SPIDERS OF SOUTHERN AFRICA

1ssued 30th July 2003

(Extracted from Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 3 of 2003)[2]

Six of the more common spiders (arachnids) have been selected for this issue, and although not all spiders are harmful or deadly to humans, all spiders have poison glands and use their toxin to catch and immobilize their prey before consuming them. Similar to snake venom, spider poison comes in three different varieties: neurotoxic, which attacks the nervous system; cytotoxic, which attacks the body cells, such as skin and fresh and hemotoxic, which breaks down the prey's blood cells.

$150 The Baboon Spider - Genus *harpactira*



The Baboon Spider is big, hairy and scary! They are dark brown to black in colour and live in silk lined burrows in the ground. Baboon Spiders are heavily built with a body, head to end of abdomen of approximately 45mm and their leg span can be as much as 95mm. The pedipalps (type of feelers) are particularly long and thick. The silk glands or spinnerets protrude beyond the abdomen.

The jaws or chelicerae are directed forwards and the spider strikes downwards with its fangs. In all other spiders the fangs close with a pincer movement. Generally, eight simple eyes are located towards the front of the Cephalothorax. The Baboon Spider bite can be extremely painful though not deadly and the victim will feel nauseous and may go into shock.



$200 The Rain Spider - *Genus palystes*

The Rain Spider, so called because they are seen mostly during the rainy season, are also arachnids and should not be confused with the Red Roman which is NOT a spider and not poisonous. The spider is greyish in colour with slightly darker markings on abdomen. Legs are banded with yellow and dark brown underneath.

The Rain Spider is a nocturnal, free ranging hunter and can run very swiftly and is often attracted indoors by lights in order to prey on insects. Large in size with head to end of abdomen of approximately 35mm. Leg span 60-70mm. A bite from this spider is extremely painful and some authorities recommend an anti-tetanus injection.

$600 The Black Button or Widow Spider -
Lactrodectus renivulvatus



The Black Button or Widow Spider is potentially the most deadly of Zimbabwean spiders and Zimbabwe has four different types. The Black Widow's cobweb normally has snare threads leading to ground at the base of rocks, logs and in rubble. Their colour varies from dark brown to deep black. They have no markings on the underside but some have red or orange stripes or dots on the top.

Victims may or may not feel the bite or any immediate pain. As the Neurotoxin venom goes through the system, pain in the legs and chest, excessive sweating, nausea and stomach cramps are experienced. Most at risk are children who do not have the body mass to absorb the poison

and persons who have heart problems and breathing problems such as asthma. The spider is not generally aggressive but can often take up residence in a house where it may become dangerous if not noticed. Size from head to end of abdomen of approximately 10-15mm in size. Nocturnal.



$900 The Wolf Spider- *Family lycosidae*
Wolf Spiders are the true Tarantulas of Zimbabwe, although the name is often mistakenly given to Baboon spiders. The spider is brown or grey with symmetrical markings on the abdomen, sometimes black underneath with a radiating pattern on head. The Wolf Spider is notable in that it has one pair of large eyes. Generally, it is free roaming but others will build trapdoor tunnels. One genus Hippasa, builds a funnel web to catch its prey.

The female Wolf Spider carries an egg sac attached to its spinnerets until the young hatch, then they ride on the mothers back. The male's pedipalps (feelers) are decorated with tufts of hair. The size from head to end of abdomen is approximately 30mm in size. The I span can be as much as 80mm.

$1,250 The Violin Spider-*family loxoscelidae*
The Violin Spider has long slender legs and is often mistaken for the harmless Daddy long legs spider but do not hang upside down in cobwebs. It has a strong cytotoxic venom and is the most villainous of poison carriers and can often cause severe necrosis. They are nocturnal hunters who hide in dark places during the day. They are fairly common and often live in houses in Zimbabwe.



They will often enter a bed in the early morning or hide inside shoes and clothing where they can inflict a fairly painless bite which can become a red, painful swelling after about six hours. The resulting wound can easily become gangrenous if not treated properly. In colour they are pale to dark reddish brown with a violin identifying mark of dark brown to blackish violin shape. The size from head to end of abdomen is approximately 10 - 15mm in size. Its spindly leg span is considerably larger.



