

The European stag beetle

by Patrice BONAFONTE

The European stag beetle, or *Lucanus cervus* Linné, 1758, is a beetle of the family Lucanidae. It is a protected species at the European level: it is listed in Annex III of the Bern Convention, and in Annex II (species of community interest whose conservation requires the designation of special areas of conservation) of the Habitats, Fauna and Flora Directive. The European Directive "Habitats, Fauna, Flora", more commonly known as the Habitats Directive, applies to the European Union since June 5th 1994. Its purpose is to ensure the maintenance of biological diversity through the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora. The Habitats Directive provides for the establishment of a network of protected areas called the Natura 2000 Network.

The inclusion of this species in Annex II of the Habitats Directive has surprised many entomologists and foresters because the species is relatively common throughout Europe. However, the disappearance of this species in areas of strong disturbance of anthropic origin (artificialization of the environments, agriculture and intensive exploitation, reforestation in exotic species) showed its great sensitivity and its weak resistance to the aggressions of its biotope.

The stag beetle is one of the largest insects in Europe, some males exceeding 8 cm. The species shows a very marked sexual dimorphism: the males have very developed mandibles carried by a head wider than the pronotum (prothorax), whereas the females, generally darker, have short mandibles and a pronotum as wide as the elytra.

Adults have a relatively short period of appearance from late spring to summer. The adults have a period of activity essentially crepuscular and nocturnal. They feed on the secretions of various plants. After mating, the females lay their eggs in injured, dead or senescent wood.

The larvae develop in the soil of various hardwoods (oak, chestnut). The duration of the larval development is long, generally 5 years. The adult insect remains in its shell during winter and until the end of spring.

Lucanus cervus is widely distributed throughout Europe with the exception of Northern Europe. It has disappeared from the Netherlands, Denmark and a large part of the United Kingdom.



Stamps issued

Except perhaps the seven-spotted ladybug, the European stag beetle is one of the best sellers for the stamp issuing countries: no less than 44 stamps issued by 36 countries.

Only stamps with *Lucanus cervus* as main subject are shown. But we also find this beetle in the margins of blocks like this one from Guinea-Bissau:



Note that the stamps of Paraguay, Barbuda, Solomon Islands and Central African Republic are reproductions of a work by Albert Dürer. :





