

Bermuda Stamps

by Ron Lucas

Bermuda has a rich history of producing postage stamps dating from 1848 when a hand made stamp consisting of the words HAMILTON BERMUDA in a circle with the year and postmaster's William B. Perot's signature in the middle was first issued. These very rare stamps were produced only 8 years after the world's first and most famous stamp was issued in the UK - the Penny Black.

Although several hundred thousand Bermuda stamps are issued every year these are relative small numbers compared with larger countries and their unique designs celebrating our history, culture, flora and fauna make them highly collectible by serious philatelists and residents. First Day Covers such as displayed make interesting gifts for visitors and relatives overseas.

Nowadays the Bermuda Philatelic Society produces 4 issues annually and stamps are available as sheets, individually or groups and as First Day Covers which are usually sold for a period of one year as in the case of the Bermuda Reef Fish Stamp Issue. These were initially scheduled for release in late May 2015 and will be available for purchase until 1st June 2016.

Recent issues have included Bermuda Shells, Bermuda in Bloom, Bermuda Roses and Lefroy botanicals. Stamps have also celebrated important anniversaries such as the 2009 issue for the 400th anniversary of settlement following the shipwreck of the Sea Venture on our reefs during a hurricane. This event was also celebrated in Shakespeare's The



Tempest.

It usually takes at least six months to produce a stamp issue from idea to point of sale in Bermuda Post Offices and through the Bermuda Philatelic Bureau, UK and USA representatives. The Philatelic Bureau is responsible for the production



Bi-Color Coney Nikon D70s in Ikelite Housing and Strobe, f6.3 1/60 sec



of postage stamps for the Bermuda Post Office. The stamp images are the result of the creative vision of the Stamp Design Advisory Committee which is a Government of Bermuda appointed group that works with historical, environmental, and arts organisations for inspiration to create original artwork for the commemorative stamps that collectors world wide have come to appreciate and expect from the Bermuda Post Office.

So it was a great honour when I was approached in 2014 to submit photographs for consideration. The stamps that were eventually selected had to be representative of Bermuda tropical fish, be readily identifiable and be suitably posed for positioning on the regular format of Bermuda stamps: 28.5mm X 52mm. Over 20 images were reviewed by the Committee and eventually 6 chosen, one of which would be printed on the First Day Cover envelope whilst the others would be available as stamps for purchase.

Whilst Keno Simmons of the Department of Communication and information completed the stamp designs I was asked to provide the information for the First Day Cover enclosure



Queen Parrotfish Terminal Phase Nikon D7100 in Nauticam Housing with Inon Strobes f10 1/125 sec

describing the 5 stamp species and also to write an introduction. I enlisted the help of a colleague Judie Clee who is the local Coordinator of REEF to provide input and review descriptions for accuracy. Judie helped edit my 2008 Bermuda Reef Portraits book and also descriptions and photos for the free Bermuda Reef Life HD app.

To my complete surprise, the Bermuda Post Office created a wallet size 2016 Calendar card with the Yellowhead Wrasse (Redback) stamp artwork and photo on one side. This was distributed free of charge on the counters at Post Offices in Bermuda during December 2015 and January 2016.

I am extremely proud to have my photos honoured on Bermuda Stamps as I was when one of my hawksbill turtle photos was used as the basis for the design of a silver commemorative coin celebrating the 40th Anniversary of the Bermuda Turtle Project a few years ago.

If you would like to obtain a first day cover for just \$5.50 USA you can email philatelic@gov.bm for further information.

Ron Lucas

Ron is the author/photographer of the Bermuda Zoological Society Bermuda Reef Portraits book and Bermuda Reef Life HD app for iOS and Android smartphones and tablets.

www.ronlucasphoto.smugmug.com