$1600 The Wall Spider- *Family selenopidae*
The Wall Spider is very common in houses in Zimbabwe, they are mottled greys and browns in colour with flat bodies. Abdomens are heart-shaped and legs are held sideways, crab like. The Wall Spider builds flat, papery egg cases on walls, polls or bark. They are conspicuous on plain walls, hide in cracks and move quickly to run down prey.

Their bite can be painful. The size from head to end of abdomen is approximately 10-15 mm in size. Its leg span can be as much as 70 mm

The Stamps

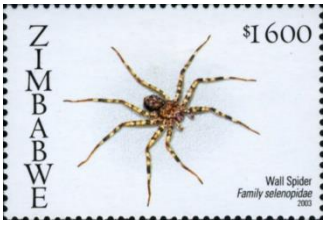


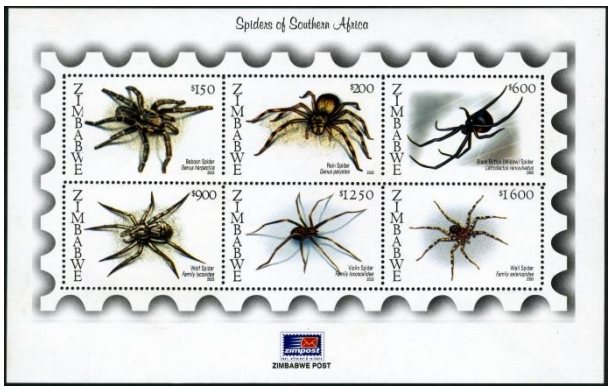












Miniature sheet at 50% size

Catalogue listings

SG	ZSC[1]	Value	Description
1108	537	$150	Baboon Spider
1109	538	$200	Rain Spider
1110	539	$600	Black Button (Widow) Spider
1111	540	$900	Wolf Spider
1112	541	$1,250	Violin Spider
1113	542	$1,600	Wall Spider
MS1114	MS6		Miniature sheet (se-tenant block of 6 values)

Technical details

Stamp size: Sheet stamps: 42 x 28 mm
Miniature sheet: 159 x 98 mm

Sheet Size: 50 stamps (10 rows of 5 stamps), two panes per printed sheet

Artist:	Darren Herbert
Paper:	ZSC paper type J: paper described by Zimpost as "Chancellor Litho PVA Gummed Postage Stamp Paper". This paper is produced by Tullis Russell Coaters of Glenrothes, Fife, Scotland. Under UV there is no fluorescence either front or back, the stamp appears to be every dark.
Print colours:	Cyan, magenta, yellow & black
Perforations:	Stamps and miniature sheet: SG 14½, ZSC 14¼ Top margin: Perforated through. Other margins: Imperforate
Printer:	NatPrint, Harare, Zimbabwe
Printer's Imprint:	Sheets stamps only. Bottom Margin, below Row 10 Column 3. Imprint printed in black
Cylinder numbers:	Sheets stamps only. Top margin above R1/1. Colours from left – cyan, magenta, yellow, black
Colour register:	Sheets stamps only. Type TL 4– round boxed – left margin opposite R1/1. Colours reading down **–** cyan, magenta, yellow, black
Sheet Value:	Sheets stamps only. Top margin, above R1/5, printed in black.
Sheet Number:	Sheets stamps only. Type SN 7 with printed 'ZIMPOST' prefix, right margin opposite R1/5, reading down
Print numbers:	\$150 1,500,000 \$200 1,500,000 \$600 200,000 \$900 230,000 \$1,250 200,000 \$1,600 200,000 Miniature sheets - unpublished
Issue date:	30th July, 2003

Miniature sheet

These miniature sheets have no perforations through the margins. In simple terms the sheetlets were produced using the comb perforators, in a laborious process of perforating with the head and teeth of the comb separately. For more details on this process see the section of the Encyclopaedia headed "the Local Printing of Rhodesian & Zimbabwean Stamps".

