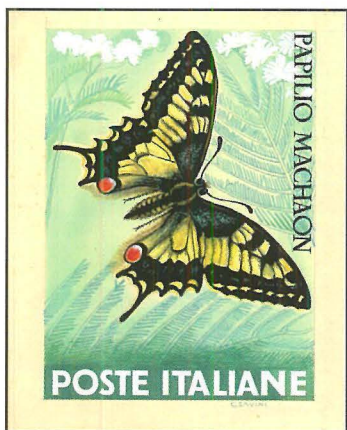


MAGNIFICENT BUTTERFLY MACHAON

Vladimir Kachan, (Belarus)



Artwork of Italy 1960 with butterfly Papilio machaon

The Swallowtail was one of the first butterflies that were described by Carl Linnaeus in the 10th edition of Systema Naturae in 1758 and named *Papilio machaon*, a figure in Greek mythology. *Papilio machaon* has a striking coloration of black on top of a yellow base color. There are blue and red spots on the hind wings. A mutation or variation on Swallowtails' natural color is the occasional butterfly that displays melanism, a black coloration on the wings, rather than yellow. Also there are butterflies of blue color. There are fairly large butterflies compared to most others. The Swallowtails have two overlapping wings, which create a wing span anywhere from 5.5 - 8 cm in length. Some females even have a fore-wing span that reaches



Stationery card of Belarus 2005 with butterfly Machaon and color error



Artist drawing of Lebanon stamp 1965

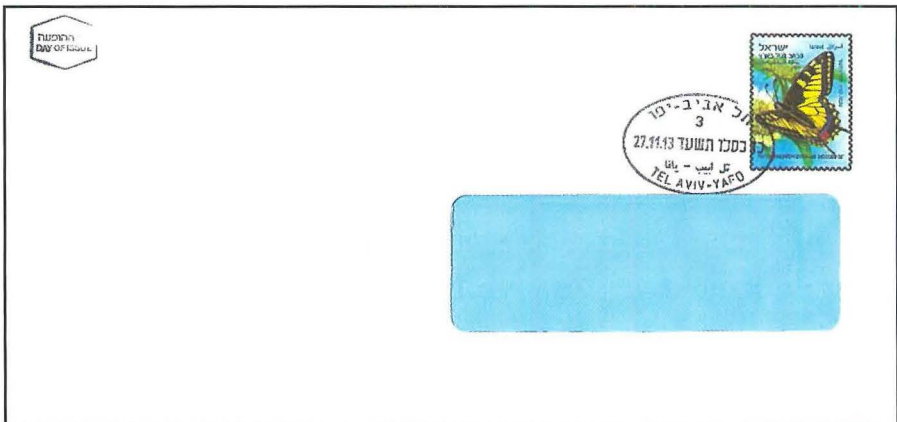
beyond 10 cm. This butterfly is present throughout the entire Palearctic region, ranging from Russia to China and Japan, (including the Himalayas and Taiwan), and across into Alaska, Canada, and the United States. In Asia, it is reported as far south as Saudi Arabia, Oman, the high mountains of Yemen, Lebanon, Iran and Israel. In southern Asia, it occurs in Pakistan and Kashmir, northern India, Nepal, Bhutan, and northern Myanmar. *Papilio machaon* inhabits alpine meadows in the Himalayas occurring from 2,000 feet (610 m) in Kashmir valley to 16,000 feet (4,900 m) in the Garhwal Himalayas. A large areal provided an opportunity for the emergence of many subspecies of *Machaon*. There are 37 recognized subspecies of this butterfly.



Stamp of USSR 1987 with error



Variety of Iran stamp 1974 with *Machaon*



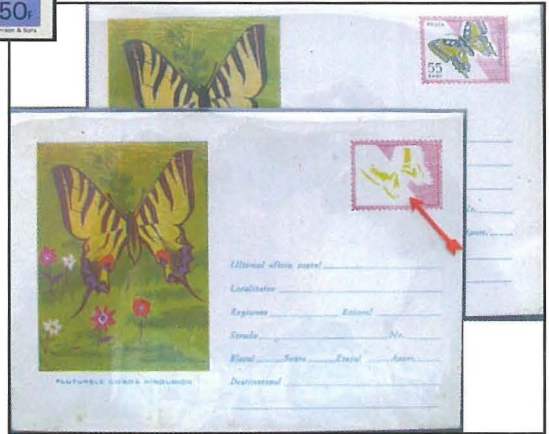
Entire postal of Israel 2013 with butterfly *Papilio machaon syriacus*

Throughout most of its range the Swallowtail shows itself to be highly adaptable, utilising a wide variety of habitats including sub-arctic tundra in Canada, prairies, woodlands and arid canyons in the south of the USA; hay meadows, roadside verges, river banks and sub-alpine pastures in Europe; high montane habitats in the Atlas mountains of north Africa, and semi-cultivated habitats in the Mediterranean area. The butterfly has a characteristic powerful gliding flight, and is capable of covering large distances. The Swallowtail butterfly flies so gracefully, swiftly and easily as a bird, that you can just admire this beauty. On warm sunny



Imperforated stamp of Gabon 1986 with butterfly Machaon

days, male Swallowtails patrol back and forth along a regular route in search of females. Often both sexes home in on a particular clump of bushes, where courtship and copulation take place. In the morning, and again in late afternoon both sexes can be seen flying freely about their habitat, pausing regularly to nectar at the



Entire postal of Romania 1961 with color error



Imperforated stamp and specimen of Tonga 1987 with butterfly Machaon

pink flowers of angelica, knapweeds, marsh thistles, red campion, ragged robin and valerian. When nectaring they keep their wings constantly fluttering to prevent the weight of their bodies from dragging down on the fragile flowers. Like all butterflies, the Swallowtails can be effective pollinators. The flight of Swallowtails is characterized by the strong flapping of their wings during the months of May and June.

