



## **Philately's Implications in Ecological Education via Romanian Thematic Joint Issues (IV)- Regarding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Collaboration with WWF**

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### **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration among all authors. Author BVC designed the study, performed the statistical analysis, and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors ALP and MC managed the analyses of the study and where it was absolutely necessary, managed the literature searches. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

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### **ABSTRACT**

The project to promote the protected natural heritage and biodiversity continues with the 2<sup>nd</sup> collaboration of the Romanian postal administration with the World Wildlife Fund. Introducing in the scientific circulation the idea of thematic philately, for the protection of endangered species, this time we focused on the issue published in 1984. This is suggestively entitled "Animals protected in the Romanian reservations". It should be mentioned that, at the end of 1984, the national thematic philately was enriched, with a series of postage stamps promoting pelicans. The philatelic issue comes to the public to confirm that in Romania (more exactly in Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve)

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there is the largest colony of common pelicans in Europe. The research emphasizes the mass character of thematic philately and its role as a cultural ambassador. The 1984 philatelic issue, underlines the implications of WWF, along with those of the Romanian postal administration, in promoting the natural capital to be protected. The issue itself has many philatelic effects (especially maximum postcards), both those made privately and officially, which we insisted. We wanted to show that such philatelic materials, made in collaboration with prestigious entities, are more than welcome in sounding the alarm about habitat alteration. Also, they can be the basis of various conservation strategies in terms of adequate information among tourists.

*Keywords: Biodiversity; endangered species; pelican colony; thematic philately; WWF.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of an unprecedented crisis of nature loss, we have, more than ever, a moral responsibility to preserve the diversity of life on earth. But the conservation of nature is not only a matter of morality, it is equally extremely important for the development of humanity [1]. From the air we breathe, to the water we drink and the food we eat, nature provides us with the essentials we all rely on for survival and well-being, including crucial emotional, health, economic, cultural and spiritual benefits. . Even natural areas have such attributions, and offer a range of ecosystem services of the most diverse [2]. If we do not take more comprehensive measures to protect and restore nature, we will all face a decline in the vital ecosystem services it provides us daily, free of charge.

This alarming deterioration of nature and climate change are just two facets of today's environmental challenge and crisis, which inevitably need to be managed together. However, although the climate crisis has led to concerted global action, the global response to nature deterioration has lagged far behind, according to the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) [1]. Due to its geographical positioning, as well as the various landforms and zonal climatic influences, Romania benefits from a rich biodiversity [3,4].

The country's natural habitats have recognized reserves in Europe, housing in considerable densities large and medium-sized predatory species, aquatic species, as well as numerous migratory bird species, which elsewhere are rare or threatened with extinction [4]. In this context, the conservation of biodiversity and the perpetuation of a healthy balance between different species, as well as between them and the living environment, is the object and purpose of many different professions, specialties and activities, including those associated with

thematic philately. The prerogative of the thematic philately for the protection of various species is also noticed at national level, where the philatelic issues paid homage to some endangered species and not only.

The recent philatelic history of Romania records the fruitful collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) [5], although this entity appeared, officially and more strongly, only in 2006. Over the years that followed, after 1977, philately has thus managed to manifest itself as a civilized way of respecting long traditions [6,7], as well as as an activity aimed at promoting among the public the elements related to maintaining a sustainable agro-forestry-hunting balance, in the limits of population growth.

