

THE "BIRDS" AIR SET, 21 OCTOBER 1950.

The theme selected for the designs of the second airmail set of the second Austrian Republic was, quite appropriately: "Native Birds". This very beautiful set was designed by Professor Hans Strohofer and engraved by Professor Hubert Woyty-Wimmer (60g, 1S, 2S, 5S and 10S); Friedrich F. Teubel (3S) and Herbert Toni Schimek (20S). It was printed in recess, on either grey paper with yellow gum (all except the second 20S) or thinner white paper with white gum, by the Austrian State Printing Works; comb perforated 13½:14¼. For each, the ornithological name is given followed by the number printed.



60gr violet (issued 21.10.1950). Two rooks flying against a cloudy sky. *Corvus frugilegus*; 850,000

1S deep violet-blue (issued 25.9.1953). Three delicate swallows, with their distinctive wings, wheel about the sky. *Hirundo rustica*; 350,000

2S blue (issued 21.10.1950). Five black-headed gulls, one large in the foreground and four smaller in the background. *Chroicocephalus ridibundus*; 1,050,000



3S deep turquoise (issued 29.9.1953). Two great cormorants, necks outstretched, fly against delicate clouds. *Phalacrocorax carbo*; 350,000

5S chocolate (issued 29.9.1953). One single buzzard glides across a cloudy sky with its wings outspread. *Buteo Buteo*; 350,000

10S slate purple (issued 29.9.1953). A beautiful heron soars upwards in graceful flight. *Ardea cinerea*; 350,000

20S blackish-brown (issued 7.1.1952). A golden eagle hovers majestically. *Aquila chrysaetos*; Not known. On 24.6.1959 a second printing (same design and colour) appeared, on the white paper & gum.

From 29 March 1956, it was permitted to use airmail stamps for normal postage purposes. Presumably for the reverse reason, no further sets of airmail stamps have been issued by the Second Republic to date (1978). Perhaps as a reaction to this policy of the Austrian Post Office, the years that followed saw a plethora of special flights with cachets and strikes of all types - not only in aeroplane flights but mail was also carried in balloons, and rockets. This aspect of philately became so popular that special catalogues were rapidly produced to satisfy the demand.