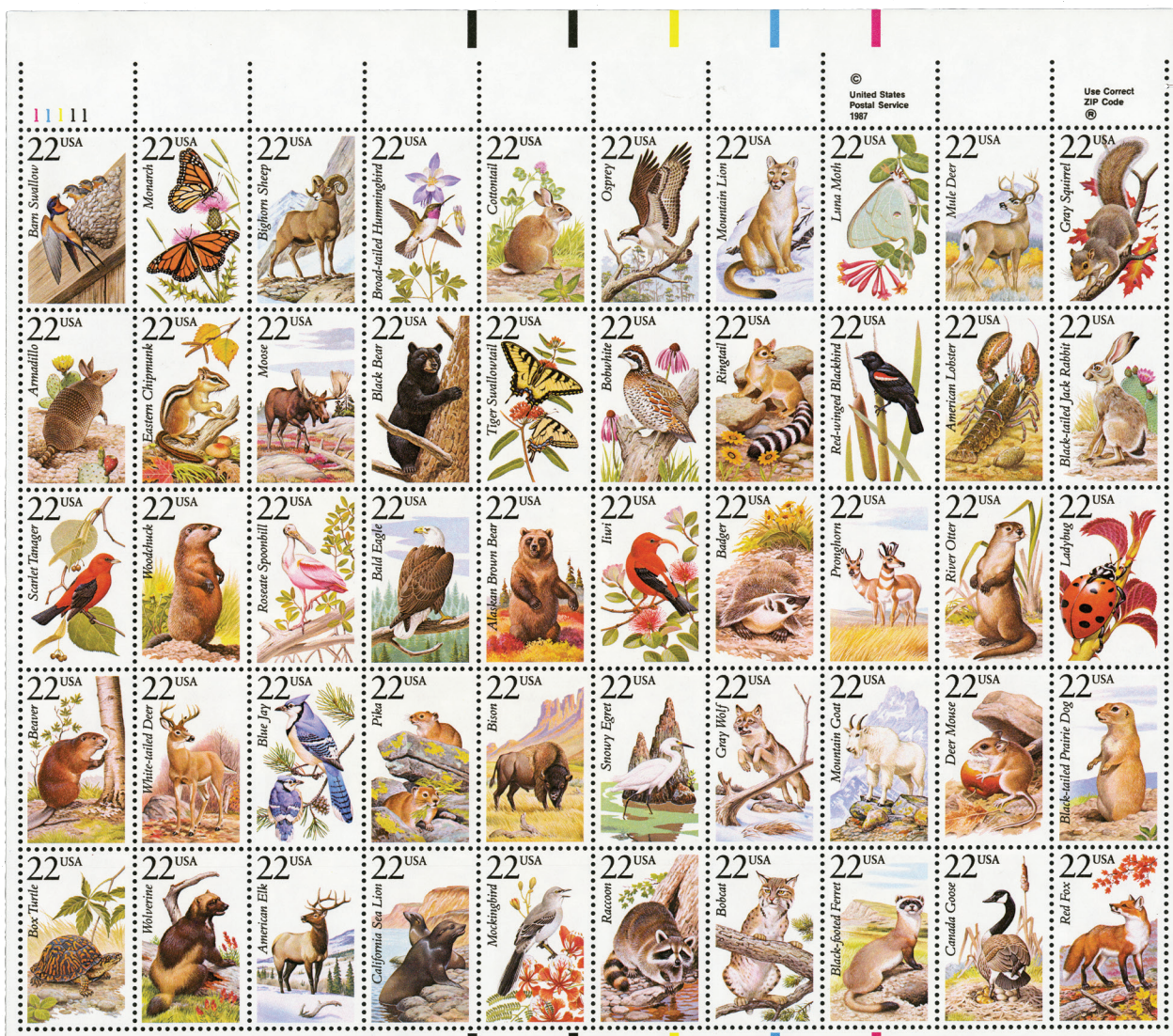


**This Day in History... June 13, 1987**

## North American Wildlife Sheet



*In April 1987, the senior assistant postmaster revealed the Postal Service had learned that Americans prefer wildlife stamps to all other subjects.*

On June 13, 1987, the North American Wildlife sheet became the third US 50-stamp se-tenant. It was also the third stamp issue with a First Day ceremony outside of the US, in Canada.

The USPS issued its first 50-stamp se-tenant featuring state flags in 1976 to celebrate America's Bicentennial. They were the most popular stamps of the year and inspired the follow-up State Birds and Flowers pane in 1982. While both of those panes included state names, the 1987 Wildlife sheet did not. The

## **This Day in History... June 13, 1987 continued**

stamps don't picture official state, as many states hadn't adopted one. Several of the animals on the sheet can be found in multiple states, and the USPS promised that each state had at least one native animal pictured.

The 1987 Wildlife pane was created to celebrate America's variety of wildlife, and animal subjects were chosen to reflect the geographic and biological diversity of creatures native to this continent. All areas of the United States are represented, including Hawaii and Alaska.

