

PARROTS, MACAWS, AND QUETZALS

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[Ed. Note: This article is from a booklet prepared for the Christopher Columbus Philatelic Society that shows parrots on Christopher Columbus stamps. It is reprinted here with permission from the author and our sister study unit. The Christopher Columbus Philatelic Society is another of the study units in the American Topical Association. It became a study unit in 1982. It publishes a quarterly journal, *Discovery*. Membership dues are \$15 for US addresses and \$20 for elsewhere. See their website (<http://ccps.maphist.nl/>) for more information.]

When Columbus arrived in the new world, one of the interesting finds he and his men came across were parrots, macaws, and possibly quetzals. They were plentiful at that time and were traded by the natives to Columbus for beads and other trinkets.

These birds are now in danger of being eradicated due to pesticides and deforestation and the capturing of birds to sell for pets. Most trade is illegal now, but lucrative, so birds continue to be depleted in the wild. Most of these birds are found in Central and South America. Columbus returned to the old world with some of these splendid birds and displayed them in the courts of Portugal and Spain.

While searching among my philatelic possessions for items that could be used in another article, I discovered that I had many stamps and souvenir sheets with several birds illustrated. I do not know my bird identifications so I cannot go into detail on each of these philatelic items. Some of the souvenir sheets do identify the bird so we will have to let that be the identification. Incidentally, as may be observed, some of the parrots illustrated on souvenir sheets are not shown in the stamp itself. There may be other Columbus related philatelic items with these types of birds illustrated, but I do not know of, or possess them.



Fig. 1. Columbus surrounded by exotic birds
Ghana Sc#1464



Fig. 2. Storm petrel with parrot
Nevis Sc#734

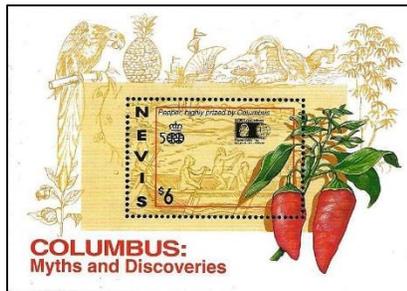


Fig. 3. Peppers with parrot
Nevis Sc#735

On July 6, 1992, Nevis issued six stamps and two souvenir sheets commemorating the Discovery of America 500th anniversary and the World Columbian Stamp Expo '92 in Chicago (Figures 2 and 3). A storm petrel is illustrated on the sheet and partially on the stamp. The parrot however, is seen on upper right side of the sheet.

The second sheet portrays the parrot in the upper left side of the sheet. Other images appear on the sheets, but at this time we are only interested in the birds. Exotic birds and fruit are depicted on a set of stamps issued for the Genoa '92 International Philatelic Exhibition and Figure 4 depicts a parrot.

I forgot to mention that I consider these as all parrots so if I err, please forgive me. In any case, these birds are magnificent in their colors, sizes, and appearance.

The souvenir sheet depicted in Figure 5 is one of my favorite sheets of all time. This is a sheet that the more I look at it, the more I find illustrated. This sheet was issued April 18, 1988, along with six single stamps to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Discovery of America in 1992. Among all the birds on this sheet there are several parrots.



