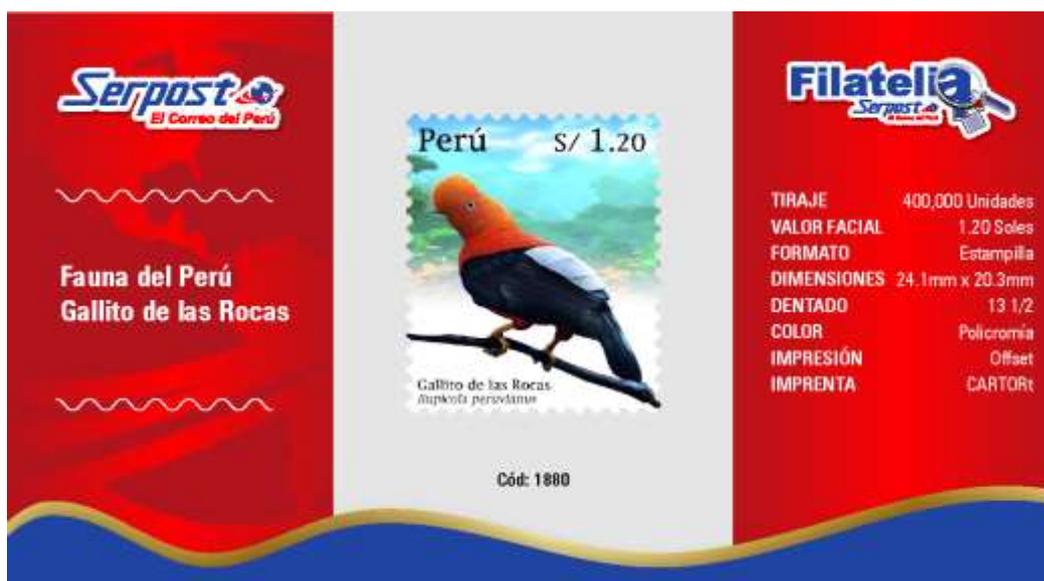


Andean Cock-of-the-Rock (*Rupicola Peruvianus*)

Browsing through the New Issues catalogue that I receive quarterly from Yvert & Tellier, I came across this new definitive stamp issued by Serpost, the postal authority for Peru, featuring the Andean Cock-of-the-Rock (*Rupicola Peruvianus*).

There is an immediate curiosity about this stamp: in the Yvert new issues catalogue, on the left-hand side of the stamp is the name of the printer (CARTOR) and the printing date (2019). On the right-hand margin is a serial number: 06062. The stamps featured both on the free stamp catalogue website and on the bird theme website also share these characteristics. In contrast, the images below, from the official Serpost website, don't show these features. That may just be a characteristic of the publicity information issued by Serpost for this stamp, both of the stamp and of the First Day Cover (dated 13 January 2020).

The stamp value at 1.20 Soles is worth around £0.26, which makes me wonder if this is a make up value or has a particular postal use on its own. Unfortunately, the tariff pages on Serpost are not available as I write this article, so I will have to do some follow up research later.



What I also thought was curious was the picture of the bird, which looks to me like an artistic representation based on a photograph. I looked at other stamps which feature the Andean Cock-of-the-Rock on the bird theme website. There are 19 of them, issued by Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador and Guyana as well as Peru; and less obviously Liberia and Zambia. Most of these stamp designs look to be drawings or painting rather than photographic images (which is fine); but never having seen Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, I did wonder how accurately they do capture the reality of the bird.



FAUNA DEL PERÚ
Gallito de las Rocas

SOBRE DE PRIMER DÍA DE EMISIÓN

Fortunately, I was able to find several photographs of the Andean Cock of the Rock on the World Land Trust Website (the international conservation charity that protects the world's most biologically significant and threatened habitats acre by acre). The picture below from that website shows what a stunning looking bird it is.



Source: <https://www.worldlandtrust.org/species/birds/andean-cock-of-the-rock/>

According to the WLT, the Andean Cock of the Rock is the national bird of Peru. What I also learned was that the colouring and fan shaped crest that we see in the images of both the photograph and

the stamp are unique to the male of the species. According to the WLT, *“in contrast, the female is a darker, less colourful bird though it has the same general colour patterns.”* The Rainforest Alliance website (<https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/species/cock-rock>) suggest that: *“as with most birds, the female colouring is subtler”*.

The 19 stamp images from the bird theme website all look to be of the male bird. The Rainforest Alliance does say though that the colourful plumage does attract predators: birds of prey, pumas, jaguars and boa constrictors. I guess that it is difficult to blend into the foliage of rainforest when you have stunning red plumage.

The Andean Cock-of-the-Rock is a bird classified as of “Least Concern”, and although numbers are not known, the consensus on Birdlife International is that the number is decreasing. The bird is also indicated as being a native resident of Bolivia, Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Venezuela, which explains the stamp issues from these countries, though not the stamps from Liberia, Zambia, St Vincent & Grenadines or from Cuba. The Rainforest Alliance describes the loss of habitat, *“predominantly from forestland being converted to farmland”*, as being a major threat to the survival of this bird. The WLT also indicates that the bird is also prey to the international pet trade, obviously owing to its dazzling colours.

In common with all the stamps that I written about, I have a rule that I only cover those stamps which I have either have in or in the process of acquiring for my collection. This is a brief exception: because I am in the process of moving, I cannot safely order this stamp but will do so when I am firmly based at my new address in Scotland.

Sources and more information on this bird:

<https://www.freestampcatalogue.com/search/category/stamps/country/peru/year/2019-2019?q=bird>

<https://www.worldlandtrust.org/species/birds/andean-cock-of-the-rock/>

<https://www.rainforest-alliance.org/species/cock-rock>

<http://www.birdtheme.org/mainlyimages/index.php?spec=1569>

<http://datazone.birdlife.org/species/factsheet/andean-cock-of-the-rock-rupicola-peruvianus>

I’m still looking for a picture of the female of the Andean Cock-of-the Rock for comparison.