

Qatar

29 January 2022 International Falcons and Hunting Festival

Al Mazayen Championship 2020-21

Introduction

In January 2022, Qatar Post issued a sheetlet of six stamps (all priced at 3.50 Rials) illustrating three images of a Saker Falcon (*Falco cherrug*) and three pictures of a Peregrine Falcon (*Falco peregrinus*).

The stamps commemorate the International Falcons and Hunting Festival which I understand the Qatari Society of Al Gannas helps sponsor each year. The Society itself has interests in falconry as well as scientific and veterinary research into falcons and hawks in Qatar, including their migrations.¹

The Stamps

2022 Qatari Society of Al Gannas – Al Mazayen Championship 2020-21



Image source: <https://store.qatarpost.qa/webstore/>

¹ Source: <https://www.marhaba.qa/al-gannas-society-attends-conference-in-ireland/>

The Qatari Al Mazayen is a 29 day series of events amongst which there is an International Falcons and Hunting Festival, the 13th of which concluded in January 2022. Within that festival, the Al Mazayen Falcon Championship took place, which is what the stamp sheetlet is intended to celebrate, I think.² The Al Mazayen Falcon Championship concluded by identifying the six most beautiful falcons and it is conceivable that the stamps are intended to depict these winning birds, but unfortunately the Qatari Post website is not specific on that.³

Overall, this is a classy issue from a postal authority that has a conservative issuing policy and which produces stamps that have close links to its culture, history and national characteristics.

The technical details for the stamps are as follows: Dimensions - 34.56mm x 52.20mm (width x height); Designer – Abdellatif Zaian (Qatar Post); Printer – Cartor, France; Print Run – 10,000 of each stamp. Qatar Post also issued 1,000 First Day Covers to support this issue.

Falcons are very popular on stamps, with Kjell Scharning's website indicating that the Peregrine Falcon has appeared on some 262 stamps and lies third in the overall rankings of the most common bird on stamps (behind the Bald eagle and American Flamingo). The Saker Falcon is lower in the rankings (57th) but nonetheless has still appeared on 103 stamps.

Both birds are popular on stamps from the Middle Eastern countries, with the Saker Falcon having appeared on the definitive issues from the United Arab Emirates between 1990-2004. In 1961, two early definitive stamps from Qatar featured the Peregrine Falcon underneath an image of the head of state, Emir Sheikh Ahmad bin Al Thani.⁴

Acknowledgements

With thanks to Qatar Post for the ability to copy and paste the stamp sheetlet and for the technical information supporting this issue. I am also grateful to Kjell Scharning's website for background data and information on the falcon stamp issues from the Middle East and globally.

² Source: <https://thepeninsulaqatar.com/article/30/01/2022/qatar-international-falcons-and-hunting-festival-concludes>

³ Source: <https://www.leaders-mena.com/king-abdulaziz-festival-crowns-the-6-most-beautiful-falcons-in-the-al-mazayen-competition/>

⁴ Source: <https://colnect.com/en/stamps/list/country/175-Qatar/year/1961>