Fig. 4. Parrot with fruit
St Vincent Sc#1654

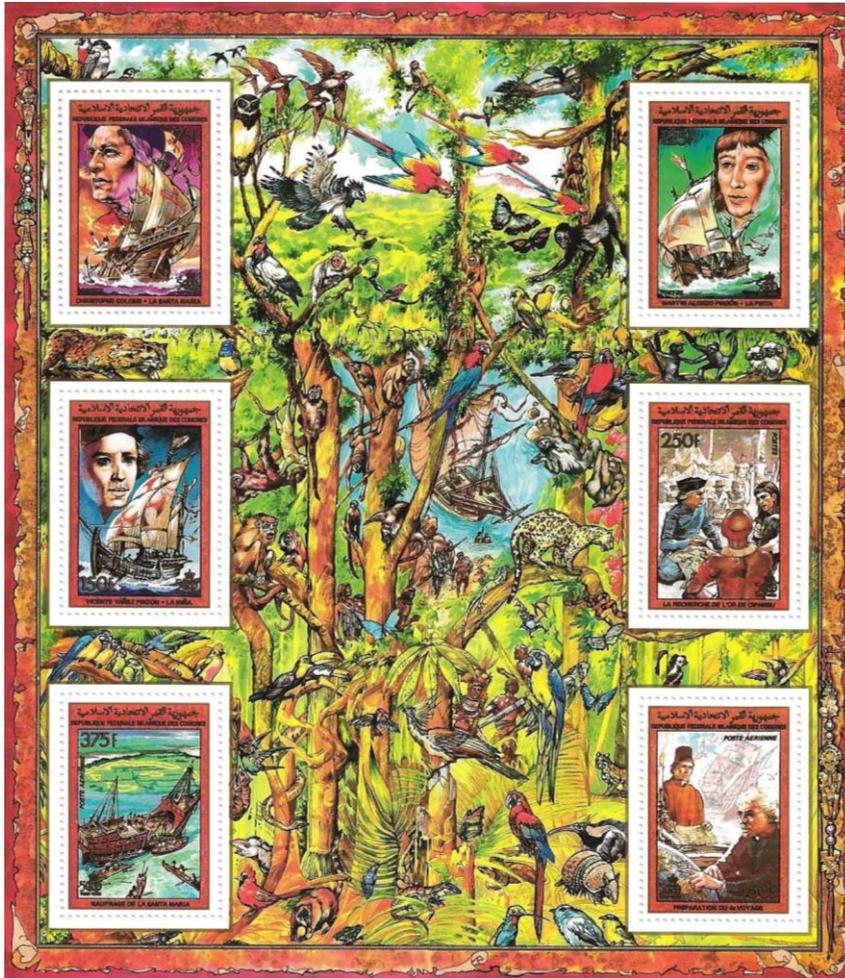


Fig. 5. Samana Cay Landing with Indians and wildlife Comoro Is. Sc#663

Although parrots come in many colors, I note that the majority of these stamps depict red as the predominate color to illustrate these birds. Natives use the feathers from these birds for many different ceremonial purposes. Many of the birds have also been used for food.

Although most parrots do not migrate very far, some species have been found as far north as Southern Arizona and may be found as far south as Argentina.



Fig. 6. *Ara macao* Honduras Sc#C869

Honduras commemorated the 500th anniversary of the Discovery of America by issuing two stamps and an imperforate souvenir sheet, which was serialized, on October 2, 1992. Figure 6 gives us a view of an *Ara macao* in its full color. A quetzal, *Pharomachus mocinno*, is featured on the souvenir sheet, Figure 7.



Fig. 7. *Pharomachus mocinno* Honduras Sc#C870

Columbus's first voyage is well illustrated with a sheet of seven stamps from Montserrat which was issued January 16, 1992. The fifth stamp (Figure 8) on the sheet is depicted as showing exotic birds.



Fig. 8. Exotic birds Montserrat Sc#789e

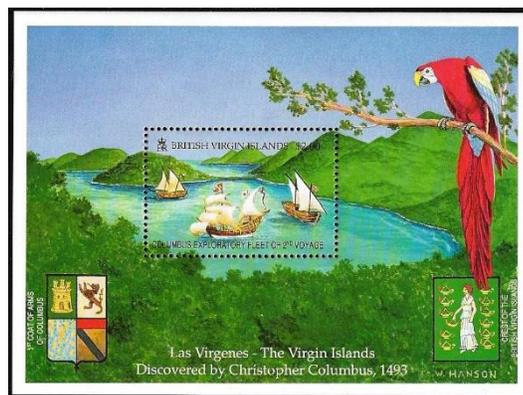


Fig. 9. Columbus Second Voyage British Virgin Is. Sc#755

Columbus's second fleet is illustrated on the stamp on the souvenir sheet from the British Virgin Islands. These islands were discovered by Columbus on his second voyage in 1493. A bright red parrot is a major visual effect on this souvenir sheet, Figure 9.