As a result of this perforating process, with the need to take the sheets through the perforators twice, some variations in the positioning of the perforations can be found. This slight movement should be considered normal.

Dates of release

Although the sheet stamps appear to have been released on due date, 30th July, 2003, due to technical reasons the miniature sheet was not available until 28th October 2003. In addition, the maxi-card produced was also delivered and released late, it is thought that this was not until late August or early September.

Never-the-less the Philatelic Bureau produced first day covers for both the miniature sheet and the maxi-card with Harare ~First Day of Issue cancellations for 30th July, 2003

Postage Rates

At the time of release the values of the stamps do not reflect the known postage rates at the time, see below. Nor did the stamp values reflect the increased postal rates from 20th August, 2003. Rod Kantor recalls that the Spider stamps were designed and printed in anticipation of a new postal tariff that was subsequently not approved. Nevertheless, as the stamps had been printed the issue went ahead despite being full of denominations of no particular use

Postal rates with effect from	1st May 2003	20th August 2003	Probable anticipated rates
Local	$100	$300	$150
Africa	$400	$1,500	$900
Europe	$550	$2,100	$1,250
Rest of the world	$700	$2,700	$1,600

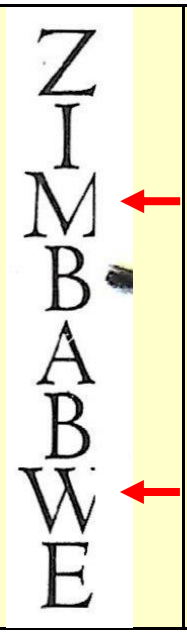
Maxi-card



Single maxi-card produced with the six spiders depicted on the stamps.
(Maxi-card illustrated at 50% of size)

Listed varieties

No listed varieties have been noted.



Common to all miniature sheets: $150 value

The ‘M’ has only half of the right leg

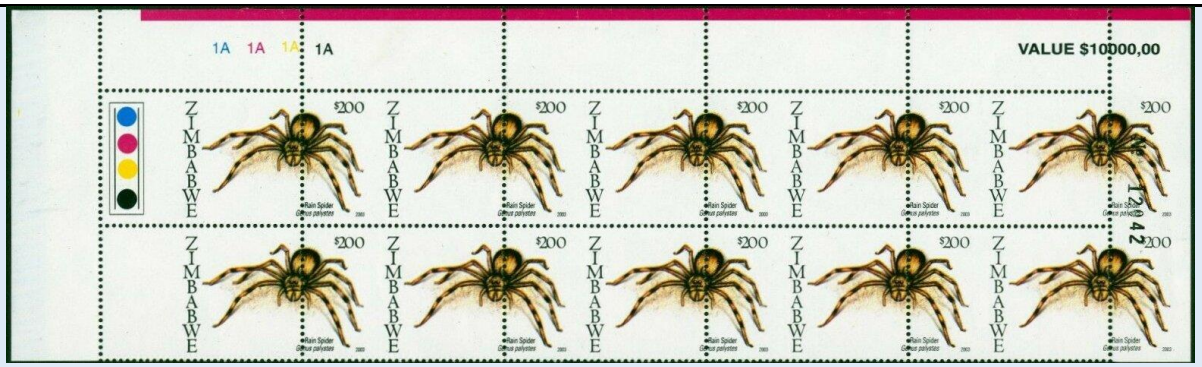
The ‘W’ is missing part of the right leg

Unlisted Varieties

There are numerous small dots and specks in the printing of these stamps, particularly in the backgrounds.