To argue that thematic philately, mainly under the auspices of WWF, is traditionally linked to the concerns of the local community, we decided to present some data on the strategies applied to strengthen the ecosystemsconservation in the regions concerned. These include specific measures for the protection of species, as well as habitats - included in the so-called Protected Areas Management Plans. What can be emphasized is that philately, the pieces we are going to expose indirectly leads to the conservation of the species in question, by promoting key information and raising awareness of the local community, tourists, and other stakeholders. For example, as will be seen throughout the paper, those interested in promoting conservation policies and strategies of species and habitats are those who manage and closely monitor protected areas. In this case, we are talking about the community near the Danube Delta, where the colonies of pelicans immortalized in the various philatelic effects identified meet. Along with the community, the authorities that take care of the health and integrity of the area, respectively the tourist entities, have concerns for the promotion of the activities they carry out in the Danube Delta.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The documentation for this paper started, from our concerns for ecology, for the management of protected areas, and because we love ecosystems, as well as the biodiversity that populates them [8-10]. Having at hand a series of extremely relevant studies at the international, and less national level [11-13], in terms of both protected area management and biodiversity, we decided to extrapolate these approaches to the wider area of ecosystems in Romania. Especially, where the protection of endangered species is a fairly well-defined activity (at least on paper), still at the forefront of various associations and management projects.

This is how the thematic philately aimed at biodiversity reaches the lands of our country, where few studies make direct reference to the management of terrestrial areas, in general, or protected biodiversity, in particular. The collection, analysis, and interpretation of data, mostly postage stamps, “first day of issue” envelopes, maximum postcards, and other post-philatelic effects were done by consulting the specialized catalogs [6,7,14] and of various philatelic trading sites, such as the platforms Allnumis, Colnect, Delcampe, eBay, Okazii, Picclick, StampWorld, wopa-plus, etc.

## 3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

For certain species not to disappear, as happened with the bison, the ox, the eagle, or the groundhog, some of the species in our country are protected by law. These are both mammals and fish, turtles, or even birds. In the

following, continuing the project of promotion and analysis of national postal collaborations with other entities [15,16], is presented in detail the philatelic issue “Animals protected in Romanian reservations”, published in 1984. On the effects, we stopped along the way to give additional information, where appropriate.

### 3.1 Stamps of the Issue “Animals Protected in Romanian Reservations”

The next philatelic issue under the auspices of WWF appeared on 15.12.1984 and had as a landmark the emblematic population of pelicans (*Pelecanus crispus*), which is also the most representative in number in Europe. In the ecosystem of the Danube Delta, the most spectacular images were immortalized, these being the basis of the philatelic issue suggestively entitled “Animals protected in the reservations from S.R. Romania” (indexed by LP RO#1116, Mi RO#4104..07, Yv RO#3543..46, G RO#4899..02, S RO#3232..35), which includes no less than four pieces (see Fig. 1) [17-19].

The pieces in question found, as was natural, an important role and place in completing no less than four envelopes with “the first day of the issue” postmark (Fig. 2a-d) [20,21]. The same support is used for the realization of the four FDCs in the private regime, under the WWF arrangement, proof of the official logo with the panda bear and the mention “WWF WORLD WILDLIFE FUND Official First Day Cover” (see Fig. 3a-d) [22-24].

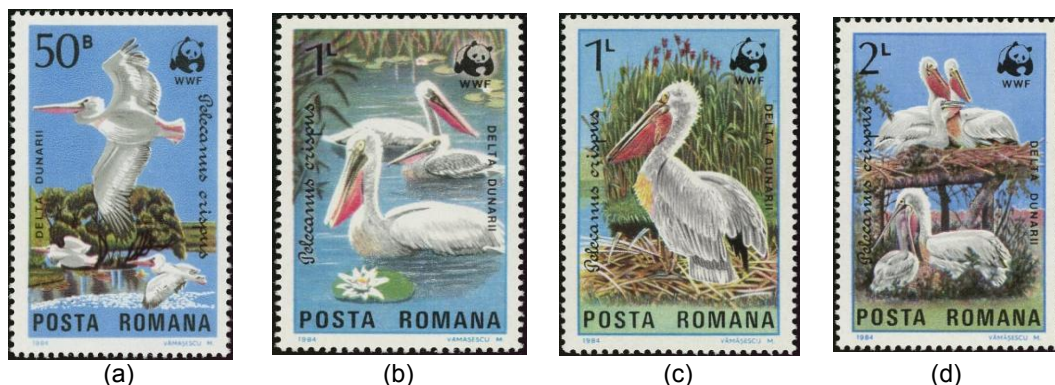


Fig. 1. The philatelic issue “Animals protected in the reservations from Romania”, 15.12.1984, Bucharest (Romania)



Fig. 2. The FDCs of the philatelic issue “Animals protected in the Romanian reservations”, 18.01.1984, Bucharest (Romania), made under the order of the Romanian P.O.