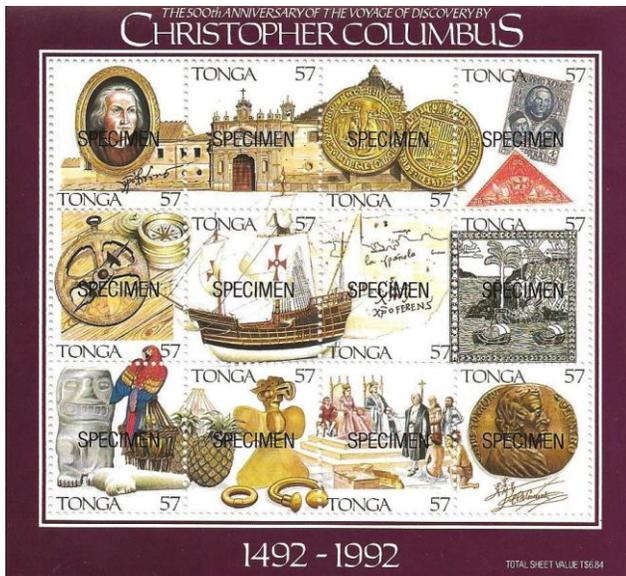


Fig. 10. Discovery of America 500th Anniversary
Tonga Sc#707

A SPECIMEN sheet (Figure 10) of twelve stamps from Tonga, commemorates the Discovery of America 500th anniversary and Christopher Columbus and vividly displayed is a red and yellow macaw in the lower left hand side of the sheet. The colors of this bird sure stand out on this sheet.

Columbus and native with parrot are seen in Figure 11, issued in 1988 by Antigua.

A green-winged red parrot (Figure 12) and a green parrot (Figure 13) issued by Grenada and Dominica add to the colorful display of parrots illustrated throughout this article.



Fig. 11. Native and Parrot
Antigua Sc#1096

The colorful birds of the Caribbean and Central and South America are well represented on stamps from the countries in those areas. This article tried to stay with parrots that were on stamps related to the Columbus topic so not all parrot stamps issued by those countries appear here.

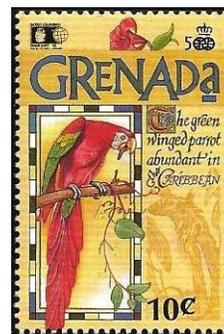


Fig. 12. Red Parrot
Grenada Sc#2063



Fig. 13. Green Parrot
Dominica Sc#1452

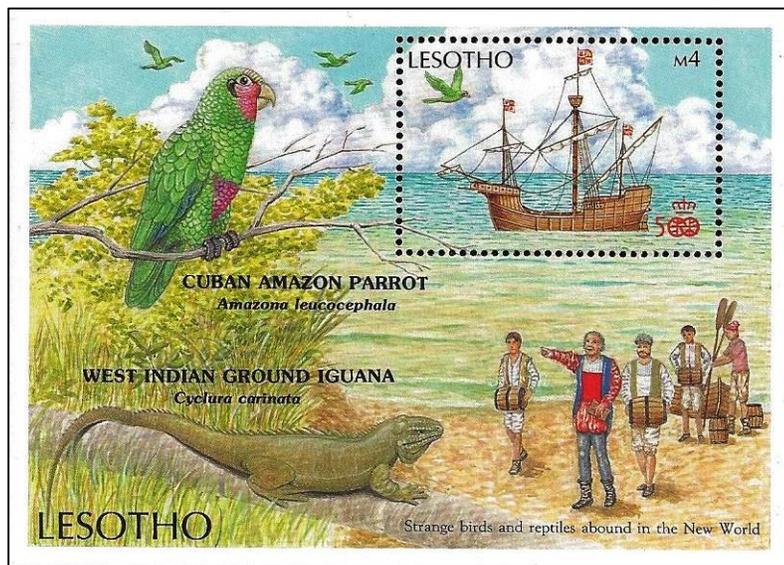


Fig. 14. Parrot and Columbus landing
Lesotho Sc#617

A Cuban Amazon Parrot is well presented on this issue from Lesotho (Figure 14). This souvenir sheet came with a set of four stamps and was issued December 14, 1987, to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Discovery of America in 1492. At the bottom of the sheet is an inscription, "Strange birds and reptiles abound in the New World."