HUNGARY 1954



CZECHOSLOVAKIA 1955



POLAND 1961



CZECHOSLOVAKIA 1962



ALBANIA 1963



EAST GERMANY 1963



YUGOSLAVIA 1966



BULGARIA 1968



PARAGUAY 1970



BARBUDA 1971



MALI 1977



GREAT BRITAIN 1985



BULGARIA 1993



GERMANY FEDERAL 1993



LAOS 1995



SOMALIA 1995



BELGIUM 1996



BHUTAN 1997



MACEDONIA 1998



CAMBODIA 1998



UKRAINE 1999



GHANA 1999



BELARUS 2001



BELARUS 2001



ITALY 2002



RUSSIA 2003



LITHUANIA 2003



CROATIA 2005



AUSTRIA 2007



GREAT BRITAIN 2008



BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA 2009



JORDAN 2009



SLOVENIA 2009



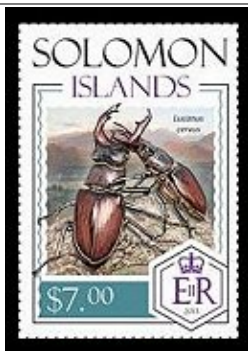
MARSHALL ISLANDS 2011



CHAD 2012



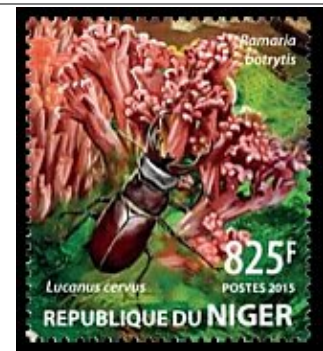
POLAND 2013



SOLOMON ISLANDS 2014



SLOVAKIA 2014



NIGER 2015



SOLOMON ISLANDS 2017



KYRGYZSTAN 2018



ROMANIA 2018



UKRAINE 2018



NIGER 2018



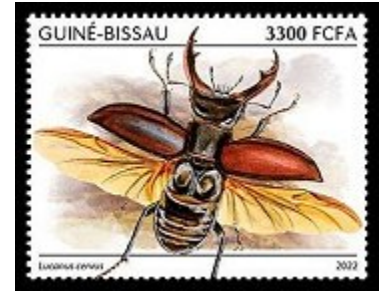
MOLDAVIA 2019



CENTRAL AFRICA 2021



CENTRAL AFRICA 2022



GUINEA-BISSAU 2022



GUINEA 2022

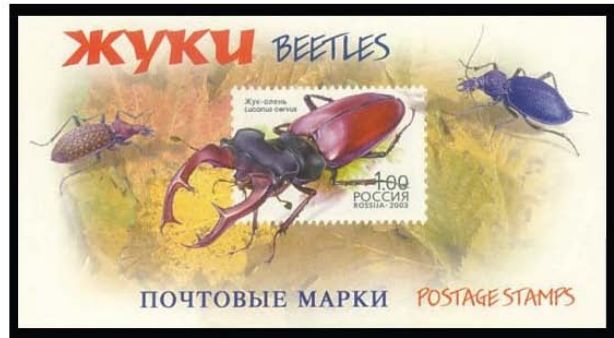


SIERRA LEONE 2022



SIERRA LEONE 2022

Croatia and Russia have also issued booklets:



Illegal issues can also be found, usually made to deceive collectors. Below two blocks from Benin and Timor. No doubt that the same printer made these two blocks...



A block from Buryatia with three beautiful males (did you notice that only males are represented?) and a block from Guinea-Bissau (lucan in the upper right margin).

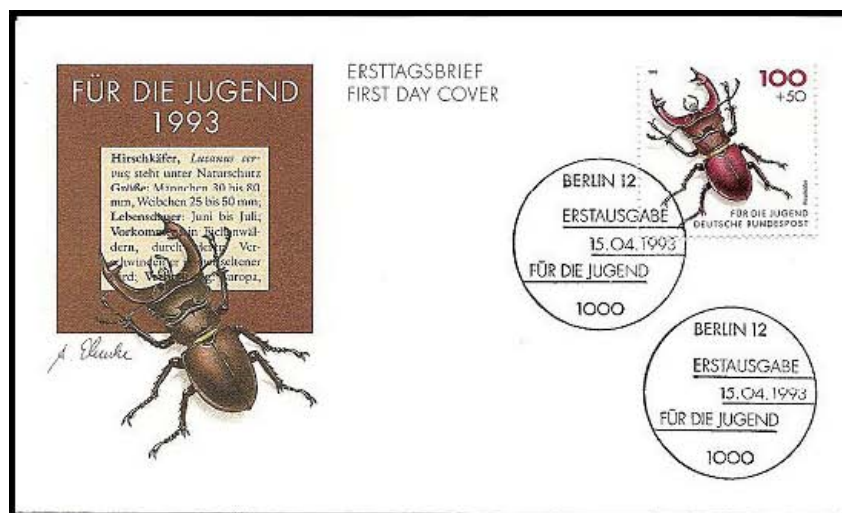


And finally, another unofficial stamp from Batoum, and a charity stamp from Belarus:

