

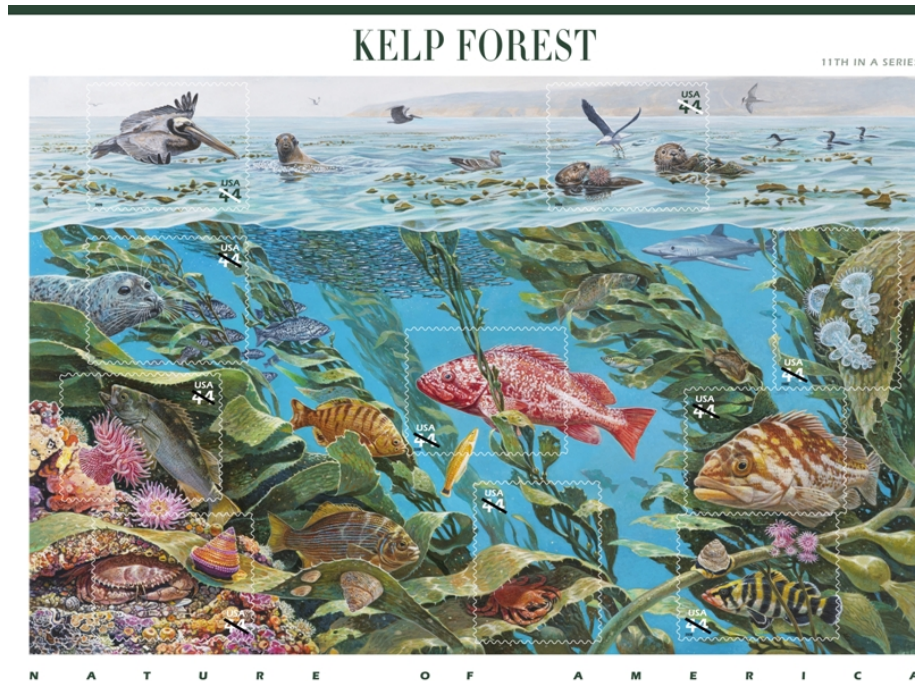
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National Stamp Collecting Month Starts With a ‘Splash’ *Underwater Stamps to be Released... Underwater!*

MONTEREY, CA — Creatures of central California’s kelp forest will swim into the nation’s mail stream when SCUBA divers unveil the *Nature of America: Kelp Forest* collectible souvenir sheet stamps and stamped postal cards to launch National Stamp Collecting Month tomorrow.

The underwater unveiling airs [live on streaming video](#)* from the Monterey Bay Aquarium’s Kelp Forest Exhibit on October 1 at 8:30 a.m. PT when all 25 million stamps and stamped postal cards go on sale nationwide.

“Tomorrow we celebrate the beginning of National Stamp Collecting Month, one of the world’s most popular hobbies,” said U.S. Postal Service Board of Governor member Mickey D. Barnett, who will dedicate the stamps. “Stamps are fun and educational tools that highlight the American experience. They commemorate America’s heroes, leaders, inventors and artists and honor our ideals and achievements. They also pay homage to the land we love and the great diversity and natural beauty of our country.”

Ten years ago the Postal Service began a new series dedicated to the unique ecosystems across our nation. The Kelp Forest set — the 11th in our *Nature of America* series — not only highlights the complexity of the kelp forest as an ecosystem, but also captures the incredible beauty of this remarkable undersea wonderland.”

Joining Barnett in dedicating the stamps will be [Monterey Bay Aquarium](#) Managing Director Jim Hekkers, *Nature of America* stamp series artist John Dawson and Monterey Bay Aquarium Guest Program Assistant Manager Traci Reid. Aquarium volunteer SCUBA divers Scott Chapman and Chad King, Web Developer and Research Specialist, respectively, of the [Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary](#), will unveil the stamps underwater inside the kelp forest exhibit.

"We are excited that the United States Postal Service is highlighting this important ecosystem in its collectible stamp series," said Hekkers. "It is meaningful to unveil it in October, which marks the Monterey Bay Aquarium's 25th anniversary, and in our signature Kelp Forest exhibit, as our mission is to inspire conservation of the oceans."

Dawson, of Hilo, HI, created the artwork for the entire *Nature of America* series under the direction of art director Ethel Kessler of Bethesda, MD. Previous issuances were *Sonoran Desert* (1999), *Pacific Coast Rain Forest* (2000), *Great Plains Prairie* (2001), *Longleaf Pine Forest* (2002), *Arctic Tundra* (2003), *Pacific Coral Reef* (2004), *Northeast Deciduous Forest* (2005), *Southern Florida Wetland* (2006), *Alpine Tundra* (2007) and *Great Lakes Dunes* (2008).

To illustrate the biodiversity of a kelp forest, Dawson depicted 27 species in his colorful acrylic painting. The scene itself is imaginary as a dense grouping of creatures was necessary to illustrate as many species as possible on the stamp sheet. Even so, all of the species could be encountered at or near the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, the area featured on the pane. All of the species and their interactions are appropriate and were recommended by scientists.

National Stamp Collecting Month: Connecting Students to Stamps

In connection with October as National Stamp Collecting Month, the Postal Service has forged a community partnership — [Community Connection](#) — that contributes to the school improvement plans of elementary school teachers nationwide.

