

Greetings from Vanuatu



Vanuatu Post extends seasonal greetings to all its customers and visitors to Vanuatu. Christmas is symbolised here through the local “Christmas Tree” known as Flamboyant *Delonix regia*,



which is also known as the Poinciana. This large tree provides a magnificent display of red flowers at Christmas time giving the islands and especially Port Vila, a blaze of colour. White birds are also synonymous with greetings and throughout Vanuatu a number of beautiful coastal birds allow Vanuatu Post to aptly illustrate their greetings message in this striking stamp issue.

Identifiable by long white tail streamers and yellow/orange bill, the White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* is around

40cm tall (excluding 35cm streamers) and carries black markings. Feeding on fish and squid and caught by diving from a great height, they tend to nest on rock ledges, tree hollows and atop coconut palms laying a solitary egg. Tropicbirds are the most pelagic (sea going) of their order and have been identified and linked with Monument Rock in the Shepherd Group and in Malo (near Santo).

The Eastern Reef Heron *Ardea (Egretta) sacra* (also known as the Reef Heron, Reef Egret and in Bislama – Longfala neck) is interestingly seen in two different colour phases in Vanuatu. They inhabit rocky coasts, reefs, sea cliffs, mangroves and mud flats. Found alone or in pairs, they are strongly territorial in defending their



foraging areas. They feed by stalking gracefully through the shallows, at the intertidal zone, taking small crabs, crustaceans, small fish, frogs, lizards and insects.

The Great Crested Tern *Sterna bergii*. Growing to 48cm and identified by long yellow bill, black cap and deeply forked tail, this tern is usually found near the coast and fishes in shallow waters near the surface. A graceful flier, it is found throughout the Indian and SW Pacific Oceans and has been reported as a vagrant in Vanuatu although reports from Efate have placed it often over Mele bay and Hideaway Island. The Fairy Tern *Gygis alba*, also known as the White Tern and White Noddy, is snowy white with a ring of black feathers around the eye. Known for its fluttering flight, it feeds near the surface taking small fish, squid, crustaceans and plankton. It can also catch Flying Fish in flight. Its distribution is in the tropical and sub tropical Atlantic, Indian and Pacific Oceans and in Vanuatu, it is scattered throughout the archipelago. *Vanuatu Post acknowledges the valuable assistance it has received from the publication “Birds of Vanuatu” by Heinrich Bregulla (1991).*

Collectors' Notes

Designer:	Lucas Kukler, Nairobi, Kenya
Printer:	Southern Colour Print, Dunedin, New Zealand
Photography:	Brian Chudleigh, New Zealand and Top Shots, Vanuatu
Process:	Offset lithography
Stamp Size:	50.0 mm x 25.9 mm vertical.
Mini sheet Size:	100 mm x 70 mm horizontal.
Perforation Gauge:	14.80 x 14.67
Panes:	Two panes of 25 stamps with central gutter.
Paper:	104g Tullis Russell, non phosphor gummed stamp paper.
Denominations:	45, 100, 130 and 250 vatu
Period of Sale:	26 November 2008 for a period of 2 years

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