On October 12, 1990, Mexico issued an AMERICA pair of stamps depicting part of a galleon with flowers and the other part with a blue and yellow parrot (Figure 15).



Fig. 15. Parrot with galleon
Mexico Sc#1679a

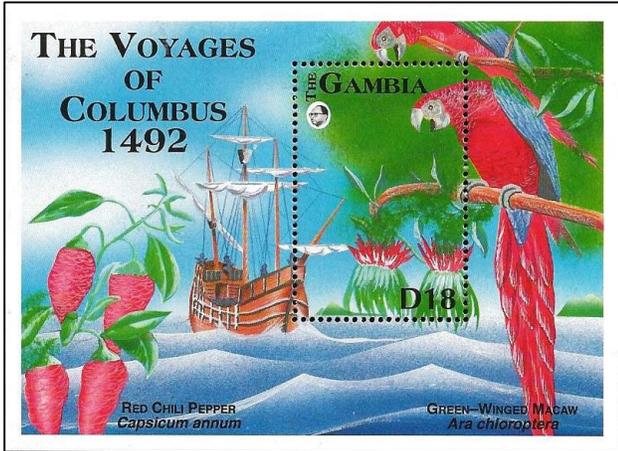


Fig. 16. Green-winged Macaw
Gambia Sc#1305

Columbus at the court of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella and a red and yellow macaw are illustrated on this 1986 souvenir sheet (Figure 17) from the Republic of Guinea. In the lower right of this sheet, is a map of the four routes that Columbus sailed. It is interesting to note that not too many children are represented in pictures with Columbus at court.

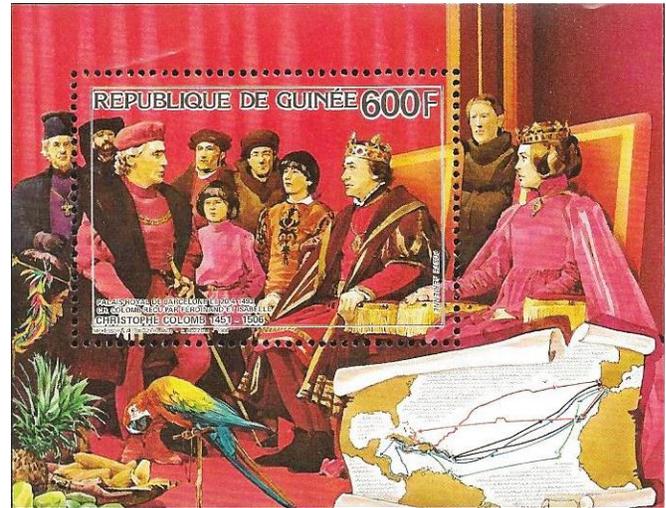


Fig. 17. Red and yellow Macaw
Guinea Sc#1010



Fig. 18. Bow of ship and Parrot
St. Vincent Sc#1462

The Landfall of Columbus is commemorated with this sheet of nine stamps (Figure 18) and the center of the sheet has a red and yellow macaw. The numeral ten appears on the top left corner of this stamp, but the stamp is not valid for postage. St. Vincent issued two sheets of the Columbus Exposition issues and sheet number one is illustrated here as the parrot is shown on this sheet.



Fig. 20. Red and yellow Macaw
Dominica Sc#1306



Fig. 19. Parrot trade
Barbuda Sc#965

In Figure 19, a parrot in the canoe and in Figure 20, a red and yellow macaw is the highlight of the Dominica issue.

This was an interesting project with so many brilliant colors and a slightly different slant on the Columbus topic.