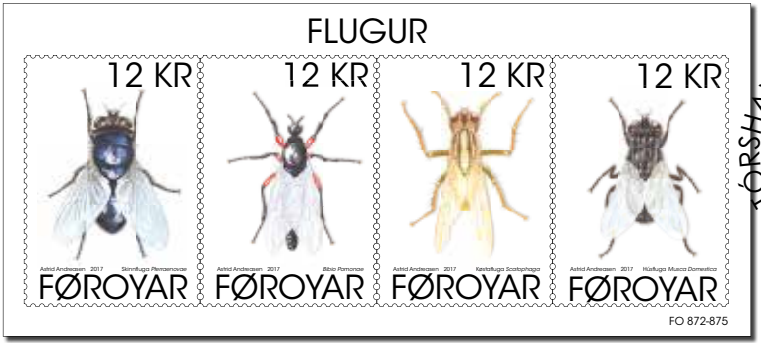
Posta Stamps
Faroe Islands

No. 34
November 2017

ISSN 1603-0036

- Flies
- H. C. Müller 200th Anniversary
- Faroese Lakes II: Sandsvatn & Toftavatn
- Seabird Fowling in the Faroe Islands

Posta
FAROE ISLANDS



FO 872-875 Test proof

Four Flies

Approximately 400 species of dipterous insects have been recorded in the Faroe Islands. This is what we call the order of insects to which blue-bottle flies, hoverflies and dung flies belong. Midges and crane flies also belong to this order of insects.

Housefly *Musca Domestica*
The housefly has followed human settlements across the globe. As a result, this 6-7 mm fly is now the most common and widespread insect in the world. It can be found all over, from the Arctic to the tropics, and it is also very common in the Faroe Islands.

Each female fly can lay up to 500 eggs in its lifetime. The eggs are approximately 1.2 mm long white and are laid in organic matter, such as animal carcasses or excrement. Even if the eggs are laid in such material, it does not constitute the larvae's diet; they feed on bacteria found in the organic matter. The larva pupates when it is 2-5 weeks old. The adult fly usually lives for 2-5 weeks, but it can live significantly longer by hibernating during winter.

In scientific context, the housefly is, among other things, used to study aging processes in cells and factors determining the gender of the offspring.

First registration: Svabo, J.-C. (1959). A Report on a Journey in the Faroe Islands in 1781 and 1782. Copenhagen: The Society for the Publication of Faroese Sources and Studies.

Blue-bottle fly *Protophormia terraenovae*
It's a little difficult to say how common this 7-12 mm gleaming blue fly is in the Faroes. Large variations in numbers can be found from one year to another, from month to month and even from island to island. An analysis of 1900 blue-bottle flies collected in the Faroe Islands between 2005 and 2008 showed that only 76, or 4%, belonged to *Protophormia terraenovae*.

This species is very tolerant of low temperatures and can be found as far north as just 900 km from the North Pole. The eggs are laid in organic matter and hatch in about 2 days. The larva pupates in about 4 weeks,

Housefly *Musca domestica*
Photo: Jógvan Hansen

and some 2 weeks later the adult fly emerges from the cocoon.

Blue-bottle fly maggots are used to clean wounds in, for example, diabetics who have sustained tissue injuries that do not heal well. The treatment consists in the larvae eating dead tissue, keeping the wound clean. Furthermore, the larvae secrete a fluid with an antibacterial properties. Spit from the adult fly has the same antibacterial properties.

Because the larval development is so closely linked to temperature, and this species also being quick to find and lay eggs in carcasses, it is used by the police to determine the age of a corpse.

First registration: Landt, J. (1800). An Attempt at a Description of the Faroe Islands. Copenhagen. (Reprinted in 1965 by Einars Prent, Tórshavn): Tikjøbs Forlag.

Golden Dung Fly *Scatophaga stercoraria*
The name of the common dung fly is descriptive of this fly species, being one of the most common flies in the Northern Hemisphere. It is also very common on the Faroe Islands. The adult fly is between 5 and 11 mm, but the size varies greatly depending on temperature and diet.