Fig. 3. The FDCs of the philatelic issue “Animals protected in the Romanian reservations”, 18.01.1984, Bucharest (Romania), made under the order of WWF

Regarding the postage stamps, we must mention the fact that they were made on chrome paper, in 33x48 mm format, 13¼ lace, on finished sheets of 25 pieces each, according to a model by Mihai Vămășescu. The circulation was different for each piece - 2,000,000 series for the nominal value of 50 bani, 1,500,000 and 1,000,000 for the variants with a nominal value of 1 lei, respectively 250,000 series for the variant with a nominal value of 2 lei. The circulation for the considered pieces was therefore 250,000 complete series, most of them circulated until 1992-1993 [17,18].

### 3.2 Errors and Philatelic Varieties

An error, in the form of a dot on the tail of the pelican in flight, was identified at the postage stamp with a face value of 50 bani (2). Also, an error was identified in the form of a blue spot on the first pelican in the case of the postage stamp with a face value of 1 lei, for the version with three pelicans in the foreground. Until the date of this material, the errors in question have not been identified (in explicit graphic form).

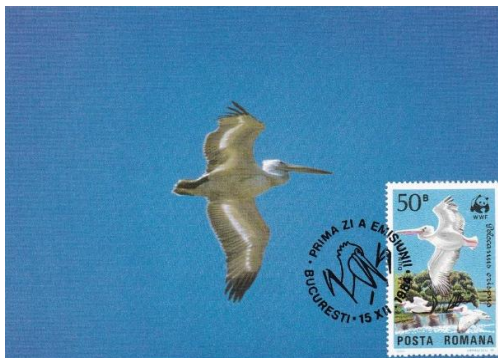
### 3.3 Maximum Postcards

The postage stamps enjoyed over time the creativity of the philatelists who wanted, with all their heart, to make maximum postcards, in order to enrich the Romanian philatelic treasure. Thus, for the beginning, the maximum postcards with the stamp “first day of the issue”, in number four, were created, as can be seen in Fig. 4 [25-28].

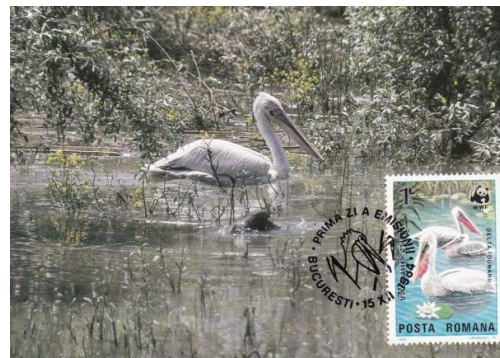
Relative to the maxims previously exposed, which wanted to emphasize by the position of the pelicans in the support illustration approximately the same elements, as those in the stamp, other

maxims were made (see Fig. 5) [29-34], more or less effect, such as:

