

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Birds of Prey to Soar Through the Nation's Mail *Five Kings of the Sky Commemorated on Stamps*

To obtain a high-resolution image of the stamps for media use only, email mark.r.saunders@usps.gov.

WASHINGTON, DC — The U.S. Postal Service salutes five kings of the sky with the Birds of Prey stamps: the northern goshawk, peregrine falcon, golden eagle, osprey and northern harrier. The 85-cent definitive Birds of Prey stamps are being issued in self-adhesive sheets of 20 at a price of \$17.00 per sheet. The stamps can be used with virtually all domestic First-Class Mail weighing up to 3-ounces.

“Anyone with a love of the outdoors will be enamored with these beautiful stamps,” said U.S. Postal Service Stamp Services Manager, Stephen Kearney. “The stamps go on sale today at Post Offices nationwide, online at usps.com and by phone at 800-782-6724.

The powerful birds are depicted in colorful portraits and shown from the neck up. The artwork appears against a plain, white background. Illustrator Robert Giusti of Bridgewater, CT, worked with art director Howard E. Paine of Delaplane, VA, on this issuance. Giusti painted the original designs in acrylic on canvas board.

Birds of prey, also known as raptors, thrive in diverse habitats and live on every continent except Antarctica. The roughly 500 species of raptors include birds that hunt by day, such as falcons, eagles and harriers and birds that hunt by night — owls. They share several common characteristics, such as being carnivorous and using their powerful talons to capture prey. Their exceptionally keen eyesight allows them to see small objects in detail, even from a great distance. As predators high on the food chain, raptors play an important role in maintaining the balance of nature.

Customers may view the Birds of Prey stamps as well as many of this year's other stamps on Facebook at facebook.com/USPSStamps, through [Twitter @USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or on the website *Beyond the Perf* at beyondtheperf.com/2012-preview. *Beyond the Perf* is the Postal Service's online site for background on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at a local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at usps.com/shop or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes (to themselves or others) and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Birds of Prey Stamp
Special Cancellations
PO Box 92282
Washington, DC 20090-2282

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes by mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by March 20, 2012.

How to Order First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

Information Fulfillment
Dept. 6270
U.S. Postal Service
P.O. Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Product

There is one philatelic product available for this stamp issue: 115263, First-Day Cover Set of 5, \$6.45

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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For reporters interested in speaking with a regional Postal Service public relations professional on this issue, please go to <http://about.usps.com/news/media-contacts/usps-local-media-contacts.pdf>.

A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, *usps.com*, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. *Black Enterprise* and *Hispanic Business* magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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