The flies propagate in excrements, especially cow dung, on which the larvae feed. The adult fly can also, to a certain extent, feed on dung, but contrary to what one might think, the adult fly is a predator which hunts and eats other flies. The male spends most of the time on dung waiting for females and hunting other flies attracted to the dung.

The larva hatches in 1-2 days. After 10-20 days, it digs into the ground and pupates. 10-80 days later the adult flies emerge. How long this takes depends on the temperature. The adult fly lives between 1-2 months.

Because the female has the ability to store sperm from several males at the same time,

Blue-bottle fly *Protophormia terraenovae*
Photo: Jógvan Hansen

and to some extent determine how much sperm is to be used for fertilization, this species is widely used in research, especially as regards propagation and genetics.

First registration: Landt, J. (1800). An Attempt at a Description of the Faroe Islands. Copenhagen. (Reprinted in 1965 by Einars Prent, Tórshavn): Tikjøbs Forlag.

Red-thighed St. Mark's fly *Bibio pomonae*
This 10-13 mm species of midges can be seen from May to October, albeit mostly in late summer. Midges fly quite slowly and you can clearly see the long hind legs hanging a little down behind them in flight. It is quite uncertain when this species came to the Faroe Islands, but there are indications that in recent years it has become much more common.

The adult midge is shiny black with dark red «thighs». This species feeds mostly on nectar and can therefore be of major importance for plant propagation. The larva develops during the fall and winter. It feeds on grass roots, and also eats dead plant material and other decomposed organic matter.

There are fairly big morphological differences between males and females, especially regarding the size of the eyes and the head. The male has large eyes that meet at the centre of the head while the female has significantly smaller eyes and head but a much larger body.

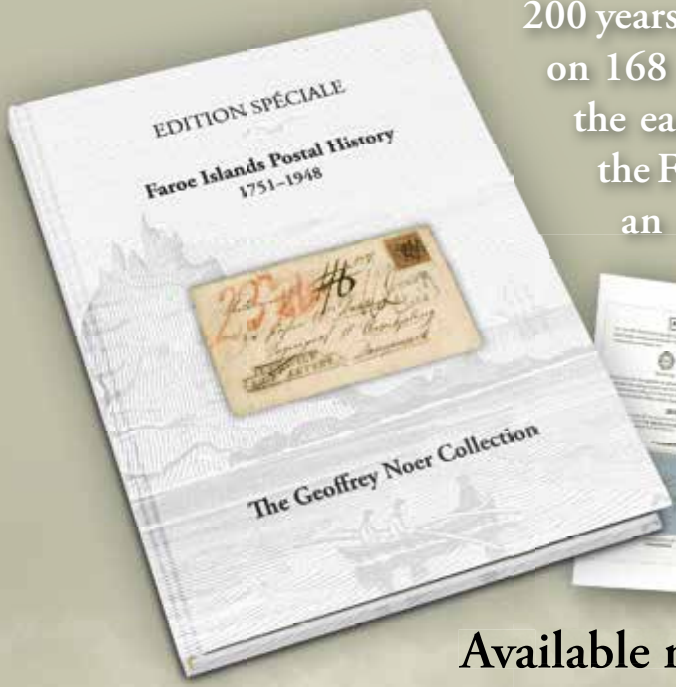
First registration: Hansen, H.J. (1881). Faunula insectorum Faeroeensis: List of insects collected on the Faroes so far. Natural History Magazine, 3 (13), 229-280.

Jóhannis Danielsen, PhD
Assistant Professor at the University of the Faroe Islands

Faroe Islands Postal History 1751-1948

The Geoffrey Noer Collection

200 years of postal history on 168 pages, including the earliest cover from the Faroe Islands with an adhesive stamp.

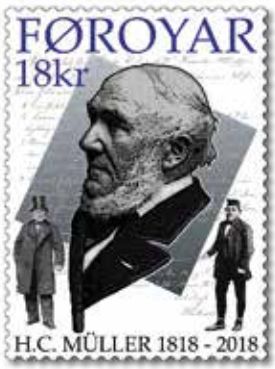


Available now!

