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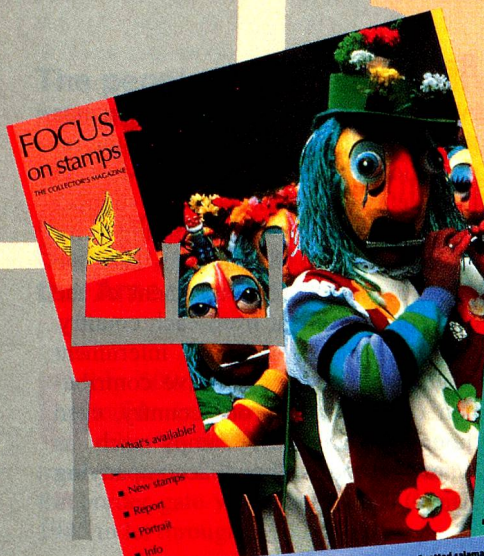
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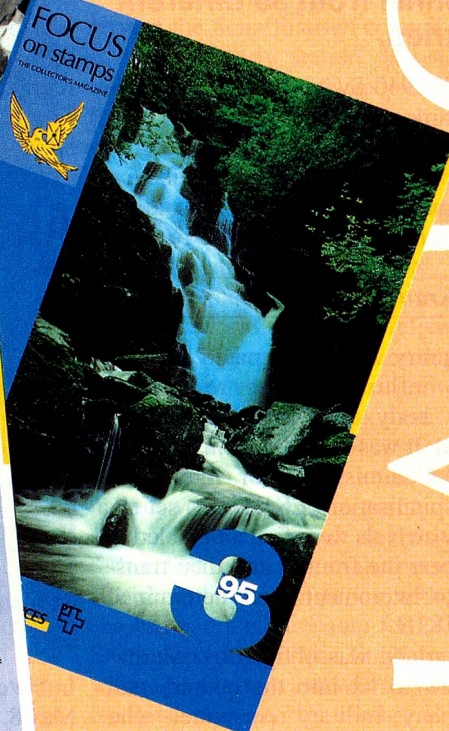
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Salmo gairdneri
Since the last century, seven out of fifty fish species have become extinct in Switzerland, including the sea trout. The "parent" of our river trout was not just the most common, as well as the most beautiful, but also the most resilient. It has adapted to a wide range of habitats, from the high mountains to the lowlands.

The female builds a nest of moss and grass, just above ground level, and preferably by streams with gravel banks; especially suitable sites are often "bushes" up for years. From April to June, she usually lays five to ten small, oval, cream-colored eggs, providing daytime temperatures are higher than 10°C. The eggs hatch after 14 days, and the chicks are mainly fed by the female. After another 12 days, they leave the nest and their parents' territory.

Spotted salamander (Salamandra atra)

The spotted salamander was first described in 1758 as the lacerta salamandra, or salamander lizard. However, salamanders are amphibians. They have a round tail and a moist, shiny skin with yellow spots on a black ground. They grow to a length of 30 centimeters, weigh up to 50 grams and live to the amazing age of 50! The spotted salamander is still found fairly frequently in mixed deciduous woodlands in Ticino and the Valais.

During the April mating season, the female takes in a sperm case from the male, and the 50 larvae get into her body for one year before being released the following spring in streams as water-dwellers equipped with gills. Depending on the water temperature, the spotted salamanders develop lungs and transfer to land after two to ten months. They usually spend the winter in the same safe place year after year, in deep, moist holes in the ground and in caves.

Christmas issue

For the Christmas stamp, the artist chose an angel motif inspired by the picture "The Annunciation" by the Spanish Baroque painter Bartolomé Estéban Murillo (1618-1682), the original is in the Prado Museum in Madrid.



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