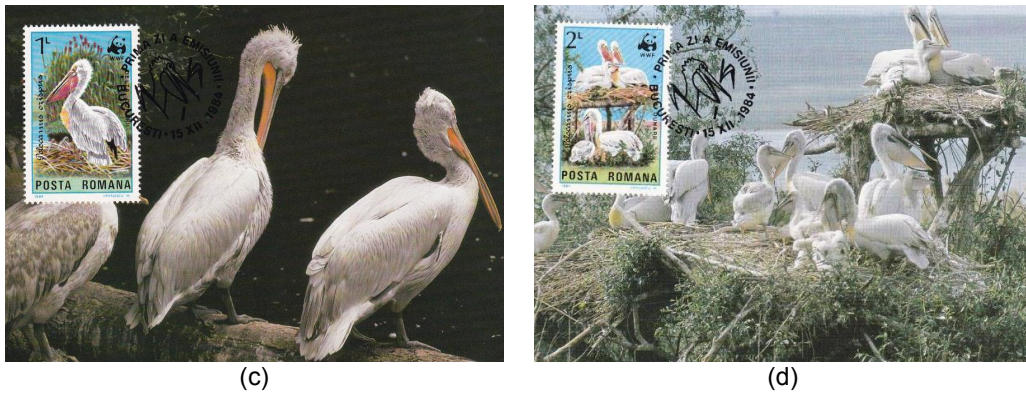
- a) The maximum postcard dated 01.02.1991, with the text “Attention poachers! Give up!”, “On September 1, 1990”, and the homage stamp “Tulcea Guard and Inspection Corps, Danube Delta Biosphere Reserve”, over the 50 bani stamp [29];
- b) The maximum postcard dated 26.10.1985, with the stamp “Protect the pelicans - the adornment of the Danube Delta” and the day stamp of Tulcea 1 P.O. [30];
- c) The maximum postcard representing pelicans in flight and at the Delta level, with the special stamp “Cluj Zoological Museum”, 16.06.2006, Cluj-Napoca [31];
- d) The maximum postcard representing several pelicans standing at the water’s edge, with the special stamp “Environmental protection”, 06.12.1982, Bucharest P.O. [32];
- e) The maximum postcard representing a few pelicans in flight, with the same support as in Fig. 5b, and the stamp referring to the “Opening of the tourist season” [33];
- f) The maximum postcard representing lots of pelicans standing together, with a stamp that is difficult to decipher; the only mention being that it was issued to Tulcea P.O., on 31.12.1989 [34].



(a)



(b)



**Fig. 4. The official maximum postcards of the philatelic issue “Animals protected in the Romanian reservations”, 18.01.1984, Bucharest (Romania), made under the order of WWF**



**Fig. 5. Maximums made in private regime for the value of 50 bani from the philatelic issue “Animals protected in the Romanian reservations”, 15.12.1984, Bucharest (Romania)**

For the face value of 1 Romanian leu, in the version with 3 pelicans and a water lily in the foreground, were identified about the same number of maxima (Fig. 6) [35-44], as follows:

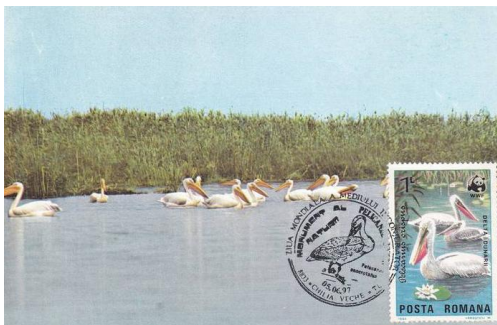
- a) The maximum book bearing the special stamp "World Environment Day" with the text "Pelican -the monument of nature", 05.06.1997, Chilia Veche P.O.[35];
- b) The maximum postcard having the same postmark characteristics as in Fig. 6a, only the support differs [36];
- c) The maximum postcard dated 26.10.1985, with the special stamp "Protect the pelicans - the adornment of the Danube Delta" and the day stamp of Tulcea 1 P.O.[37];
- d) The maximum postcard having the same postmark characteristics as Fig. 6c, only the support differs [39];
- e) The postcard illustrated with the stamp "Visit the EXPODELTA Philatelic Exhibition", 24-31.05.1987, House of Culture from Tulcea [40];
- f) The maximum postcard having the same postmark characteristics as Fig. 6e), only the support differs [41];
- g) The maximum representing a scene with pelicans stationed in the shelter [42];
- h) The maximum postcard representing the same scene as in Fig. 6g, but bearing the special stamp "Stop pollution!" on the occasion of the International Day of the Environment, 05.06.1992 [43];
- i) The maximum postcard representing a few pelicans standing on an island cliff, with the same postmark as in Fig. 5c [44].