EUR 69,- | DKK 500,-

Order the book by sending the reply card or on www.heinrich-koehler.de

HEINRICH KÖHLER
Germany's Oldest Stamp Auction House



FO 876 Test proof

H. C. Müller - 200th Anniversary

H. C. Müller (1818 - 1897)

"Jack of all trades" is a figure of speech used in its original and positive sense in reference to a versatile person whose life and interests are so broad and comprehensive that this humorous British expression spontaneously comes to mind.

The renowned H. C. Müller was indeed such a person - a Faroese official and politician who from 1843 until his death in 1897 served as a district magistrate in Streymoy, but whose interests and activities included an astonishing number of disciplines. "Old Müller", as he was also called, did not stand out among his contemporaries, neither in appearance nor in his way of life, but he was unusually well-read, linguistically gifted and well informed about conditions in the Faroes and abroad.

District Magistrate

Hans Christopher Müller was born on 1 September 1818, the son of the then district magistrate Rasmus Müller from Tórshavn. When he was only 20 years old, he was deployed as a bailiff assisting his aging father, and four years later, in 1843, he was appointed district magistrate for Streymoy (an officer with police authority and various administrative duties in the district).

A Politician and an Official

H. C. Müller was elected to the Faroese Parliament several times. He was a member of Parliament in 1852 - 53, 1857 - 58, from 1863 to 1881 and again from 1885 to 1893, a total of 28 years. He also represented the Faroe Islands in both chambers of the Danish Parliament, Folketing and Landsting, from 1858 to 1886 and again from 1887 to 1889, a total of 30 years.

In the middle you can see the building where Müller's Kantór and the first post office was.

H. C. Müller's political affiliation was to the then Right party, i.e. the conservative-right on the political spectrum. However, this in no way prevented him from being active in the cultural life of the Faroes and a pioneer of the new Faroese identity movement, which started emerging after the mid 1800's. He was a highly respected official, serving sometimes as an appointed County Governor, a bailiff and a judge. Parliament appointed him as a member of Faroese School Commission and director of the Faroe Islands' Savings Bank.

The First Postmaster in the Faroes

Around 1860, H. C. Müller bought the old parliament House in Gongin, a part of Tórshavn since the 1690's. It had served as a courthouse after the Parliament was suspended in 1816. (The Parliament was restored in 1852, and functioned then more or less as a county council). He joined the old parliament hall to his own house, using it as an office. When The United Steamship Company (DFDS) began regular routes to the Faroe Islands in 1866, H. C. Müller became its Faroese representative, and "Müllers Kantór", as it was known colloquially, became the DFDS office.

Müllers Kantór also became the first post office of the Faroe Islands with H. C. Müller being appointed a postal agent of the Danish Post Office in 1869.

A Natural Scientist

In addition to his many activities as an official, politician and business agent, H. C. Müller took great interest in science. He studied Faroese fauna and flora, collected and studied plants, birds and fish, sending specimens to researchers in Denmark and England. Among them were Professor Japetus Stenstrup of the University of Copenhagen and Professor Chr. F. Lütken of the Zoological Museum. Müller also exchanged

H.C. Müller and Maria Mikkelsen who worked at the first post office.

letters with the well-known British natural scientist and ornithologist, Colonel H. W. Feilden, sending him bird skins and eggs. Feilden published 12 brochures on Faroese birds in the period 1872 to 1893.

In 1862, H. C. Müller published his thesis *"The Bird Fauna of the Faroe Islands - with Comments on Fowling"* describing 124 bird species, 24 of which had not previously been recorded as native to the Faroes. In 1869, the thesis was published in German with a prologue by F. Droste in The Journal of Ornithology.

In 1883, *"Whale-Fishing in the Faroe Isles"* was written for the "International Fisheries Exhibition in Edinburgh 1882". This paper was awarded a medal by the exhibitors.

1884 saw the publication of *"Information on the Pilot Whale Hunting in the Faroe Islands"*. Scientific Presentation. The Natural History Society, Copenhagen 1883.