Community Connection provides schools with the resources of 32,700 area Post Offices, the country's largest and most extraordinary archive of American history and culture, and exciting new cross-curricular tools for teaching through stamps and other curriculum-connected classroom tools designed for primary grade implementation in the 2009-2010 school year.

First-Day-of-Issue Postmarks

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, or at the Postal Store website at www.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 a larger envelope addressed to:

Nature of America: Kelp Forest Stamp
Postmaster
565 Hartnell Street
Monterey, CA 93940-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes through the mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by Dec. 2, 2009.

How to Order First-Day Covers

Stamp Fulfillment Services 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
PO Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Products

There are six [philatelic products](#) available for this stamp issue:

464062, First-Day Cover Full Sheet, \$6.90.

464064, Cancelled Full Sheet, \$6.90.

464066/896900, Oversized Premium Stamped Cards, \$8.95.

464084, Uncut Press Sheet, \$35.20.

464091, Ceremony Program with 10 stamps, \$6.95.

464093, First Day Cover Keepsake Full Pane/Cancelled Sheet, \$11.30.

The Kelp Forest “Back Story”

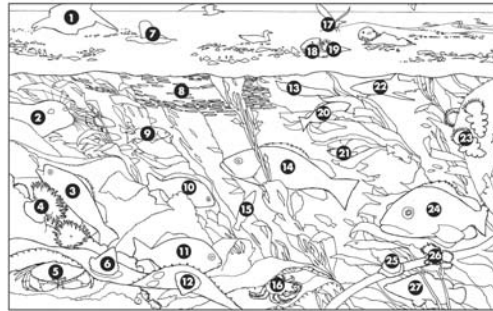
A description of the kelp forest and a numbered key to the artwork appear on the back of the stamp pane, along with a corresponding list of common and scientific names for 27 selected species.

KELP FOREST

Hundreds of species live in the kelp forest, a lush undersea ecosystem in which the largest seaweeds, known as kelp, grow as tall as trees.

Much like a forest on land, a kelp forest has an upper layer called a canopy, but instead of leafy branches, this canopy contains the topmost fronds of swaying towers of kelp. The largest kelp species extends a hundred feet or more from the canopy down to the seafloor, where its root-like holdfast clings to the rocky bottom and holds it in place.

The stamp pane features a kelp forest in the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, a federally protected area encompassing 5,322 square miles of ocean off the central California coast. Here, a rich assemblage of marine organisms finds ample food and shelter. One species is especially important to the survival of the kelp forest itself: The sea otter likes to eat sea urchins, spiny kelp-eating creatures that can overgraze groves of kelp when otters are absent.



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| 1. Brown Pelican
<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i> | 10. Rainbow Seaperch
<i>Hypsopus caryi</i> | 19. Red Sea Urchin
<i>Strongylocentrotus franciscanus</i> |
| 2. Harbor Seal
<i>Phoca vitulina</i> | 11. Striped Seaperch
<i>Embiotoca lateralis</i> | 20. Kelp Rockfish
<i>Sebastes atrovirens</i> |
| 3. Yellowtail Rockfish
<i>Sebastes flavidus</i> | 12. Dusky Turban Snail
<i>Promartyria pulligo</i> | 21. Kelp Perch
<i>Brachyistius frenatus</i> |
| 4. White-spotted Rose Anemone
<i>Urticina lobata</i> | 13. Giant Kelp
<i>Macrocystis pyrifera</i> | 22. Blue Shark
<i>Prionace glauca</i> |
| 5. Pacific Rock Crab
<i>Cancer antennarius</i> | 14. Vermilion Rockfish
<i>Sebastes miniatus</i> | 23. Lion's Mane Nudibranch
<i>Melibe leonina</i> |
| 6. Jeweled Top Snail
<i>Calliostoma ornatum</i> | 15. Señorita
<i>Chrysis californica</i> | 24. Copper Rockfish
<i>Sebastes coorvus</i> |
| 7. California Sea Lion
<i>Zalophus californianus</i> | 16. Northern Kelp Crab
<i>Pugelia producta</i> | 25. Monterey Turban Snail
<i>Chlorostoma montereyi</i> |
| 8. Northern Anchovy
<i>Engraulis mordax</i> | 17. Western Gull
<i>Larus occidentalis</i> | 26. Brooding Sea Anemone
<i>Epactis prolifera</i> |
| 9. Blue Rockfish
<i>Sebastes mysius</i> | 18. Southern Sea Otter
<i>Enhydra lutris nereis</i> | 27. Treefish
<i>Sebastes serriceps</i> |

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N A T U R E O F A M E R I C A
THIS SERIES OF STAMPS FEATURES THE BEAUTY AND COMPLEXITY OF PLANT AND ANIMAL COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED STATES.

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* **Please Note:** Media can download broadcast quality B-roll of the event from this [link](#) at 12:30 p.m. PT.

An independent federal agency, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 149 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes, six days a week. It has 34,000 retail locations and relies on the sale of postage, products and services, not tax dollars, to pay for operating expenses. Named the Most Trusted Government Agency five consecutive years by the Ponemon Institute, the Postal Service has annual revenue of \$75 billion and delivers nearly half the world's mail. To learn about the history of the Postal Service visit the Smithsonian's National Postal Museum: www.postalmuseum.si.edu.