And for the version with a single pelican sheltered in vegetation, with a nominal value of 1 leu, there are maximum postcards (see Fig. 7) [37,45-48], as follows:

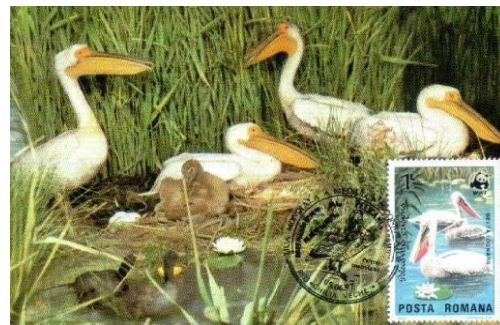
- a) The maximum postcard dated 26.10.1985, with the special postmark "Protect the pelicans - the adornment of the Danube Delta", Tulcea 1 P.O. [45];
- b) The maximum postcard having the same postmark characteristics as Fig. 7a, only the support differs [46];
- c) The maximum postcard having the same postmark characteristics as Fig. 7a, only the support differs [47];
- d) The maximum postcard having the same illustrated support as Fig. 7c, only that the stamp refers to the "ExpoDelta inter-county philatelic exhibition", 24.05.1987, Tulcea P.O.[48];
- e) The maximum postcard "Bucharest Zoo", bearing the occasional stamp of Tulcea P.O., 24.05.1987, and the stamp with the nominal value of 1 Romanian leu [37].
- f) The maximum postcard having the same postmark characteristics as in Fig. 6a and Fig. 6b, only the support differs [38].

The face value of 2 lei, corresponding to the last stamp in the series of four, also enjoys use in making maximum books (see Fig. 8) [49-51]. Mainly, the elements that form the support part are the same, as those already encountered in other maxima. Until the time of making this material, the following have been identified as follows:

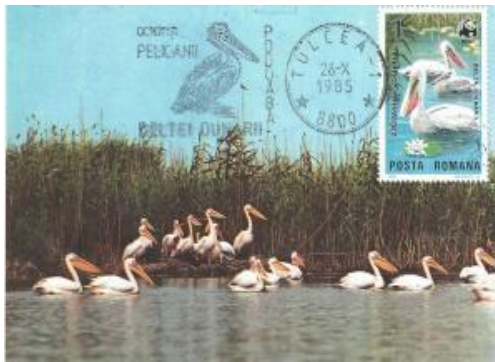
- a) The maximum postcard made after the support presented in Fig. 7c or Fig. 7d, bearing the special stamp "World Environment Day" with the text "Pelican - the monument of nature", 05.06.1997, Chilia Veche, practically the same as the one applied in Fig. 6a și b) [49];
- b) The maximum postcard made on the support and the Fig. 5b stamp [50];
- c) The maximum postcard made on a new medium, never seen before, dated 24.05.1986, Bucharest P.O.[51].



(a)



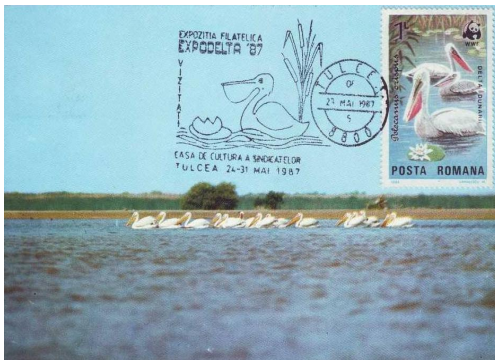
(b)



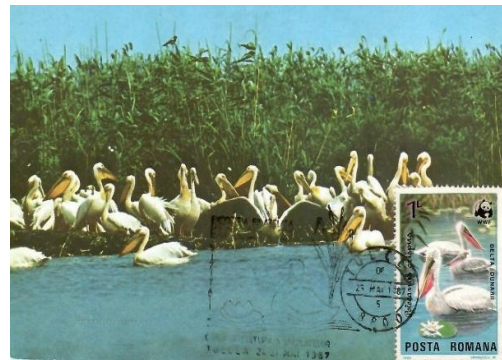
(c)