The same year also saw the publication of *"Information on Bottle-nosed Whale Hunting in the Faroe Islands."* Same publisher as above.

In 1901, K. Andersen published *"Magistrate H. C. Müller's Handwritten Record of the Birds of the Faroe Islands; in Excerpt"*. Same publisher as above.

In addition to the published material, there was a manuscript entitled *"The Faroe Islands Fish Fauna"* by H. C. Müller, published by J. S. Joensen in Fróðskaparrit 14 in 1965.

The Unpretentious Scholar

When H. C. Müller, in his capacity as a magistrate, received the newly arrived expedition yacht "Maria", his first question in perfect English was if there were any news

H.C. Müller's cash box, coins and books.
Photo: John Müller.

from the great war. This seems to give a good indication of Müller's personality. He was genuinely interested in everything that happened in the outside world, being a talented linguist with connections to leading personalities in science, finance and politics.

Whatever his ability was to conduct himself in distinguished company, H. C. Müller also regarded himself as the common man's equal. Let's conclude with a few excerpts of the obituary published by the newspaper Føringatíðindi on January 6, 1898:

"Although he was esteemed by both royalty and common folks, he always remained the same friendly person who did not seem to know conceit or haughtiness except by name. No one was able to see that he had, all his life, been associating with the most powerful personalities in the Kingdom. To the poorest of the poor, he spoke in the same cordial manner as to his own peers. Many a pauper only had good things to say about him - and many an affluent one owes him gratitude because he so willingly supported those who were striving forward...

... Few knew better than the old man to keep order during pilot whale hunting. The whalers were happy to obey him because they knew from experience that the old man's orders were to be carried out, this being in the best interest of all parties."

A truly remarkable man, old Müller.

Anker Eli Petersen

FO 877-878 Test proof

Lakes II: Sandsvatn & Toftavatn

Sandsvatn - the Lake of Sandur

The surroundings of major Faroese freshwater lakes are generally quite picturesque and Sandsvatn, the island's third largest lake on the island of Sandoy, is no exception. Sandur, the island's largest town, is situated at the southern end of the lake. From there the lake stretches northwards through a long, sloping valley towards the town of Skopun.

Sandsvatn is approximately 2 kilometres long and 640 meters at its widest point. The lake's surface area is 0.82 km2 and its deepest point about five meters. Originally, the elongated lake was a river basin created by eruption and erosion in the volcanic bedrock. Today a sandy shoreline, about 400m wide, separates the lake from the sea - hence the name of the town and the lake. On the shore, in close proximity to the lake, a grassy sand hill "*Mølheyggjar*" has emerged over time with thriving plants and insects not found elsewhere in the Faroes. Sandsvatn holds both trout and salmon and is a favourite place for anglers.

In addition to a number of small streams, two large rivers run into the lake, *Dalsá* from the north and *Traðará* from the east. The outlet is at the southern end, curving its way between Mølheyggjar out into the sea.

A small islet, *Vatnsoyrarhólmur*, is in the northern part of the lake. At the northern end we also find the island's school buildings for older public school students, with facilities such as football pitch, a sports hall and swimming pool.

While the eastern side of the lake roughly stretches roughly from south to north, there is a bay on the west side with a small promontory. This is *Todnes*, the site of the town's prefecture since ancient times. Todnes was the residence of two of the Faroe Islands most famous, not to mention notorious, clergymen.

Kálvur lítli (Calf the little) lived in the 14th century and became notorious for his wickedness. According to the folk tale, he was both a killer and a sadist, a greedy fellow in constant fight with his surroundings. The story has it that Kálvur lítli built a storehouse and pantry on the

The lake of Sandsvatn and the town of Sandur with the islands Skúvoy and Stóra Dímun in the background.
Photo: Jógvan Horn.

small islet of Presthólmur in the bay. The only way to reach the islet was by walking on stepping stones leading to the islet. One winter, six of his seven sons crossed the frozen lake intent on stealing food from their father. However, they strayed a little from the stepping-stones, the ice broke and all of them drowned.