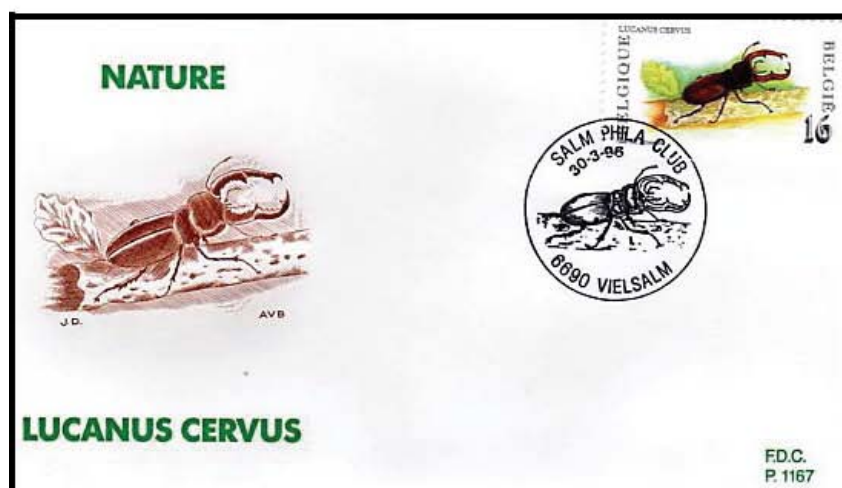


The First Day Covers

Just a few of the most representative examples:



Germany



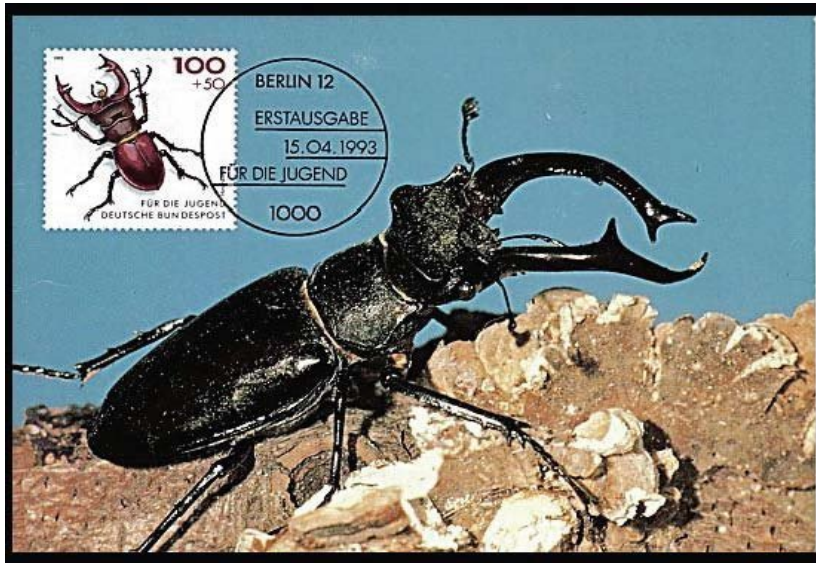
Belgium



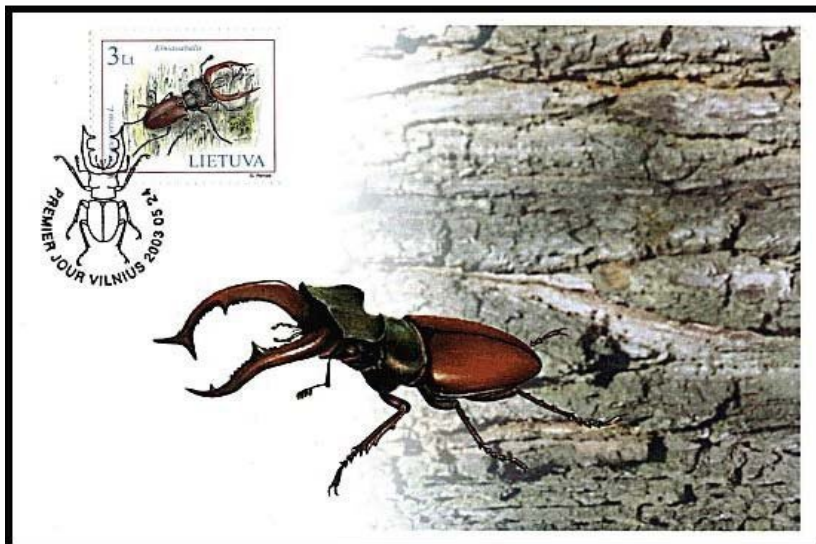
Bulgaria

Maximum cards

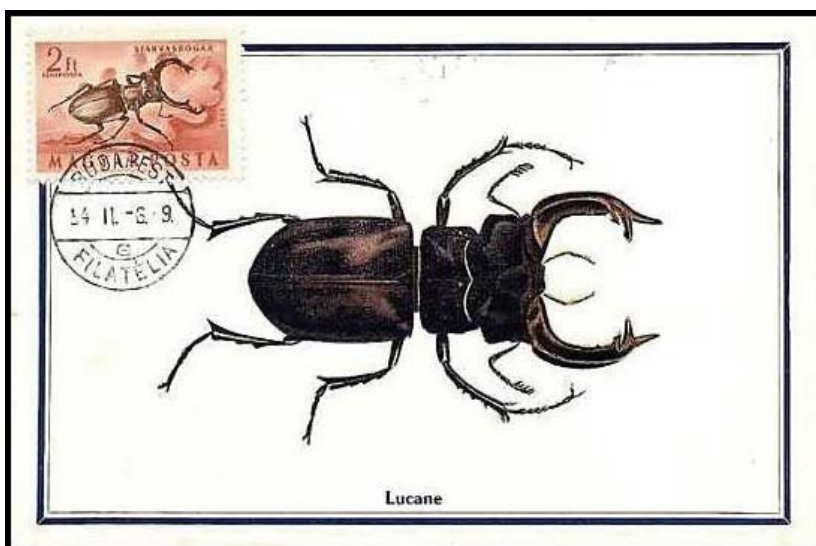
Here are some maximum cards:



