

Woodland Animals Royal Mail's new set of



The stamps are designed by Kate Stephens, who designed the stamp issues for the 50th anniversaries of The Queen's accession and coronation.

TEN COLOURFUL 1ST CLASS STAMPS featuring much-loved animals from British woodlands will be available from Post Office branches and philatelic outlets and from Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh from 16 September. The se-tenant block is being printed in gravure by Enschedé. Post Office branches will be supplied with sheets of 30; sheets of 60, with gutter margin, will be supplied to Royal Mail Tallents House and Post Office philatelic outlets.

Technical details

Printer Enschedé

Process Gravure

Stamp size 35 x 37mm

Sheets 30 and 60

Perforation 14.5

Phosphor Two bands

Gum PVA

Gutter strips Horizontal

Cylinders and colours

E1 phosphor ● E1 gold ● E1 black ● E1 cyan (blue) ● E1 magenta ● E1 yellow

FIRST DAY FACILITIES Unstamped Royal Mail FDC envelopes will be available from main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets about a week before 16 September, price 25p. Orders for serviced FDCs with the stamps cancelled by a pictorial first day postmark of Royal Mail Tallents House Edinburgh or Woodland, Bishop Auckland must reach Tallents House (see address below) by the day of issue. Price £3.71 UK or £3.16 overseas.

Collectors may send stamped covers on the day of issue to: Royal Mail, Tallents House, 21 South Gyle Crescent, Edinburgh EH12 9PB (Tallents House postmark), or Special Handstamp Centre, Royal Mail South Shields DO, Keppell Street, South Shields NE33 1AA (Woodland postmark), marking the outer envelope 'FD0425' (Tallents House), or 'FD0426' (Woodland). Covers can be posted or handed in at main Post Office branches for the Woodland postmark. Details of other handstamps for 16 September will be announced in the *British Postmark Bulletin* – available on subscription from Tallents House (£12.25 UK/Europe; £24.95 elsewhere). For a sample copy write to: The Editor, British Postmark Bulletin, Royal Mail, 148 Old Street, London EC1V 9HQ.

stamps featuring much-loved British animals



Top row From left to right: Pine marten (photographed by John Cancalosi), Roe deer (Andy Rouse), Badger (Laurie Campbell), Yellow-necked mouse (Stephen Dalton), Wild cat (Mark Hamblin)



Bottom row Red Squirrel (Niall Benvie), Stoat (Gordon Langsbury), Natterer's bat (Kim Taylor), Mole (Guy Edwardes), and Fox (Laurie Campbell).



PHILATELIC PRODUCTS A well-illustrated pack (above left) containing the 10 stamps (price £3.30) and stamp cards (30p each) will be available from Tallents House, main Post Office branches and philatelic outlets.

The pack, designed by Karen Wilks, includes text by the TV nature programme presenter Bill Oddie and Dr Kenny Taylor.

STAMP BOOK Please note that the self-adhesive stamp book for this issue, announced here in June, has now been cancelled. We regret any disappointment caused.



Above hedgehog, red squirrel and badger, three of the five 1977 British Wildlife stamps designed by Patrick Oxenham; and the common dormouse in the 1998 Endangered Species issue.

Woodland animals Woodland animals have featured on a number of GB stamps beginning with two charming designs by Michael Goaman – 1961 PO Savings Bank (above), and 1963 National Nature Week 4½d (badger, fawn and field mouse). The 1977 British Wildlife and 1986 Nature Conservation issues both included woodland species. The 1992 Wintertime set included a fallow deer and fox, and the common dormouse featured in the 1998 Endangered Species set. A red deer was shown on the second of the Nature of Scotland aerogrammes, issued July 1997. The Nature Conservation and Wintertime issues were voted the favourite sets of 1986 and 1992 and the dormouse the most popular stamp of 1998. It will be interesting to see how this new Woodland animals set does in the 2004 Stamp Poll.

The pine marten is closely related to the stoat, weasel and badger, but resembles a cat in being roughly the same size, great at climbing trees, and most active at night. Excellent eyesight and a good sense of smell help a marten to navigate. Once nearly extinct in Britain, the pine marten is now increasing in numbers as tree cover grows once again. Its diet includes berries, beetles, eggs, birds, rodents and rabbits. Pine martens are mostly found in woodlands in northern Scotland and Ireland.

Many roe deer begin life as twins (even triplets) but each fawn stays by itself while its mother grazes, relying on the camouflage of its spotted coat to hide it from danger. Adult roe deer can sometimes be quite noisy; both bucks (male) and does (female) bark when they spot a predator. They feed mostly on grasses, herbs, fresh and succulent tree shoots and leaves, and live in woodland throughout Britain and Ireland.

The black-and-white-striped headgear makes a badger instantly recognisable. Digging is often a sign of badgers but the animals only emerge from their underground 'setts' at dusk. Badgers live in families of up to a dozen animals, using scent marking to proclaim ownership of a territory. They feed on berries, tubers, earthworms, insects, rodents, and frogs.

The yellow-necked mouse was the last of Britain's native rodents to be scientifically described, and much about its behaviour remains unknown. Named for its coloured collar, it is slightly larger than its close relative, the wood mouse, and found in mature, broad-leaved woodlands where it is an agile climber. Its diet comprises tree seeds, fruit, fungi, insects, and worms. Its habitat is restricted to southern England and the Welsh borders.