The second clergyman was *pastor Klæmint*, Clemen Laugesen Follerup (1602 - 1688). Pastor Klæmint was notorious for his greed. According to the story, the only possessions he had when he came to the Faroes were the ones he carried on his shoulders. At his death, however, he was the island's largest landowners. The good pastor acquired his possessions with cunning and deceit; the only forms of payment he would receive were plots of land. Pastor Klæmint had many children, 23 according to legend - but "only" 15 of them inherited their father.

Located at the southwest of Sandsvatn is the district of Traðir where you still can still see the flat stone, *Tingborð*, the medieval place of the regional court.

Toftavatn – the Lake of Toftir

The Faroe Islands' fourth-largest lake is Toftavatn, situated in the hills between the towns of Toftir and Rituvik at the southern end of Eysturoy. Surrounded by heather hills and mounds, Toftavatn is one of the most beautiful spots in the Faroe Islands.

The lake itself has a surface area of 0.50 km2. It is located approx. 75 meters above sea level and its deepest point is approx. 22 meters. Small rocky crags stick out along the shores of the lake, contributing to the lake's attractive features.
At the north end, the lake is divided by a man-made barrier of stones neatly stacked in the early 20th century. Since times of old, peat has been cut for fuel in the area and the barrier served as a shortcut when transporting the peat to the town of Toftir.

As stated above, the environment around Toftavatn is one of the most enchanting places in the Faroe Islands. It is located in the largest moorland areas on the islands. Three different species of heather grow on the hills and

The lake of Toftavatn and Runavík town.
Photo: Elna Johannesen.

mounds. Common heather *(Calluna vulgaris)*, blooming in late summer, is most prevalent in the area. More rarely seen is the cross-leaved heath *(Erica tetralix)* with its beautiful bell-shaped flowers. In addition, there is also the black crowberry *(Empetrum nigrum)*, which blooms in May. Other plants include common cotton-sedge *(Eriophorum angustifolium)*, the tormentil *(Potentila erecta)* and woolgrass *(Scirpus Caespitosus)* - as well as many other plants, both rare and common.

In addition to the rich flora, Toftavatn is also known for its abundant bird life. Besides the ubiquitous black-backed seagull *(Larus fuscus)*, the aggressive great skua *(Stercorarius skua)* and other species of seabirds, there is a large variety of moorland birds, such as the common snipe *(Gallinago gallinago)* and the oystercatcher *(Haematopus ostralegus)*. The familiar red-throated loon *(Gavia stellata)* is also found here, being frequent close to most other lakes in the Faroes. In 1985, the first pair of graylag goose with chicks was observed on Toftavatn. Since then the stock of graylag goose *(Anser anser)* has grown and in July, when the geese start losing their flight feathers, they gather at Toftavatn. Seeing over a thousand geese on the lake is not unusual.

As is the case with most other great mountain lakes in the Faroes, legend has it that Toftavatn is also inhabited by a creepier creature. This is the so-called nixie that can metamorphose into other creatures, usually a horse, and sometimes try to drag people down into the deep of the lake. If you touch the nixie you will stick to it and become its prey. Stories of the nixie have been told since days of old in order to keep children from going to the lakes which can pose danger to playful kids.

The neighbouring municipalities of Nes and Runavík created a system of pathways in 2007 to decrease the strain from tourists and other visitors. Toftavatn is a natural park which is definitely worth a visit – but it is also a delicate nature area to be treated with respect and caution.

Anker Eli Petersen

FO 879-880 Test proof

Seabird Fowling in the Faroe Islands

Although we, the Faroese, usually refer to times prior to the heyday of the fish industry as "the old peasant society" the term is used with certain reservations. The location of the islands, their environment and size only offered possibilities of relatively simple agriculture mainly concerned with sheep farming. Animal husbandry was restricted to whatever resources were available. Farms, large and small, kept some cattle for the sake of milk along with poultry for meat and eggs. There were limited conditions for grain cultivation, harvests often failing - about every three years on the average.