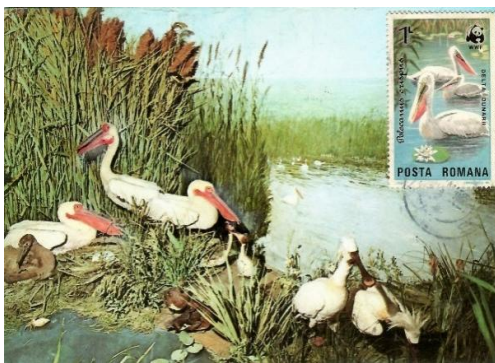
(d)



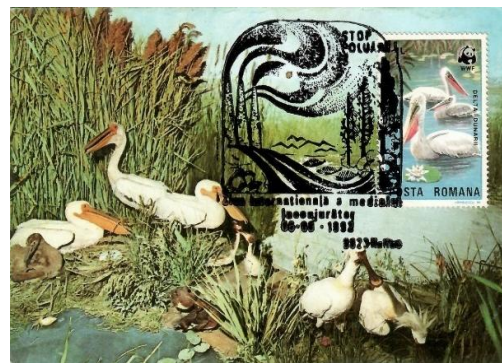
(e)



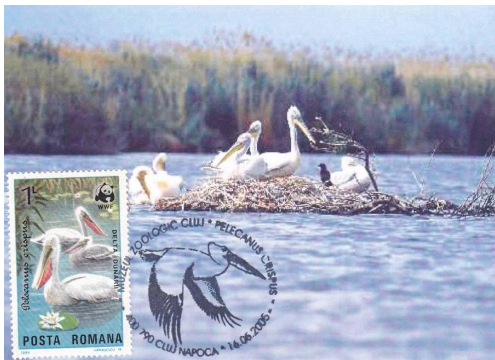
(f)



(g)



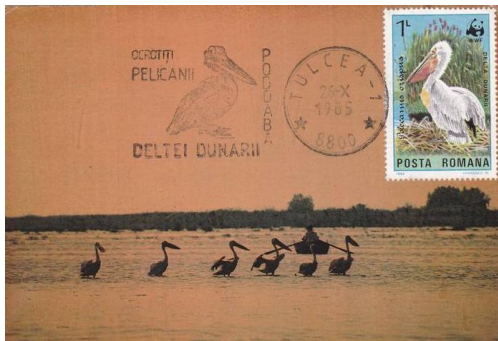
(h)



(i)

**Fig. 6. Maximums made in private regime for the value of 1 leu from the philatelic issue “Animals protected in the Romanian reservations”, 15.12.1984, Bucharest (Romania)**





(a)



(b)



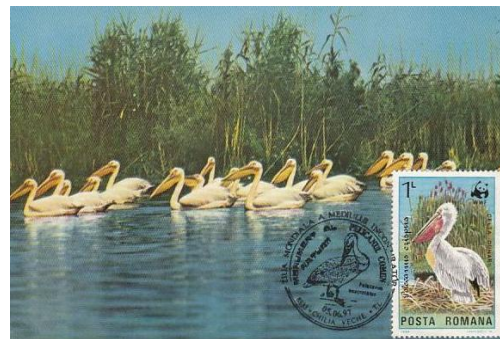
(c)



(d)



(e)



(f)

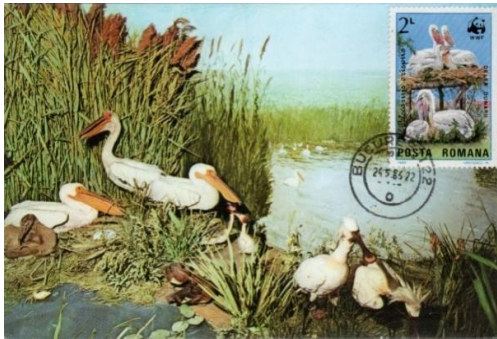
**Fig. 7. Maximums made in private regime for the value of 1 leu from the philatelic issue "Animals protected in the Romanian reservations", 15.12.1984, Bucharest (Romania)**



(a)



(b)



(c)

**Fig. 8. Maximums made in private regime for the value of 2 lei from the philatelic issue “Animals protected in the Romanian reservations”, 15.12.1984, Bucharest (Romania)**

As it has been observed so far, the maximum postcards are supported by various illustrated postcards, with some of the most unique scenes - pelicans in flight, pelicans looking for food, or even resting in the shelter of the reeds. Certainly, there are other pieces that we have not yet been able to draw from the great mass of philatelic content, probably due to their poor indexing, the main shortcoming of e-commerce sites.