The USPS selected well-known wildlife artist, Chuck Ripper, to produce the 50 stamp images for this sheet. Ripper had previously created the art for four other stamp issues featuring wildlife. A lifelong wildlife enthusiast, Ripper researched each of the creatures himself, ensuring every state would be represented. Once his list was approved by the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, Ripper created initial sketches based on his own extensive reference library. His sketches were then reviewed by experts at the Smithsonian and *National Geographic* to check for accuracy. These same experts later reviewed his final artwork as well. To point out the importance of environment and the realism of his designs, he pictured many of the animals with flora common to their habitats.

The First Day Ceremony for this stamp sheet was held in Canada. This was only the third time US stamps had a First Day of Issue outside of the US. Interestingly, the first two times were also in Canada. One was for Expo '67 in Montreal and the other for the Canadian International Philatelic Exhibition (CAPEX) 1978. The 1978 CAPEX sheet also featured wildlife, including four animals found on the 1987 sheet. The USPS made 10 different pictorial cancels available, all designed by Chuck Ripper. The cancels featured scenes from national parks, such as Florida's Everglades, California's Yosemite, and Wyoming's Yellowstone.

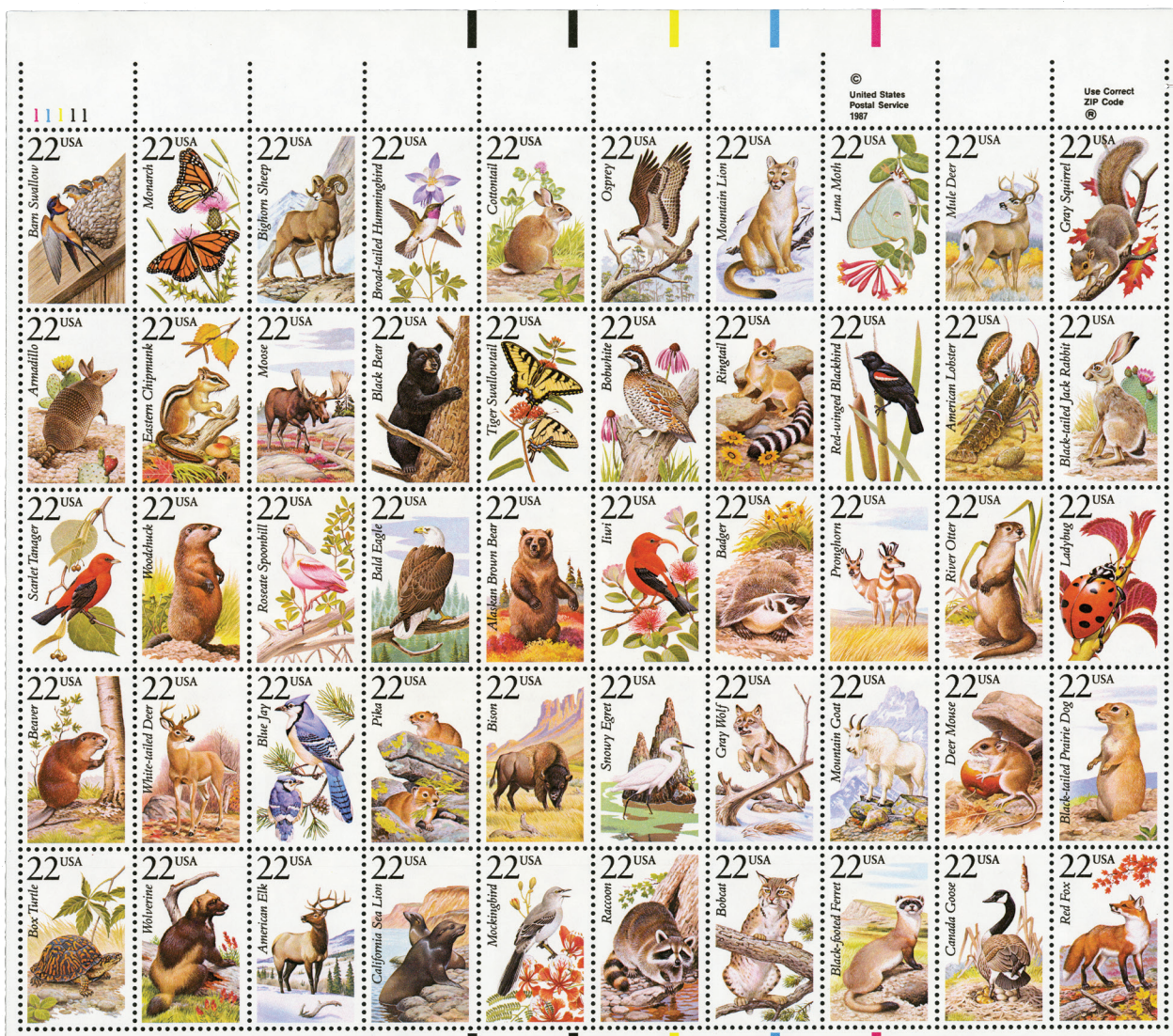
The North American Wildlife sheet was issued at CAPEX 1987 as part of the opening ceremonies on June 13. The event opened with a color guard, fifer, and drummer escorting speakers to the podium.

The USPS also put forth one of their largest advertising efforts since the 1983 Summer Olympics stamps. They ran television commercials for the Wildlife pane as well as a five-page foldout ad in *Reader's Digest*. They also produced a 56-page Wildlife book and a free booklet titled, *The Wonderful World of Stamps*.



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