

NEW ZEALAND COLOR MISSING ERRORS

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[Ed. Note: Because this article is about missing colors, if you are reading the black and white print edition of the journal, you may want to view the color version of this article that you will find on the Biology Unit website, <http://www.biophilately.org>.]

On 2 September 1970, New Zealand issued a set of six low value definitive stamps depicting butterflies and moths (Sc#438–43) with the following denominations: ½c, 1c, 2c, 2½c, 3c, and 4c. The three lower denominations were designed by Enid Hunter and the three higher denominations were designed by Eileen Mayo.

All were printed by Harrison and Sons in England in sheets of 200 on chalk surface paper with multiple NZ and star watermark. They were perforated 13½×13. The 1c, 3c, and 4c stamps also exist with the watermark sideways.

On 7 September 1973, the 1c, 2c, 3c, and 4c stamps were reissued on unwatermarked paper (Sc#533–37).

During production, the 1c, 2c, and 4c stamps ended up with missing colors and some of these fluttered into the hands of the public. That missing colors occurred is not surprising since the photogravure printing for each of these stamps required multiple colors, five of them in the case of the 4c stamp.

The Scott Catalogue does not list all of these missing color errors, but the Stanley Gibbons Catalogue does. This article will focus only on the 4c stamp because it has the most varieties (see the cover). It depicts a Puriri Moth (*Charagia virescens*) found exclusively on the North Island. Its larvae are a pest of wineberry, manuka, kamahi, puriri, and other trees.



Dark Green omitted
Sc#443a/SG1011e

This stamp was printed with orange-yellow, light green, blue, purple-brown, and dark green colors. The most common instance of missing color is the dark green used to print the wing veins of the moth. It is possible to find this stamp for under \$100. In fact, I have in my collection a used copy on cover. This error occurred on both the watermarked and unwatermarked stamps. The other errors exist only on unwatermarked versions.

The remaining color missing errors catalog for several hundred dollars, if you can even find them. I am still searching for some. The most striking example is the purple-brown omitted stamp. Its conspicuous appearance makes me wonder how it ever got released.

An example of a missing color error exists for each of the five colors used for this stamp, but curiously there are no examples where two or more colors are missing.



Orange-Yellow omitted
SG1011c



Blue omitted
SG1011d



Light Green omitted
SG1011f



Normal copy
Sc#443/537



Purple-Brown omitted
SG1011b



Dark Green inverted
SG1011a

There also exists a stamp with all five colors, but the dark green color is inverted. It is only found on the booklet pane of 3+3 labels (Sc#533a). There are also many examples of color shifts that, although not errors, result in eye-catching items.