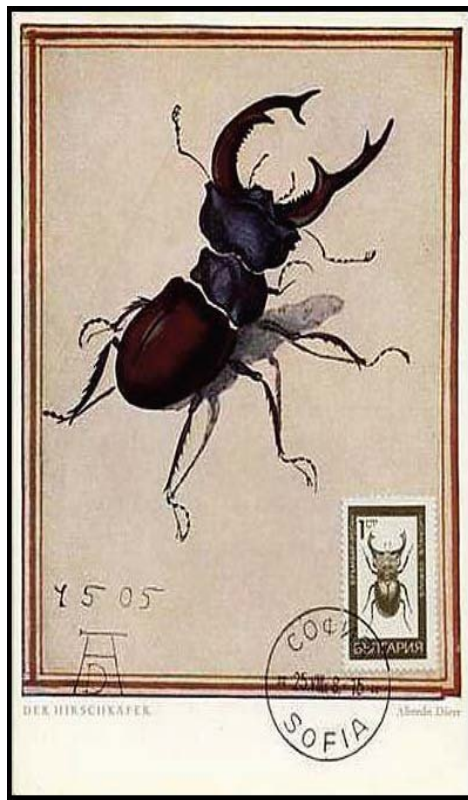
Germany



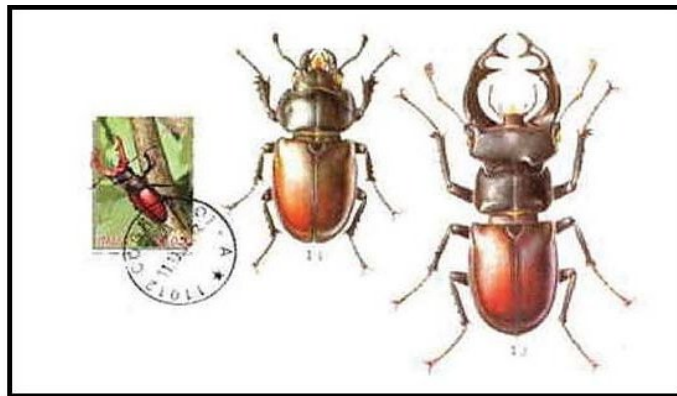
Lithuania



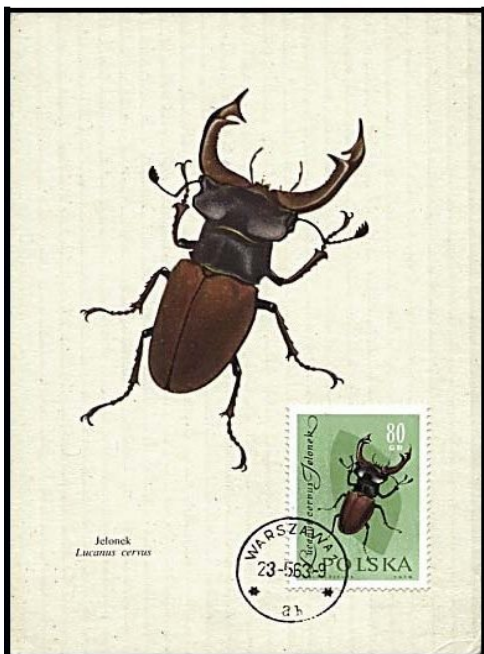
Hungary



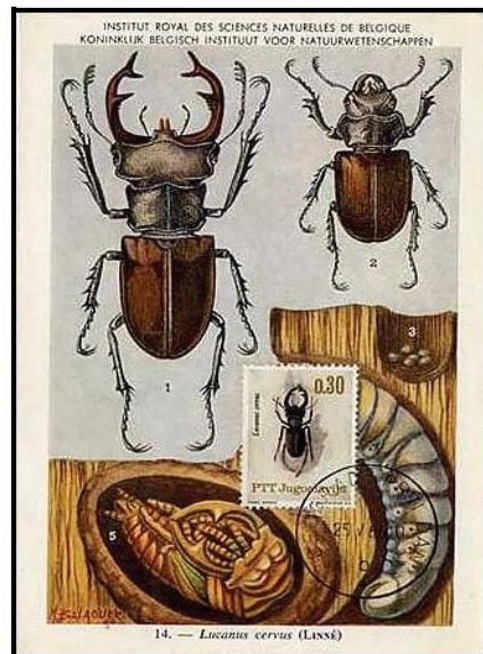
Bulgaria



Italy



Poland



Yugoslavia

Postal stationeries

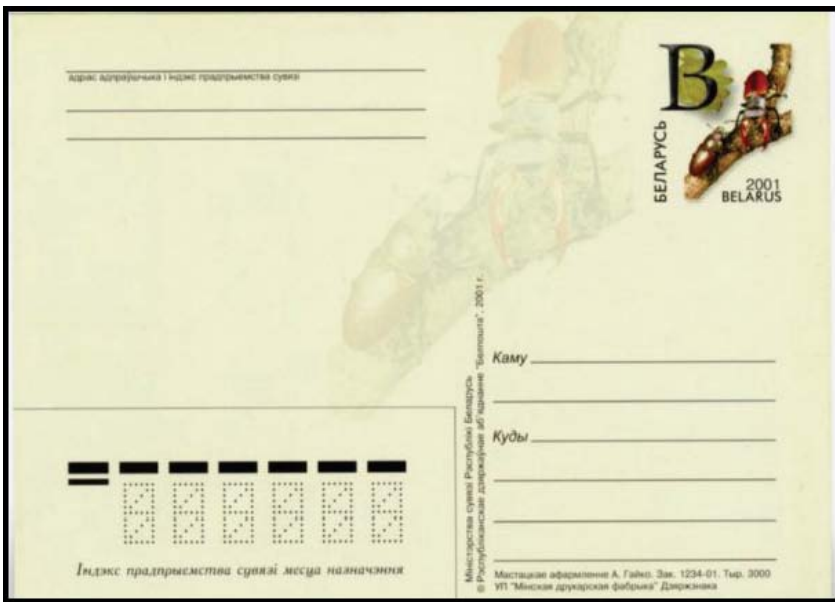
Here after some integers related to *Lucanus cervus*. We finally see a female on the Belarus stationery.



