

Wallis & Futuna

26 July 2021

Background

In July, the French Overseas Territory of Wallis & Futuna issued a sheet containing four birds stamps (see image below).



Image source: www.delcampe.net

The featured birds are:

- Pacific Reef Heron (*Egretta sacra*);
- White-tailed Tropicbird (*Phaethon lepturus*);
- Purple Swamphen (*Porphyrio porphyrio*); and
- Weka (*Gallirallus philippensis*).

The local names for these birds, also disclosed on each stamp, are respectively: Amatuku; Tavake; Kalae and Veka.

Previous Stamp Issues

The **Pacific Reef Heron** has appeared on a dozen or so stamps, all primarily from territories in Oceania, including Aitutaki (Cook Islands), Fiji, Kiribati (multiple times), Tahiti (French Polynesia, as illustrated below):

1982 French Polynesia (Tahiti) 7 November - Birds [this is the lowest value of the set of three]



Image source: www.birdtheme.org

The **White-tailed Tropicbird** is one of the most popular birds on stamps and there is no shortage to choose from, with postal authorities in the Caribbean, Indian Ocean as well as Oceania all contributing to the issues. This one is from Bermuda:

1978 Bermuda 15 November – Wildlife [17 values, this stamp was the lowest]



Image source: www.birdtheme.org

The **Purple Swamphen** has not, from what I have been able to establish, ever featured on a stamp issue.

The **Weka** has not previously appeared on a stamp from Wallis & Futuna but has featured on three separate stamp issues from New Zealand (on eof which is shown below). The other two countries that have issued stamps illustrating tej Weka are Nicaragua and Cuba.

2001 New Zealand 1 February – Hong Kong International Stamp Exhibition Sheet [One of two stamps were illustrated, the other being a Kiwi]



Technical Details of the Stamp Issue¹

Illustration and designer: J-R Lisiak

Sheet dimensions: 140 x 110mm

Face values of the stamps: 30 FCFP, 20 FCFP, 10 FCFP and 5 FCFP (equivalent to €0.54 in total)

Printing: Offset

Issue number: 25,000 of the sheets



Image source: www.delcampe.net

The stamp designer, Jean-Richard Lisiak, is a well-known stamp illustrator for the French Overseas Territories, in particular New Caledonia, where he contributed to the design of the Kagu definitive (1997-2003), a landmark series covered by Mel West in his two-part analysis of the New Caledonia definitive issues².

More recent bird stamps designed by Lisiak include the following:

- Michel Corbasson Botanical and Wildlife Park sheet of three stamps (see below), which includes a FCFP 110 value illustrating a New Caledonian Crow (*Corvus moneduloides*), previously incorporated into two stamps by Lisiak in 2001 and 2002; and

¹ Source: L'Écho de la Timbrologie, No 1963, July-August 2021

² See Flight September 2020 and December 2020 issues.

- The single stamp marking the 50th anniversary of the New Caledonia Ornithological Society, which features the Goliath Imperial Pigeon (*Ducula goliath*), symbol of the society.

2012 New Caledonia, 23 September 2012 – Michel Corbasson Botanical and Wildlife Park

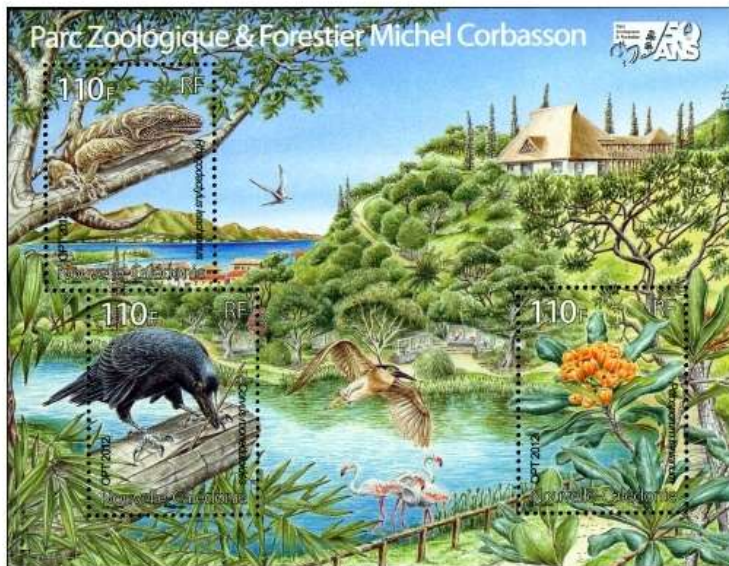


Image Source: [Michel corbasson botanical and wildlife park | Calédoscope \(opt.nc\)](#)

2015 New Caledonia, 8 May - 50th Anniversary of the New Caledonian Ornithological Society

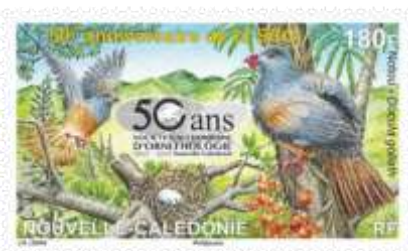


Image source: [50e anniversaire de la Société Calédonienne d'Ornithologie | Calédoscope \(opt.nc\)](#)

Lisiak has contributed numerous other designs for New Caledonia and a good share of these feature birds on them.

Finally, returning the 2021 Wallis & Futuna issue, what is curious about this sheet of four values is that not one of the stamps on its own will be sufficient for any sort of postage.

The tariff which appears on the website of the Wallis & Futuna Postal and Telecommunications Service³ indicates that, to post a letter of up to 20g within Wallis & Futuna will cost FCFP 65 (65F). That is the value of the sheet as a whole, so to post a letter locally, you would probably have to detach the stamps from the sheet to fit them on a C6 envelope (or smaller). The sheet would also be valid for posting anything up to 10g (this weight usually represents nothing more than a postcard) to French Polynesia or New Caledonia. Possibly a small airmail envelope and a letter comprising a sheet of light weight airmail paper might also come under 10g. The price for France, other Overseas Territories and Communities and Europe (EU) is FCFP 85 (85F) for up to 10g. Whether that tariff band (Zone C) also covers the UK is debateable: Zone F, which covers the rest of the world, is FCFP 115 (115F) for up to 10g (a postcard).

Steven Ardron May 2022

³ <http://spt.wf/postales.html>