The butterflies of the north have one flight sometime in May through July while those of the south have two flights. Pupae of machaon, attached to the stalk of a herbaceous plant or shrub, hibernate near the ground and only in May of them appear butterflies. They lay eggs, caterpillars feed and in the beginning of August

the second generation of butterflies comes out. They lay eggs, caterpillars pupate in September, pupae winter and ... further in a circle.

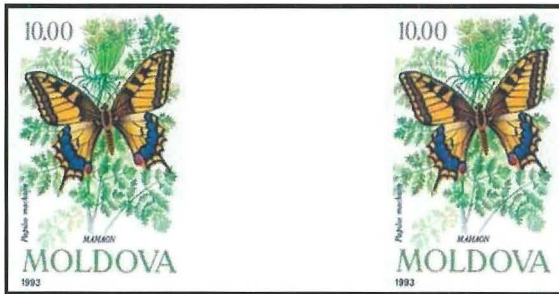
Butterfly Machaon is one of the most magnificent insects. It is distinguished by a chic multi-colored color. At the same time, the shape of the butterfly's wings is unusually beautiful. This is one of the most elegant butterflies in Europe. In view of their scarcity, butterflies



Imperforated stamp of Hungary 1959



Meter mark of Great Britain with butterfly Machaon



Imperforated pair stamps of Moldova 1993 with butterfly Machaon

do not cause any damage to agriculture and need protection. Butterfly Papilio machaon is protected by law in six provinces of Austria, Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania, and in the United Kingdom. The species are listed in the national Red Books of Ukraine, Moldova, Lithuania, Latvia, and Germany.

Aesthetically butterflies Papilio machaon are unique and therefore by spectacular appearance the popularity of the butterfly in human society has become very great. «Perho» (Butterfly) was a paint product family name of the Finnish company «Suomen Väri- ja Vernissa Tehdas Oy». The company used firm meter mark with stylized butterfly Machaon on firm cover. Also is known butterfly Machaon as trade mark of American company I.P.Farnum. Writer and entomologist Vladimir Nabokov dedicated the lines



Corporate envelope of Finland 1954

of his poem “Butterflies” to the Machaon:

From afar you will learn of machaon
 on solar tropical beauty:
 swept along the mildew
 and sat down on a dandelion by the
 highway.

Strike the net, - and in the grid rustling
 loud.

Oh, yellow demon, how trembling you
 are!

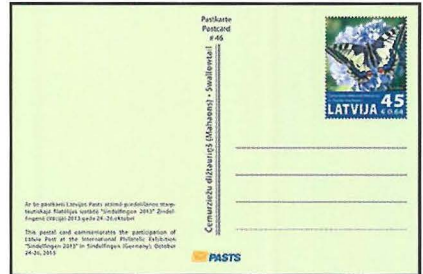
I’m afraid to break the jagged edges
 and black finest tails.

Aim, - but prevent the branches;
 you will wave, - but he flashed, and was such,
 and are poured from an inverted grid
 only torn crosses of flowers ...

Butterfly Machaon is so popular that it is depicted on the coat of arms of Skrudalienas volost (small rural district) of Latvia. Subspecies *Papilio machaon melitensis* is the largest butterfly in the Maltese Islands. The race occurring locally is endemic, that is, it is not found anywhere else. In the not so distant past it was much common but like most



Souvenir post card of USA 1908



Stationery card of Latvia 2013 with butterfly Machaon



Stamp of Malta 2002 with butterfly *Papilio machaon melitensis*



Proofs of Monaco 1987 with butterfly Machaon

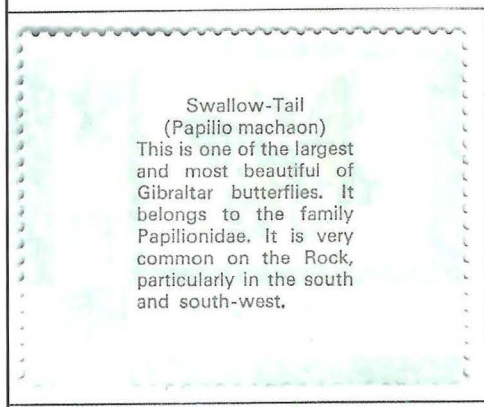
butterflies it has declined drastically through human activities. In 1976 this butterfly was figured on the 10Lm Gold Coin of Malta. This butterfly is also the logo of the National Museum of Natural History of Malta.

How to keep this magnificent butterfly? Butterfly Machaon lives only about three weeks. We admire these fragile creatures, their light flight, we marvel at the life cycle and amazing transformation. Let's watch their life in flight, in the wild, and they will please us with their beauty. It is impossible not to admire these gentle creatures!

I hope that my article, illustrated with unusual philatelic material, will be stimulate interest of philatelists in studying of philatelic material of the world with butterflies. I wish new interesting discoveries for philatelic enthusiasts.

Author always glad to help for philatelists in creation or improve of philatelic exhibit on butterflies and moths. My address for letters is the next: Vladimir Kachan, street Kulibina

9-49, Minsk-52, BY-220052, Republic of Belarus, e-mail: vladimirkachan@mail.ru



Stamp of Gibraltar 1977 with butterfly Machaon and advertisement on back side of stamp

Please remit your membership dues for 2019 immediately

to Mr John Cardona, 56 Triq Santa Marija - Tarxien TXN 1703

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