

Estonia – 100th Anniversary of the Ornithological Society¹

Introduction

On 29 April 2021, Eesti Post commemorated 100th anniversary of the Estonian Ornithological Society. According to the information on the Eesti Post Website²:

“The Estonian Ornithological Society was established on 1 May 1921. For over one hundred years, the society has contributed to the research, protection and introduction of our bird species. With more than 600 members, the ornithological society is currently one of the largest nature protection societies in Estonia and it is also a partner of the international bird protection organisation BirdLife International. We continue to stand for the wellbeing of Estonian wild birds.”

The stamp issue includes a sheetlet of two colourful stamps, both at €1.90 (the letter rate for postage outside of Europe, up to 250g), with the left-hand stamp featuring the Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and the right-hand stamp illustrating a pair of binoculars and the logo of the Ornithological society, plus a Tree Sparrow (*Passer montanus*).



Source: [100th Anniversary of the Estonian Ornithological Society \(omniva.ee\)](https://eoy.ee/)

The Eesti Post website explains that the image of the Starling is included on the left-hand stamp as this is the “Bird of the Year”, as selected by the Ornithological Society. This is an annual stamp issue that Eesti Post have been running for some time – it was only when I went to www.birdtheme.org –

¹ <https://eoy.ee/>. English content available on this website.

² [100th Anniversary of the Estonian Ornithological Society \(omniva.ee\)](https://eoy.ee/)

that I realised how long: since 2001, starting with the Northern Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*). The first two years featured stamps (see below) designed by **Signe Viilik & Janno Poopuu**; thereafter, **Vladimir Taiger** has designed all the subsequent bird of the year stamps. The Barn Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*), the Ornithological Society's own bird (as appears on its logo) featured as bird of the year in 2011. All of the stamps in this series share the same square shaped stamp format and design.

As regards the 2021 Bird of the Year, the Eesti Post website states:

"The starling, with its spotted black feathers and yellow beak, is the well-known announcer of Spring. The nuptial plumage of starlings with its green and violet sheen is remarkably beautiful and the songs they sing to attract partners are skilful."

The Estonian Ornithological Society has been electing a bird of the year since 1995. The Starling is the 27th bird of the year. The Starling follows on from the Great Crested Grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*) which featured on the 2020 issue.

The 2021 issue includes a colourful First Day Cover, which replicates in larger format the illustration of the Starling; and a set of two maximum cards, again one of which replicates in larger format the second stamp (with the binoculars). The second card, on which the Starling stamp is attached, is more interesting in that it shows a juvenile with its head stuck out of a bird box, presumably waiting to be fed.



Source: [100th Anniversary of the Estonian Ornithological Society \(omniva.ee\)](https://www.omniva.ee)

First Day Cover (dated 29 April 2021) with the two stamp sheetlet.



Source: [100th Anniversary of the Estonian Ornithological Society \(omniva.ee\)](https://omniva.ee)

Maximum Card featuring in larger format the image on the second stamp, commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Ornithological Society.



Source: [100th Anniversary of the Estonian Ornithological Society \(omniva.ee\)](https://omniva.ee)

Maximum Card featuring the 2021 “Bird of the Year”, the Starling.

The stamp issue also includes a “information card” as illustrated below. Vladimir Taiger designed the two stamps.



Source: [100th Anniversary of the Estonian Ornithological Society \(omniva.ee\)](http://100th Anniversary of the Estonian Ornithological Society (omniva.ee))

The information card (priced at €0.50).

Past Bird of the Year Issues (all images from www.birdtheme.org)

2001 Northern Lapwing



2002 Tree Sparrows



2003 Magpie



2004 White Stork



2005 Northern Goshawk



2006 Western Yellow Wagtail



2007 Tundra Swan



2008 Black Grouse



2009 Tawny Owl



2010 Red-backed Shrike



2011 Barn Swallow



2012 Little Ringed Plover



2013 Grey Partridge



2014 Kingfisher



2015 European Honey Buzzard



2016 Great Tit



2017 European Turtle Dove



2018 Western Capercaillie



2019 European Nightjar



2020 Great Crested Grebe



Vladimir Taiger has designed a number of other stamps for Eesti Post as well as Bank of Estonia bank notes before the country adopted the Euro³. His philatelic designs in 2021 also include the two stamps issued for the 2021 Europa Issue on Endangered National Wildlife. The two stamps illustrate the lady's slipper (*Cypripedium calceolus*), which is the orchid with the largest flower in Estonia and Europe; and the Eurasian hoopoe (*Upupa epops*). This bird stamp is illustrated below:



Source: [EUROPA – Endangered National Wildlife \(omniva.ee\)](https://www.omniva.ee)

³ Taiger designed the 5, 10, 25, 50, 100 and 500 Krooni notes. Source: [Interview with Bank of Estonia's Head of Cash and Security Department | Coin Update](#)

BIRD STAMP SOCIETY

This Hoopoe issue comes in sheets of 10 stamps. In the second and fourth rows the stamps are printed upside down, effectively creating two blocks of four stamps in vertical tête-bêche format. The date of issue for these two Europa stamps was 6 May 2021.

About the Hoopoe, the Eesti Post website commentary states:

“It has a feather tuft on the top of its head which stands up when excited. The elegant bird may often be seen walking on the ground or sometimes even running short distances. It is also capable of climbing trees, but this can rarely be seen. Its flight is reminiscent of a large butterfly because of its undulating path and rapid wing flapping. The Eurasian hoopoe nests in hollows in trees, on the ground or in walls. It is afraid of men but not of man-made structures. The bird tries to reuse its nest for several years. They do not clean the nests which is why they tend to smell. The Eurasian hoopoe mainly eats insects, particularly beetles and their larvae.”

Vladimir Taiger’s artwork has also involved designing the commemorative folders for coins and bank notes issued by the Bank of Estonia for collectors (e.g., the euro Brilliant Uncirculated pack for 2016).