BIOLOGY STUDY UNIT
of the ATA

The Biology Unit has the distinction of being the second oldest study unit in the American Topical Association. It was founded on 22 May 1951, by Homer L. Jones and six other collectors. It has grown to include a total of almost 1,900 members over the period of its existence. Other than perhaps the very general topic of notable persons, biological themes form the largest category of topical postage stamp issues.

From its very beginning, its members were involved with the production of topical listings. The Unit has supported more ATA Handbooks than any other starting with HB1-2, *Biology Philately*, and including three handbooks on Horses, six on Flowers and Plants, five on Birds, four on Insects and Invertebrates, two on Fish, two on Pharmacy, and four on various Mammals including Bats and Bears.

Thirty of the 121 recipients (nearly one-quarter) of the Distinguished Topical Philatelist award, the highest honor bestowed by the ATA, have been members of the Biology Unit.

The Biology Unit, throughout its history, has been a leader in the field of topical philately. It was the first study unit to produce topical handbooks and its members have been responsible for the publication of more ATA handbooks than any other unit. It was the first to provide a special topical exhibit award. It has provided leaders not only to many other philatelic organizations, but also to the scientific and educational communities. Its Unit journal, *Biophilately*, is one of the oldest philatelic periodicals in continuous existence, and its members have many received philatelic and academic honors.

Collecting stamps portraying the natural world has long been one of the most popular topical pursuits. These always head popularity listings of thematic subjects. Collecting all plants and animals on stamps is virtually impossible, but concentrating on a single topic, or a narrower field is the conventional approach.

souvenir sheet, Czech Republic, 4 September 2013
depicting the flora and fauna of the Karlštejn region
all species of plants & animals are identified by their scientific name except for two (can you find them?)