

Glass Jewels of the Sea – Radiolaria
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In the world's oceans there feature a wide variety of microscopic plankton. One of the major groups are the single-celled radiolaria which have exquisitely sculptured shells which are commonly made of silica i.e. glass. All the known stamps and covers issued that depict them are presented below but the author would welcome information on others.



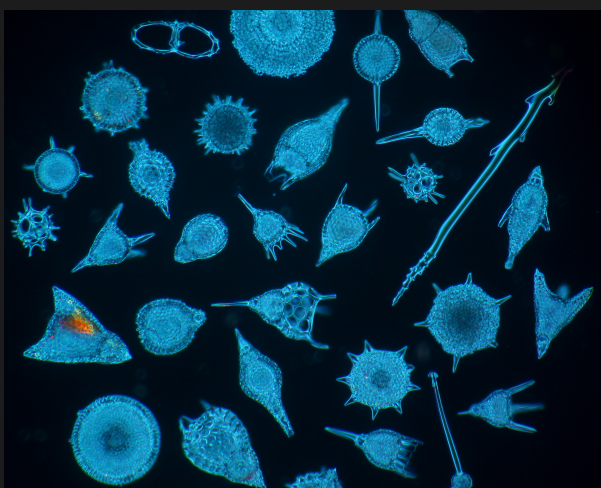
A striking set of five stamps were issued by Senegal in 1972 (above and right, 116% and 70% full size). The designer Pierre Opic is credited on the stamps who I contacted and he provided a fascinating background into his work. He lived and worked in Senegal for 14 years and proposed the designs to the Senegal post office. He has co-authored / illustrated many publications including books on fishes.

Each species design is based on the stunning illustrations in Ernst Haeckel's 1887 report on the radiolaria recorded on the HMS Challenger Expedition 1872-76 (presented as a separate one-page exhibit, 2023).



Left and right, (50% and 130% full size), USSR 1969, for the 3rd International Protozoologists Congress held in Leningrad.

Right below, Norway 2005, 'Centenary of the Geological Society of Norway'.



Radiolaria attracted the attention for study by 19th century microscopists and species were arranged permanently on a microscope slide.

The arrangement left 1.4 mm wide is a modern one by Wim van Egmond, image by the author using a microscope. Magnified 55X. The longer shells are the spicules of sponges which give them their structure.