### 3.4 Occasional Envelopes and Other Philatelic Effects

In addition to the mentioned pieces, a series of postal items were also identified. They are exposed in Fig. 9 [52-55]. These include the quality of word processing, as well as, the joint initiative that was the basis for their realization, namely the Interzonal Philatelic Exhibition "Pro Natura", the first edition, held between 05-14.06.1992 in Oradea (Bihor County). At the same time, a unique aspect that also deserves to be mentioned is related to the symbolism of the semi-illustrations. The four pieces illustrate the logo of the United Nations Environment Program, the logo of sustainable development, the WWF logo, and the logo of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Other pieces we stopped on in our research are reproduced in Fig. 10 [56-63], respectively:

- a) The special envelope bearing the stamp with the mention “Nature protection month, 20.06. - 20.07.1985, Constanța”, next to the day stamp of the Constanța Transit P.O., 15.05.1985 [56];
- b) The special envelope made at the Philatelic Exhibition “Man and Nature”, as part of the IV National Symposium entitled “Biological bases of treatment

processes and environmental protection”, held between 05-08.06.1985 in Piatra Neamț [57];

- c) Philatelic-numismatic envelope with the coin symbolizing the pelicans, and the stamp with the insignia “World Wilde Fund for Nature”, 07.10.1993, Bucharest P.O. [58];
- d) Official postage stamp issued by the postal administration of Liberia, representing the same issue as a faithful replica for the version with a single pelican sheltered in vegetation [59,60];
- e) Official block issued by the postal administration of Liberia, representing the same issue, as a faithful replica, for the version with a single pelican sheltered in vegetation [61,62];
- f) Official illustrated postcard issued by the postal administration of Bacău, according to the philatelic exhibition “Balcanfila”, 20-25.09.1991, Bacău [63]

### 3.5 The Postal Role of the Philatelic Issue “Animals Protected in the Romanian Reservations”

As expected, the parts we referred, were also identified in circulation. Their postal circulation was both locally, starting from the Tulcea post office - the first four indexed pieces [64], from Sebeș (Alba County) to Cluj-Napoca, on 09.07.1983 [65], but even internationally (Fig. 11). The last philatelic effect on our list, for example, circulated on the relationship Botoșani (Romania) - Rickenbach (Switzerland), starting with 09.11.1985 [66]. Certainly, there were other circulating pieces, but only these we managed to identify.