Still, the Faroes had other resources. The waters around the islands are rich in fish, whale and seal. Bird cliffs, promontories, islets and precipices are nesting places for many species of seabirds. It is therefore not surprising that coastal fishing, fowling and whale hunting were quite a significant part of traditional Faroese working life.

Fowling Poles

There is a great number of special hunting methods requiring appropriate specialized hunting gear - and of these the most distinctive Faroese tool is the fowling pole. As the name suggests the pole is a long rod with two large arms or branches between which a net is suspended, almost like a triangular lacrosse stick. This tool existed in two variants since times of old: "*fyglingarstong*" and "*fleygingarstong*", the fowler's pole and the pole-net.

Fyglingarstong

Fyglingarstong (fowler's pole) was a shorter pole with a larger net and branches. It was used in bird cliffs where fowlers rappelled down to narrow ledges on well-nigh vertical cliff walls. The fowler moved towards guillemots and razorbills brooding on the ledges. He was able to get quite close to the birds as they unwillingly left their eggs or chicks, catching up to ten birds in his net each time. The method was quite effective but deemed to have a negative effect

on the bird population and so it was abandoned. Eggs and chicks were sometimes hurled over the edge, although the fowler only intended to catch adult birds. As far as I am aware, *fyglingarstong* was used for the last time in the cliffs of the island of Skúvoy around 1925.

Fleygingarstong

Fleygingarstong (pole-net) is depicted on the two stamps. It was longer than *fyglingarstong* and had shorter arms and a smaller net. The pole itself was 6 cubits long (3.76m), made of pine. The branching arms varied in size, from 2 to 3 cubits long (1.25m - 1.88m) and were kept apart by means of a small crossbar with holes, called "horns". The arms and horns were made of stronger and more flexible wood than the pole. In places where the fowler rappelled down cliffs in ropes, the pole was often fitted with an iron spike at the lower end so the fowler would be able to use it for support during the descent.

When hunting with *fleygingarstong*, the fowler sat down in a certain place close to the cliff edge, or rappelled down to a convenient spot. Places where the fowler could sit and hunt are called "*sessur*" (seat). With the pole resting on his legs, the fowler waited for a bird - puffin, guillemot or razorbill - to fly close by. He then swung the pole upwards behind the bird catching it in the net with a twisting motion. The captured prey was quickly hauled in, freed from the net and killed by breaking its neck. The fowler then stuffed it under a woolen strap around his body and resumed his former position.

Fowling with a pole-net is far more sustainable than other fowling methods. The fowler only catches one bird at a time and, moreover, he is able to sort out certain birds, for example puffins carrying small fry for their chicks. In addition, maiming birds by shooting is avoided. It has always been forbidden to use firearms in and near bird cliffs.

The two stamps show two different variants of fowling with fleygingarstong. The first consists in fowling in cliffs, the fowler either sitting at the cliff edge or rappelling down the cliff.

The second stamp illustrates "*omanfleyg*" fowling. This was done using traditional Faroese boats, preferably with a fowler at each end of the boat with a fleygingarstong. Guillemots and razorbills were mainly caught this way when soaring down (hence "*oman*") to rest on the water or to catch fish.

The last couple of decades have seen a sharp decline in seabird populations which is the reason why puffins, guillemots and razorbills are no longer caught with *fleygingarstong*. The decline is due to lack of small marine fish on which seabirds feed, resulting in pervasive brood reduction. On the other hand, there is an abundance of fulmars, an invasive seabird species, which is being hunted. Fulmars are disliked by fowlers because they tend to displace other seabirds from cliffs and skerries.

Anker Eli Petersen

Traditions of Sea Bird Fowling in the Faroes: An Ecological Basis for Sustained Fowling. Arne Nørrevang. Ornis Scandinavica (Scandinavian Journal of Ornithology). Vol. 17, No. 3 (Jul., 1986), pp. 275-281.

Puffin nesting site.
Photo: Ólavur Frederiksen.

