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UNDERWATER STAMPS YOU CAN COLLECT

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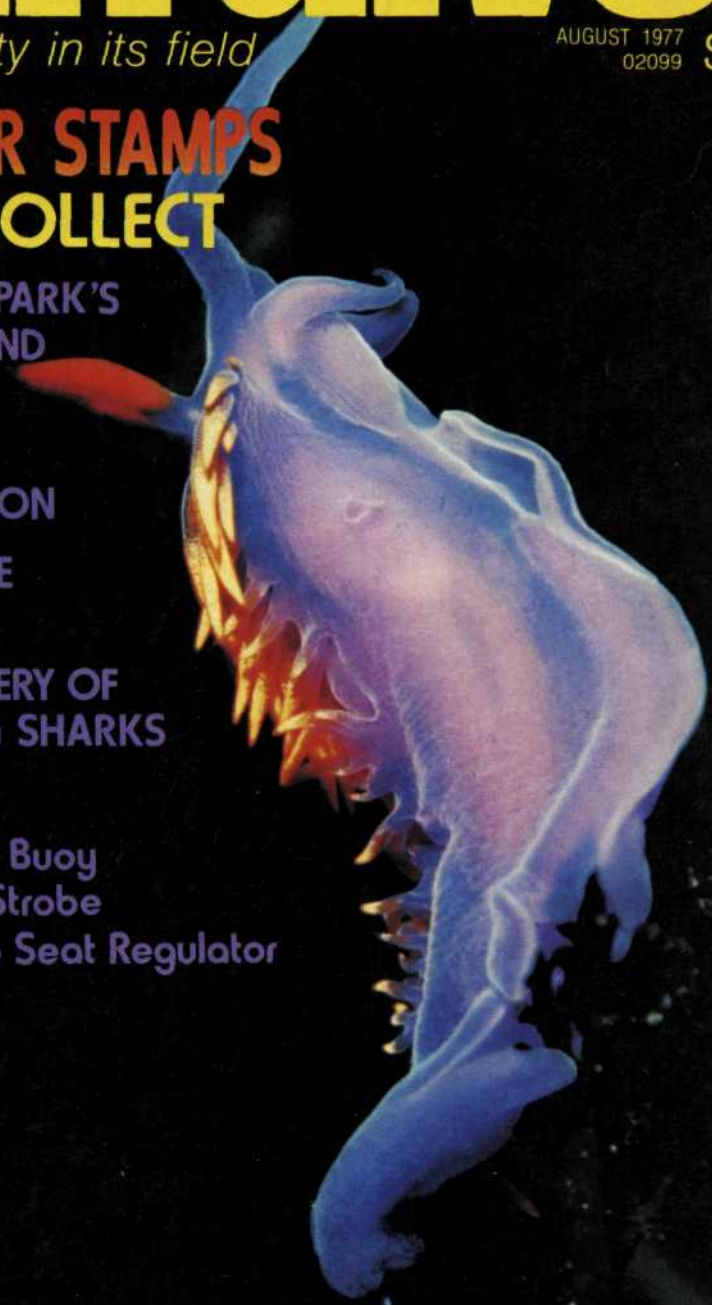
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UNDERWATER STAMPS OF THE WORLD

START YOUR COLLECTION NOW!

By Jack and Sue Drafahl



photography by Authors





Few people really look at the image captured on the face of postage stamps. Most individuals are only concerned with the rate increase and how much they must pay to mail a letter. Until recently, I fell into this category.

Several months ago my younger brother returned from Germany. He brought with him a large stamp collection, most of which he obtained while in foreign countries. To my amazement, I found several beautiful undersea stamps. After giving me a short course on stamp collecting, he told me that I should take up topical stamp collecting — that is, collecting stamps of a certain subject matter, for example, undersea animals.

My first step was a trip to the local stamp store, where I found all the necessary items to start my collection. I purchased a stamp album with blank pages, stamp hinges to mount the stamps, and of course, my first undersea stamps. I was then introduced to the local stamp club, where I found other topical collectors eager to sell or trade their extra stamps. Finally I discovered stamp companies exist that will send you stamps on approval; you buy what you want and return the remainder. And so, I became a full-fledged stamp collector.

Why, you may ask, would a skin diver want to collect underwater stamps when he can see everything firsthand? The most important reason is the beauty of the stamps. Each stamp is a work of art. The intense beauty and rich colors of the subject are shown in great detail. It becomes very easy to view these stamps as miniature paintings.

If cost is your concern, don't worry. Stamps have proven to be good investments. Most increase five to ten percent in value each year. You never lose money.

Undersea stamp collecting has become a miniature biology course for me as well, because each stamp shows the animal in great detail, gives its name, and shows the location.





UNDERWATER STAMPS

For a small initial investment you can build a beautiful and profitable undersea stamp collection

For the diver who travels the world, stamps create a treasure hunt. Upon visiting each country, a diver can stop at the local post office and buy many different undersea stamps at a very low cost. At the conclusion of the trip, the world traveler will not only have photos and souvenirs of the trip, but also a stamp record of the animals in and near the country.

An individual who has an interest in the sea, but can't dive also has a good reason to collect undersea stamps. Through stamp collecting, he can collect his own colorful undersea pictures, almost as though he were an experienced underwater photographer.

To interest new members, dive clubs throughout the country have slide shows for entertainment. What better way to start a slide show than by using photos of stamps? Suppose you give a slide show on Panama. The beginning title slides could have Panama stamps along with the credits. You could use a photo of a grouper on a stamp, and then dissolve into an actual photograph you took of the grouper. The slide show ending credits could also include undersea stamps.

There you have it: reasons why you might want to take up stamp collecting. But wait, I left out one very important reason why I collect undersea stamps:

They give me ideas and concepts which advance stamp collecting to its ultimate. I make my own stamps! Because I have an extensive background in graphics, I am able to re-create stamp perforations and lettering on high contrast film. By double-printing my own photographs through these masks, I have been able to create my own stamp collection. Stamps with animal life of the local California area are hard to find, so I make my own. I then add these to the easily accessible stamps of other countries of the world.

Next time you put a stamp on a letter, stop and take a good look at it. You might be surprised at what you will find.

