

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly Flutters On U.S. Postal Stamp *Adds Beauty to Large Greeting Cards and 2-Ounce Letters*

To obtain a high-resolution image of the stamp for media use only, email mark.r.saunders@usps.gov.

BALTIMORE, MD — Maryland's official insect — the Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly — spreads its wings to take flight today through the nation's mail as a 65-cent First-Class Mail stamp. The stamp is good for mailing large greeting cards and other non-standard shaped and sized mail, and for mailing First-Class Mail letters weighing up to 2 ounces.

"This beautiful stamp will be coveted by anyone having an interest in butterflies, both in Maryland and across the nation," said U.S. Postal Service Stamp Services Manager Stephen Kearney. "As a customer convenience, many large greeting cards requiring the additional postage will feature a silhouette of a butterfly to suggest using the stamp." The stamp is now available at Post Offices nationwide, online at usps.com and by phone at 800-782-6724.

Tom Engeman of Bethany Beach, DE, created the image on a computer using images of preserved butterflies as a starting point. The result is a highly stylized, simplified image of a Baltimore Checkerspot rather than an exact replica. He worked under the art direction of Derry Noyes of Washington, DC.

The Postal Service began the line of stamps featuring butterflies with the Monarch issuance in 2010. Butterflies have previously graced many other stamps, including Prairie Ironweed, Southern Dogface Butterfly (2007), Common Buckeye Butterfly (2006) and Tiger Swallowtail (1987).

Naming the Checkerspot

Like the Baltimore Oriole, the Baltimore Checkerspot is named after George Calvert, Lord Baltimore, who helped found the colony of Maryland, because the butterfly's colors resemble those on Calvert's coat of arms. Since 1973, the Baltimore Checkerspot has been the official insect of the state of Maryland. A medium-sized butterfly with a wing span of 1.75 to 2.75 inches, the Baltimore Checkerspot ranges from southern Canada to Georgia, and may be found as far west as Nebraska. Its orange and white spots form a checkered pattern on its black wings. The butterfly is often found in wet meadows where its primary food plant, the turtlehead, grows.

Other 2012 Stamps

Customers may view the Baltimore Checkerspot Butterfly stamp as well as many of this year's other stamps on Facebook at [facebook.com/USPSStamps](https://www.facebook.com/USPSStamps), through *Twitter* [@USPSstamps](https://twitter.com/USPSstamps) or on the website *Beyond the Perf* at beyondtheperf.com/2012-preview. *Beyond the Perf* is the Postal Service's online site for background on upcoming stamp subjects, first-day-of-issue events and other philatelic news.

How to Order the First-Day-of-Issue Postmark

Customers have 60 days to obtain the first-day-of-issue postmark by mail. They may purchase new stamps at a local Post Office, at The Postal Store website at usps.com/shop or by calling 800-STAMP-24. They should affix the stamps to envelopes of their choice, address the envelopes to themselves or others and place them in larger envelopes addressed to:

Baltimore Checkerspot (Butterfly) Stamp
Postmaster
8409 Lee Highway
Merrifield, VA 22116-9998

After applying the first-day-of-issue postmark, the Postal Service will return the envelopes by mail. There is no charge for the postmark. All orders must be postmarked by March 20, 2012.

How to Order First-Day Covers

The Postal Service also offers first-day covers for new stamp issues and Postal Service stationery items postmarked with the official first-day-of-issue cancellation. Each item has an individual catalog number and is offered in the quarterly *USA Philatelic* catalog. Customers may request a free catalog by calling 800-STAMP-24 or writing to:

Information Fulfillment
Dept. 6270
U.S. Postal Service
P.O. Box 219014
Kansas City, MO 64121-9014

Philatelic Product

There is one philatelic product available for this stamp issue 114861, First-Day Cover, \$1.09.

The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations.

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A self-supporting government enterprise, the U.S. Postal Service is the only delivery service that reaches every address in the nation, 151 million residences, businesses and Post Office Boxes. The Postal Service receives no tax dollars for operating expenses, and relies on the sale of postage, products and services to fund its operations. With 32,000 retail locations and the most frequently visited website in the federal government, usps.com, the Postal Service has annual revenue of more than \$65 billion and delivers nearly 40 percent of the world's mail. If it were a private sector company, the U.S. Postal Service would rank 35th in the 2011 Fortune 500. Black Enterprise and Hispanic Business magazines ranked the Postal Service as a leader in workforce diversity. The Postal Service has been named the Most Trusted Government Agency for six years and the sixth Most Trusted Business in the nation by the Ponemon Institute.

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