

Title: On the Wings of Wonder: Audubon's Avian Art on Stamps

Scope of the Exhibit: The purpose of this display exhibit is to provide background history of John James Audubon and demonstrate how his vast exploratory ornithological travels resulted in revolutionary artwork which impacted art, philately, science, and conservation. This will be accomplished with postal history items, commemorative issues and other material related to his life and his crowning achievement: *The Birds of America*.

Material Organization: The material is organized in chapters in chronological order with minor exceptions. Interspersed in the exhibit are aspects of his life and the creation of *The Birds of America*. The highlights of his personal life are identified in italics.

There are inconsistencies in identifying birds in *The Birds of America* on stamps because numerous species identified by Audubon now have different names. For example, the 1985 Bicentenary stamps use modern names, while others, like the Leaders of the World stamps, use Audubon's original names. I also encountered difficulty verifying when and where particular bird sketches were completed because Audubon often changed his sketches, creating different dates and locations for the same illustrations. To ensure consistency, I attempted to link bird drawings to their first known location and date of completion.

Collecting challenges: I am a novice exhibitor and collector with three years of philatelic experience. The first appearance of Audubon's artwork on postage stamps was in 1953, so the material is modern and inexpensive. The challenge involved sourcing diverse materials, primarily from the 1985 bicentenary issues. To maintain a single-frame format, the exhibit includes material up to 1985, except for three souvenir sheets found in chapter 6 (The 200th anniversary of Charles Darwin from 2009, the 235th anniversary of John Audubon in 2020 and the 2021 Extinct Carolina Parakeet).

Completeness of the Subject: Included in the exhibit are:

- Maxim card from Hungary
- The first stamp depicting his artwork (1953 Cuba).
- Examples of the first US common design on regular mail and airmail stamps (1963 and 1967).
- Cinderellas from the 1975 Haiti Scam
- Individual stamps and First Day Covers from the 1985 Bicentenary issues
- Color trial proofs of the 1985 bicentenary stamps (Montserrat).
- Philatelic examples of the six now extinct birds found in his famous book *The Birds of America*.
- Copies of historical documents are included to provide background to his personal life and experiences.

To include all examples of covers and material stamps issued with Audubon artwork would be financially prohibited. I have done my best to provide a basic representation of philatelic materials available to collectors from the years 1953 through the 1985 Bicentenary issues, apart from the three later issues of souvenir sheet noted above.

Exhibit History: In 2025, I first presented this exhibit at RMSS as a new collector. This is the second time items from my private collection are being shown.

Resource Materials: In preparing this exhibit, I used multiple books, catalogs, internet resources, fellow collectors, Societies, Clubs, and auctions. From my research, I obtained copies of his personal documents, private writings, drawings, river, and sea journals.

Material Rarity: The material presented in this exhibit would not be considered rare. The most difficult to obtain are the color trial proofs from Montserrat.

Expertizing of Specific Items: None of the material presented in this exhibit requires expertizing.

Quality and Condition: The assembled material is of the highest quality from my personal collection.

Item Inclusion: All the material found within this exhibit is easily obtainable and representative of material available to the beginning collector. I am constantly searching for new material to augment my collection.

Philatelic References:

- A. Bird Theme.Org; <https://www.birdtheme.org>. (verification of Audubon art on stamps).
- B. Hermann, Lois; John James Audubon on Stamps; 2004; American Topical Association in conjunction with the Biology Study Unit.
- C. History of the Haitian Audubon Stamps; *Philately Lately*; July 2018; <https://philatelylately.wordpress.com>.
- D. Sherwood, William; The Audubon Philatelic Handbook; 1986; Fine Arts Philatelists.

Audubon Historical References:

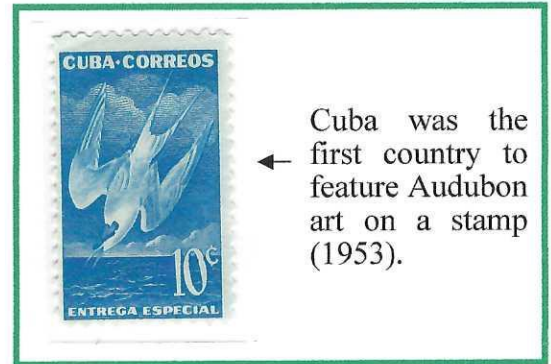
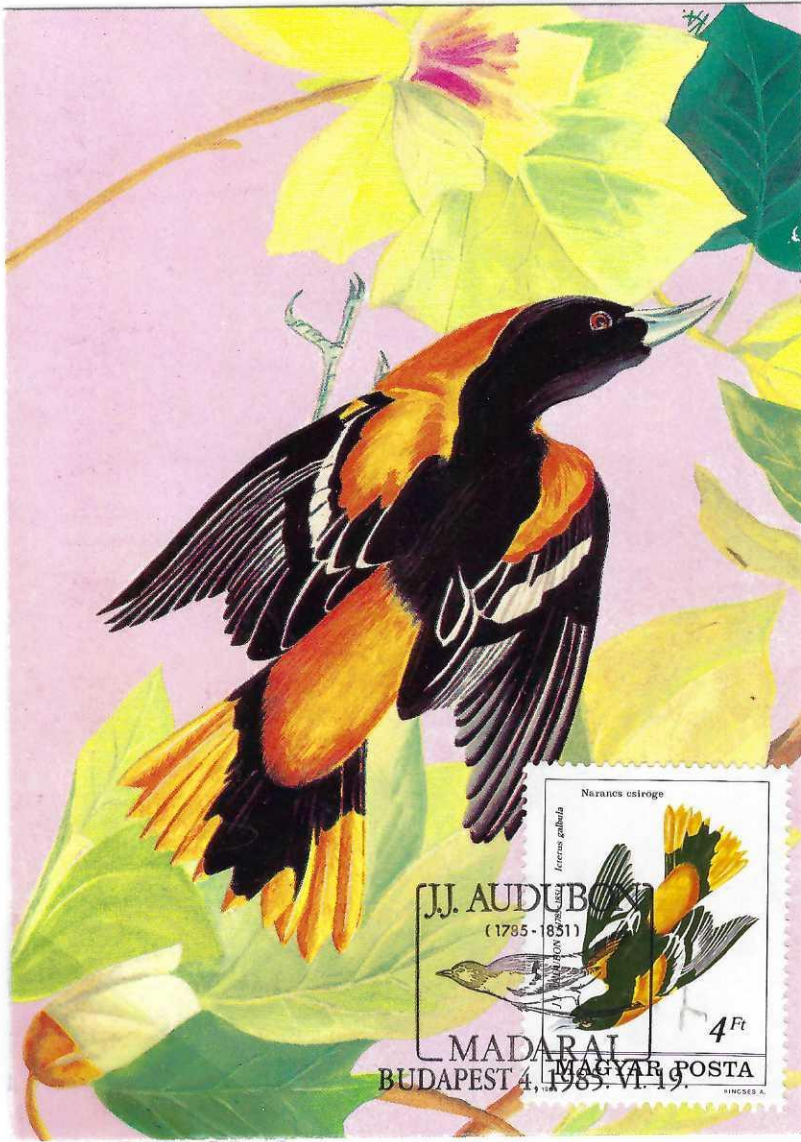
- A. Audubon, John James; The Birds of America; 1983; Sotheby's New York.
- B. Audubon, John James; Mississippi River Journals of John James Audubon; 2016; University of Nebraska Press.
- C. Audubon, John James; Audubon: The Writings and Drawings; 1999; Literary Classics
- D. John J. Audubon; Audubon At Sea, The Coastal and Transatlantic Adventures of John James Audubon; Christopher Irmscher and Richard King; August 2022; University of Chicago Press
- E. Clavruel, Denis; In the Footsteps of Audubon; November 2022; Princeton Press.
- F. Jenns, Erika; Mapping Audubon; <https://www.arcgis.com/apps>.

On the Wings of Wonder: Audubon's Avian Art On Stamps

This exhibit presents an overview of John James Audubon's avian artwork featured on worldwide postage stamps. It includes commemorative stamp issues, postal history items, and ephemera. The exhibit provides background information about Audubon's life and his extensive ornithological explorations. The exhibit will demonstrate how his revolutionary style influenced art, philately, science, and conservation.

The evolution of the Roseate Tern Stamp

- 1953 Cuba (top center)
- Haiti Cinderella 1970-75 (bottom right)
- Barbuda 1985 (bottom left)



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The Hungarian Maxim card prominently features Audubon's illustration of a Baltimore Oriole. This stamp is part of a 1985 set comprising four stamps, including two additional airmail stamps.

Key to special items in the exhibit:

- Highlights about John J. Audubon are in *italics*.
- Information about *The Birds of America* is highlighted in blue box.
- First Stamps: Worldwide and US to feature Audubon artwork are highlighted in a green box.
- Montserrat trial color proofs are highlighted in a red box.
- Haiti Cinderellas are highlighted in a purple box.