

NON-MACHINEABLE RATE STAMPS

In 2010, the U.S. Postal Service began issuing a series of special stamps to accommodate paying the total fee for a first-class letter weighing up to two ounces. This fee includes the regular first-class rate and the additional fee for the second ounce. It also happens that the USPS charges this same fee for non-machinable mail items.

The non-machinable surcharge is applied to envelopes that cannot be serviced by the automatic sorting machines. Items that meet the criterion for this treatment include: odd-shaped, length divided by height is less than 1.3 or more than 2.5, container is too stiff to bend, container is lumpy, or has ribbons, buttons, or clasps.

The square stamp format was developed in partnership with the greeting card industry for use on oversized or square envelopes. These stamps are also valid on any piece of mail at their denominated value, or in the case of non-denominated stamps, their current rated value.

Artist Tom Engerman created the art for each stamp on a computer using images of preserved butterflies as a starting point. The resulting art is a stylized, simplified image of the species rather than an exact replica. Derry Noyes of the USPS designed each stamp. The USPS has used different printers for the stamps.

Each stamp was issued in a pane of 20 and uses self-adhesive gum. They are all non-soakable and therefore used copies are best left on piece.

The first stamp in this series was issued on 17 May 2010, and shows the Monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*). The 64c denomination pays the first-class rate (44c) plus (20c) non-machinable surcharge. It was printed by Avery Dennison.



Danaus plexippus
2010, Sc#4462



Euphydryas phaeton
2012, Sc#4603

Our second stamp was issued on 20 January 2012, and depicts the Baltimore Checkerspot (*Euphydryas phaeton*). The 65c paid the first-class rate (44c) plus (21c) non-machinable surcharge. It was printed by Avery Dennison.

The third stamp was issued on 23 January 2013, and shows the Spicebush Swallowtail (*Papilio troilus*). The 66c paid the first-class rate (45c) plus (21c) non-machinable surcharge. It was printed by Avery Dennison.



Papilio troilus
2013, Sc#4736



Speyeria cybele
2014, Sc#4859

Fourth in our series was issued on 10 February 2014, and depicts the Great Spangled Fritillary (*Speyeria cybele*). The 70c paid the first-class rate (49c) plus (21c) non-machinable surcharge. It was printed by CCL Label, Inc., which acquired Avery Dennison and took over their printing contracts.

The fifth stamp was issued on 1 June 2015, and shows the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*). At this point, the USPS began using the "Non-machinable [sic] Surcharge" indicia instead of a denomination. This stamp sold for 71c and paid the first-class rate (49c) plus (22c) non-machinable surcharge. It was printed by Ashton-Potter.



Papilio glaucus
2015, Sc#4999



Cupido comyntas
2016, Sc#5136

The sixth and current stamp was issued on 24 September 2016. It shows the Eastern Tailed-Blue (*Cupido comyntas*). This stamp initially sold for 68c and paid the first-class rate (47c) plus (21c) non-machinable surcharge. It was printed by Ashton-Potter. The current (2018) rate for this stamp is 71c.



Zerene eurydice
2019?

The design for a seventh stamp shows a California Dogface (*Zerene eurydice*).