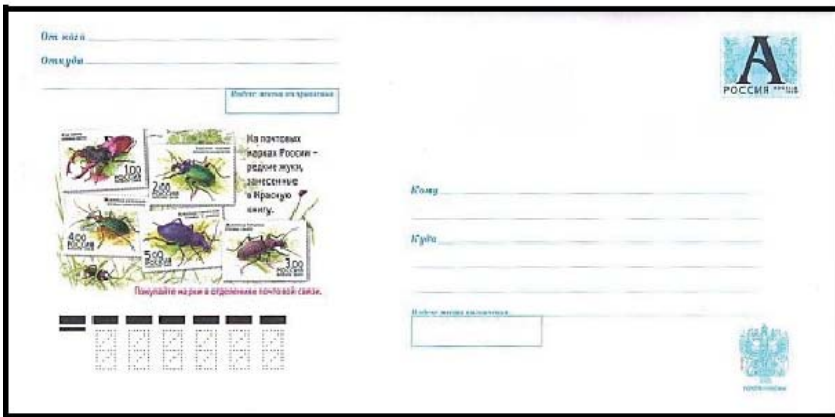
Romania



Romania



Belarus



Russia

In France, this envelope was issued at the occasion of the "Salon du papier de collection" in March 2001. Note also the stag beetle on the meter.



Postmarks and meters

In addition to the cachets used for the first days, here are some postmarks related to *Lucanus cervus*.



For the meters, I only know these below:

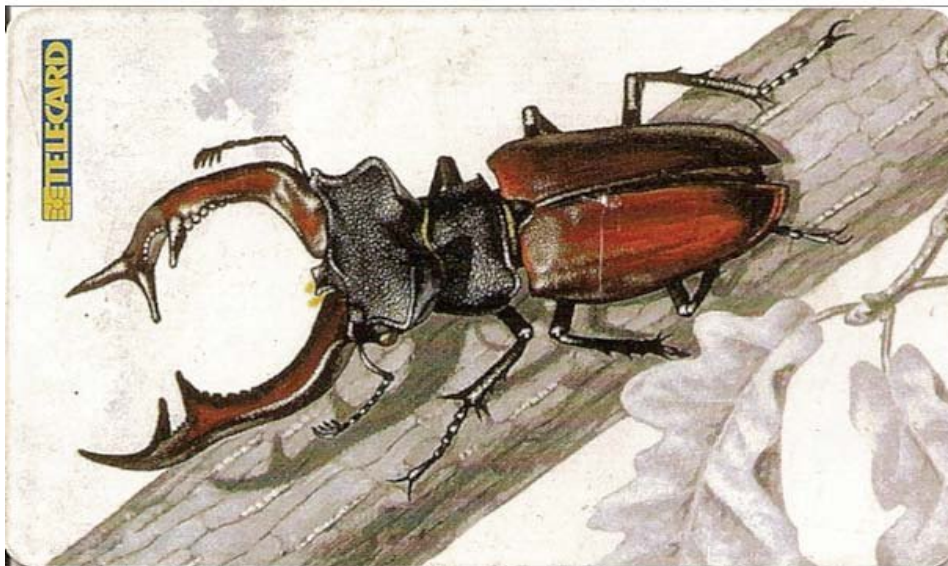


Phone cards

And even if it has nothing to do with philately, just for the pleasure of the eyes some phone cards.



Bulgaria



Czech Republic



Germany



Andorra



Switzerland



Russia fake card

Coins

And even if it has nothing to do with philately, just for the pleasure of the eyes some coins...



Fiji 2014



Oudmourtie 2014 (fantasy)



Oudmourtie 2014 (fantasy)



Poland 1977



Poland 1997



Poland 2010 (front)



Poland 2010 (back)



Russia 2013



Sumatra 2017



Transnistria 2006



Fancy medal (USA)