Vote for Stamp of the Year 2017

and join the draw to win a woollen blanket

FO 847-852

FO 857

FO 855

FO 856

FO 867

FO 853

FO 854

FO 859

FO 860

FO 858

FO 869

FO 861

FO 862

FO 863

FO 864

FO 865-866

FO 870

FO 871

FO 868

1st prize: A woollen blanket
2nd prize: The Yearbook 2017
3rd prize: Franking Label Folders I and II

Cut out the coupon and send it to us or you can vote on www.stamps.fo The deadline for voting is 16th March 2018!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postal Code/ _____

Town: _____

_____

Client no.: _____

Stamp of the year 2017:

FO

☑ **Yes,** please. I would like to register for the e-newsletter from Posta Stamps.

E-mail: _____

End sale of the year

Please note that 31st December 2017 is the last date of sale for the stamps and articles presented on these pages.

It is therefore your last oppurtunity to purchase the stamps at the nominal value.

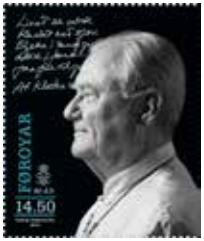
The articles can be ordered by completing the enclosed coupon or by visiting our web-shop at www.stamps.fo

FO 776-778

FO 784-785

FO 786-787

FO 779-782



FO 791

FO 796

FO 783

FO 797

The Christmas Gospel II, booklet with 8 stamps
PPN000914

FO 798-799

FO 750-758

The Prince Consort 80 years, self-adhesive booklet with 4 stamps PPN000614

Franking Labels 2008-2012

2008 2009 2010 2011 2012

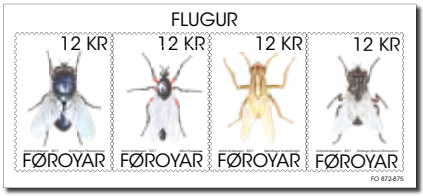
Year Pack 2013

Booklet folder 2013

FDC Folder 2013

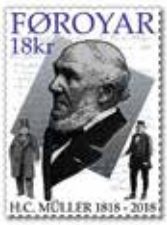
Yearbook 2013

New Stamp Issues - 26 February 2018



FO 872-875 Test proof

New stamp issue: **Flies**
Date of issue: 26.02.2018
Value: 4 x 12,00 DKK
Numbers: FO 872-875
Stamp, size:
Sheet, size:
Artist: Astrid Andreasen
Printing technique: Offset
Printer:
Postal use: Medium inland letters, 0-50 g.



FO 876 Test proof

Self-adhesive booklet

New stamp issue: **H.C. Müller 200 years**
Date of issue: 26.02.2018
Value: 18,00 DKK
Numbers: FO 876
Stamp, size:
Artist: Anker Eli Petersen
Printing technique: Offset
Printer:
Postal use: Small letters to Europe, 0-50 gr.

FO 877-878 Test proof

New stamp issue: **Lakes II: Sandsvatn & Toftavatn**
Date of issue: 26.02.2018
Value: 10,00 & 20,00 DKK
Numbers: FO 877-878
Stamp, size: 56 x 21 mm
Photos: Jógvan Horn & Durita Jacobsen
Printing technique: Offset
Printer: Cartor Security Printing, France
Postal use: Small inland letters and letters to other countries, 0-50 gr.

FO 879-880 Test proof

New stamp issue: **Seabird Fowling**
Date of issue: 26.02.2018
Value: 10,00 & 44,00 DKK
Numbers: FO 879-880
Stamp, size: 31 x 43 mm
Artist/engraver: Martin Mörck
Printing technique: Offset & engraving
Printer: La Poste, France
Postal use: Small inland letters, 0-50 gr. and medium and large letters to Europe, 101-250 g

Layout: Posta Stamps - Cover photo: Puffin - Photo: Ólavur Frederiksen - Printer: Føroyaprent, Faroe Islands

Posta Stamps
Óðinshædd 2
FO-100 Tórshavn
Faroe Islands

Tel. +298 346200
Fax +298 346201
stamps@posta.fo
www.stamps.fo

Multilingual webshop: www.stamps.fo

/faroestamps