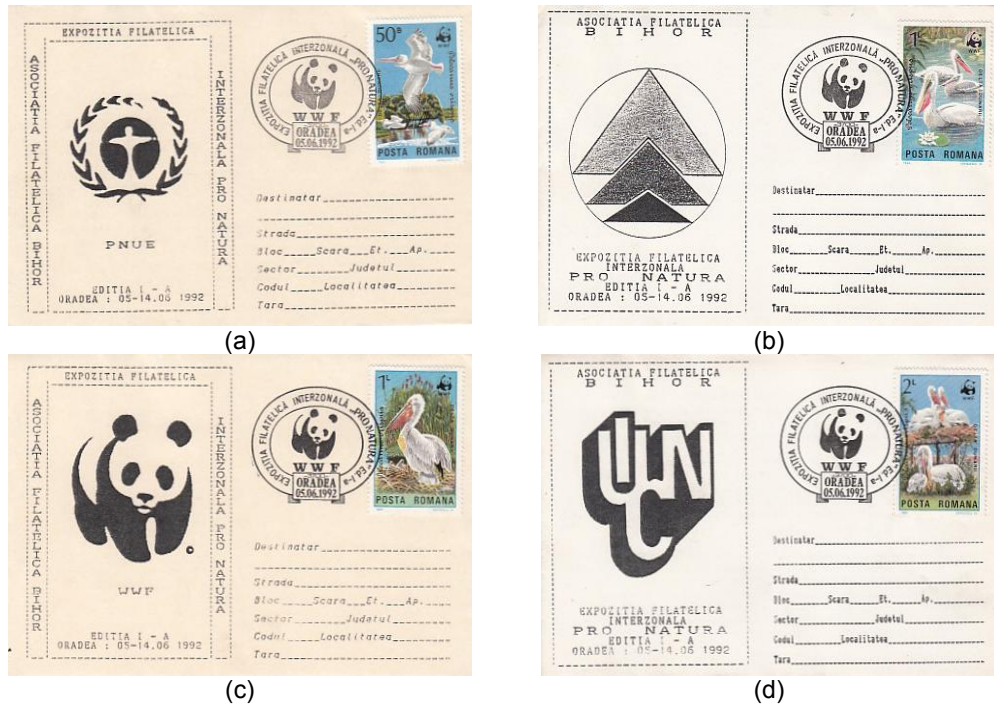


Fig. 9. Postal items with the postage stamps of the philatelic issue “Animals protected in the Romanian reservations”



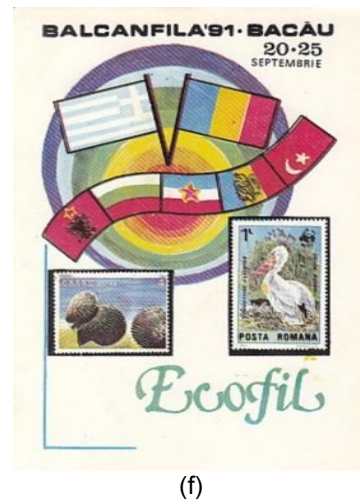


Fig. 10. Occasional philatelic effects with the postage stamps of the philatelic issue “Animals protected in the Romanian reservations”

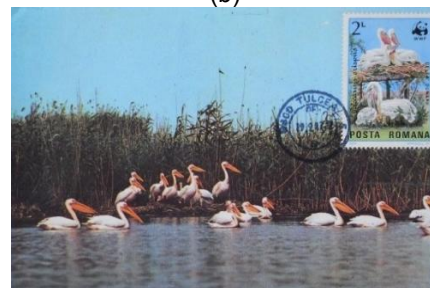
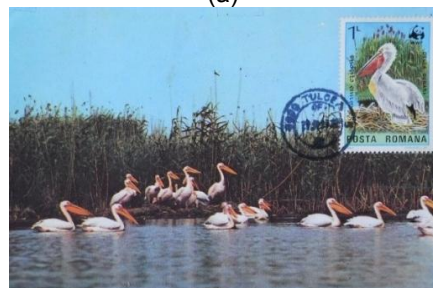


Fig. 11. Different circulated effects with the postage stamps of the philatelic issue “Animals protected in the Romanian reservations”

#### 4. CONCLUSION

From the rich philatelic material (postage stamps, blocks, souvenir packages, FDCs, maxima and postal effects, various circulations) that was identified, reproduced, and analyzed, we managed to highlight the second collaboration of Romanian postal administration with WWF. Moreover, it could be shown that such a collaboration is auspicious, especially given that the thematic philately has suffered somewhat lately, due to the few external contributions. At the same time, in addition to the beauty of the material itself, we can note the double integration of the material on the philatelic market, national and especially international, which would not have enjoyed philatelic issues without the support of entities such as WWF, UNESCO, UNEP, IUCN and other.

One last aspect that is worth mentioning is that the vast majority of the pieces, especially the illustrated postcards and the maxims, were based on scenes from the Danube Delta. The circulation of various postal media being a promising one in terms of promoting the reservation. It has also had some impact on environmental protection, just at the local level, thematic philately being included in various profile events, policies, and strategies for habitat conservation.

#### COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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