

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Media Contact: (202) 268-2155
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'NATURE OF AMERICA' STAMP SERIES **TREKS TO THE LAST FRONTIER**

WASHINGTON — On July 2, the U.S. Postal Service will celebrate the fascinating flora and fauna of the remote arctic tundra when 10 new commemorative postage stamps are issued in Fairbanks, Alaska.

The first day of issue ceremony for the Arctic Tundra stamps will take place at 4:30 p.m. at the International Arctic Research Center (IARC) on the campus of the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF), 930 Koyukuk Drive. The ceremony will be free and open to the public. Parking at the IARC is very limited due to construction in the area. A shuttle bus will be available in the Farmers Loop Taku parking lot beginning at 4 p.m. For more information, call (907) 474-7581.

The 37-cent, self-adhesive Arctic Tundra stamps will be available only at the event and at Fairbanks post offices on July 2. They will be available at post offices across the country starting the following day.

"These stamps are vivid reminders that U.S. mail is delivered to every home and business from the east coast to the west coast and north to 'The Last Frontier' — all at reasonable rates" said Postmaster General John E. Potter.

Scheduled to join Potter at the first day ceremony are Sen. Ted Stevens (R-Alaska); Dr. Brian Barnes, professor and director, Institute of Arctic Biology, UAF; Dr. Syun-Ichi Akasofu, director, IARC; Orie Williams, director, Doyon Limited Native Association; Dianne Horbochuk, district manager, Alaska District, Postal Service; and Fairbanks Postmaster Raymond E. Clark.

The Arctic Tundra stamps come in a pane of 10 stamps. The individual designs are part of a larger scene illustrated by John D. Dawson.

The pane is the fifth in an educational series promoting appreciation of North America's major plant and animal communities. The previous issuances in the Nature of America series were Sonoran Desert (1999), Pacific Coast Rain Forest (2000), Great Plains Prairie (2001) and Longleaf Pine Forest (2002).

Coldest of the North American ecosystems, the arctic tundra is a vast treeless region stretching across northern Alaska and Canada. Here the soil is permanently frozen except for the surface layer, thawed by the summer sun, where plants take root. The frozen soil, or permafrost, keeps the surface layer moist by preventing water from seeping deeply into the ground.

Summer sunlight in the Arctic is long, but the growing season is short. Arctic plants have adapted to survive the cold and wind. Most grow close to the ground, many

are evergreen, and all are frost hardy. Although there are no trees on the tundra, other plants flourish here: shrubs and herbs (nonwoody plants), sedges and grasses and lichens and mosses.

The tundra provides habitat for diverse fauna, including mammals, birds, insects and fish. Large mammals such as the muskox, the grizzly bear and gray wolf are tundra inhabitants. The tundra serves as the calving grounds for caribou and also provides nesting sites for many species of migratory birds.

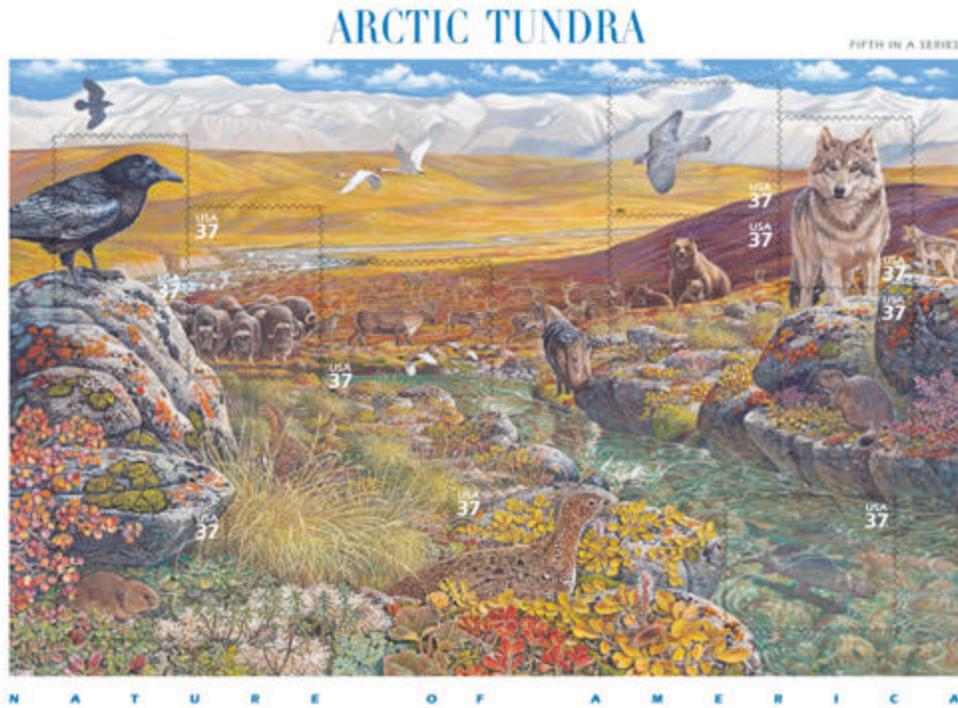
The Artic Tundra stamp pane depicts an autumn tundra scene in the northern foothills of the majestic Brooks Range in Alaska. In fall the leaves and berries of tundra plants make a brilliant tapestry of red, yellow and orange. Animals prepare for the long arctic winter. Some migrate, while others have found ways to survive the intense cold. Caribou cross mountains, plains and braided rivers to reach the taiga, the spruce-hardwood forest south of the tundra. Tundra swans fly across the continent to wintering areas on the Atlantic coast. Arctic grayling, freshwater fish found in tundra streams and lakes, live in deep water under the ice all winter. As willow ptarmigans begin molting into white plumage that conceals them in snow, singing voles build forage piles of vegetation for winter feeding. Grizzly bears and arctic ground squirrels fatten before hibernating. Arctic woolly bear caterpillars, which can live as larvae for 14 years before becoming moths, undergo the most extreme change: they freeze in winter and thaw in summer.

To illustrate the diversity of species found in the arctic tundra, Dawson portrayed 24 animal and plant species in his beautiful acrylic painting. Although the scene itself is imaginary, all species represented are appropriate and were recommended by researchers from UAF's Institute of Arctic Biology and the Marine Biological Laboratory of Woods Hole, Mass., who served as consultants on the project to ensure an accurate and dynamic portrayal of life in the Arctic. A description of the arctic tundra and a numbered key to the artwork appear on the back of the pane, along with a corresponding list of common and scientific names for the 24 species.

To see the Arctic Tundra stamps, visit the Postal Service Web site and open this press release at www.usps.com/communications/news/stamps/welcome.htm.

Current U.S. stamps, as well as a free comprehensive catalog, are available by toll-free phone order at 1 800 STAMP-24. In addition, a selection of stamps and other philatelic items are available at the online Postal Store at www.usps.com/shop.

Since 1775, the U.S. Postal Service has connected friends, families, neighbors and businesses by mail. It is an independent federal agency that visits 140 million homes and businesses every day and is the only service provider to deliver to every address in the nation. The Postal Service receives no taxpayer dollars for routine operations, but derives its operating revenues solely from the sale of postage, products and services. With annual revenues of more than \$66 billion, it is the world's leading provider of mail and delivery services, offering some of the most affordable postage rates in the world. The Postal Service delivers more than 43 percent of the world's mail volume—some 203 billion letters, advertisements, periodicals and packages a year—and serves 7 million customers each day at its 38,000 retail locations nationwide.



TECHNICAL DETAILS

Issue:	<i>Arctic Tundra</i>
Item Number:	454500
Denomination & Type of Issue:	\$3.70 Souvenir Sheet
Format:	Self-Adhesive Pane of 10 (10 designs)
Series:	<i>Nature of America</i>
Issue Date & City:	July 2, 2003, Fairbanks, AK 99709
Artist:	John D. Dawson, Hilo, HI
Designer:	Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Art Director:	Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Typographer:	Ethel Kessler, Bethesda, MD
Modeler:	Banknote Corporation of America, Inc. (BCA)
Manufacturing Process:	Offset
Printer:	Banknote Corporation of America, Inc. (BCA)
Printed at:	Browns Summit, NC
Press Type:	Man Roland, 300
Stamps per Pane:	10
Print Quantity:	60 million stamps
Paper Type:	Phosphor tagged, Block, Type III
Adhesive Type:	Pressure sensitive
Processed at:	BCA, Browns Summit, NC
Colors:	Yellow, Magenta, Cyan, Black
Stamp Orientation:	Horizontal and Vertical
Orientation 1:	Horizontal
Image Area (w x h):	1.56 x 1.23 in./39.62 x 31.24 mm
Overall Size (w x h):	1.56 x 1.23 in./39.62 x 31.24 mm
Orientation 2:	Vertical
Image Area (w x h):	1.23 x 1.56 in./31.24 x 39.624 mm
Overall Size (w x h):	1.23 x 1.56 in./31.24 x 39.624 mm
Full Pane Size (w x h):	9.13 x 6.75 in./231.90 x 171.45 mm
Plate Size:	80 stamps per revolution

Catalog Item Number(s): 454540 Full Pane — \$3.70
 454562 First Day Cover FP — \$6.20
 454564 Cancelled Full Pane — \$6.20
 454584 Press Sheet — \$29.60
 454591 Full Pane w/Ceremony Program — \$9.65
 454593 Full pane w/FDC — \$9.90

How to Order the First Day of Issue Postmark

Customers have 30 days to obtain the first day of issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at their local Post Office, by telephone at 1 800 STAMP-24, and at the Postal Store Web site at www.usps.com/shop. 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:

ARCTIC TUNDRA COMMEMORATIVE STAMPS
POSTMASTER
5400 MAIL TRL
FAIRBANKS AK 99709-9991

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 Aug. 1, 2003.