$200: Printing sheet mis-cut, with magenta strip to top. The top margin is wider than normal, the magenta strip should have been part of the sheet waste. (also reported on cylinder 1B block of 4)



$200: Double top row, with sheet miscut; shift ofperforations to the left; right margin with sheet number printed on to column 5 stamps.
(Courtesy of Jefferson Ritson)



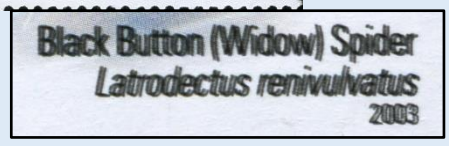
$200: Appears to be a major shift of the perforations, but they stop short of the right stamp. Possible major mis-cut of the sheet, possibly prior to perforating, which resulted in the apparent perf shift
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)





$200: Double printing of the black plate
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)





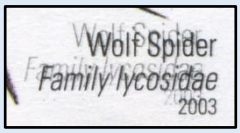
$600: Double printing of the black plate



$900: strip of 5 across sheet, with progressive doubling of the black ink from left to right

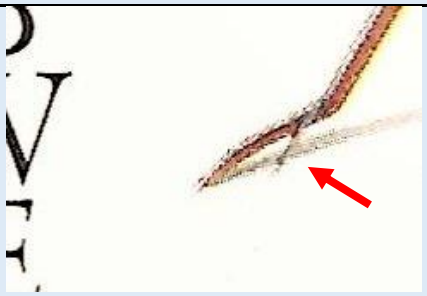


Stamp to the left is from column 5 and shows the greatest extent of the double printing of the black ink

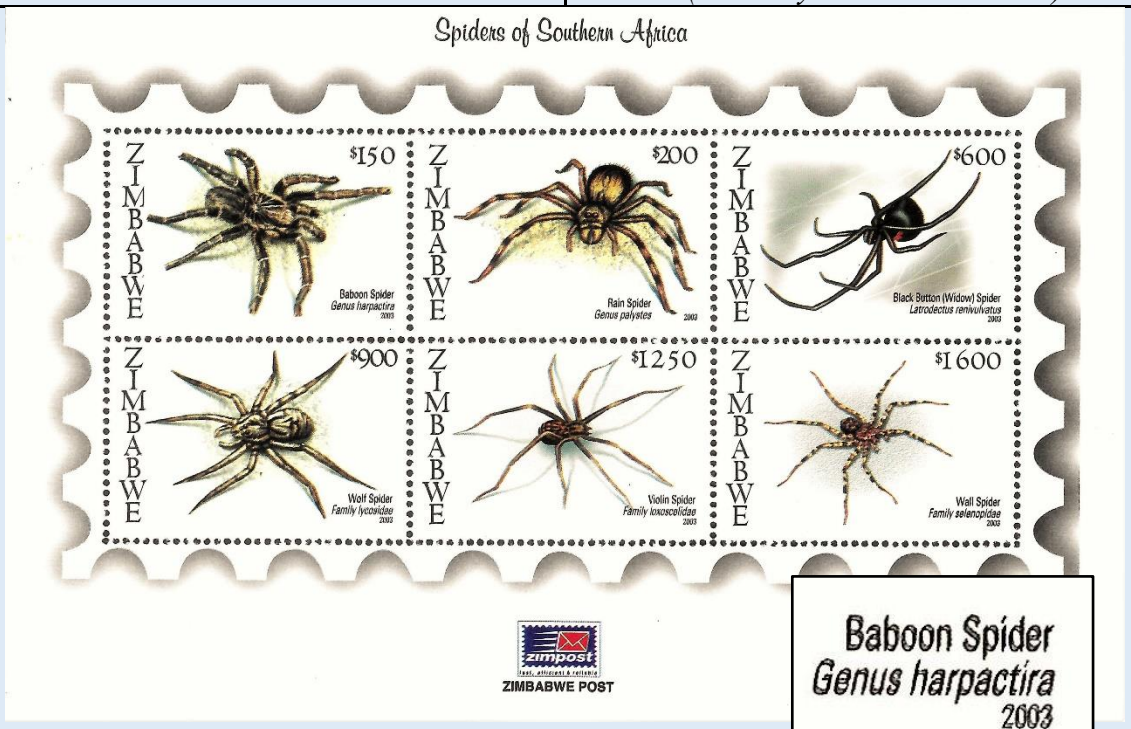




$1,250: Double printing of black plate
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)



Miniature sheet: $1,250 value.
Spur on bottom left left of spider
(Courtsey Narendhra Morar)



Miniature sheet: Double of black printing through out
(Courtesy Narendhra Morar)



Miniature sheet: Imperforate
(Source eBay August 2023)

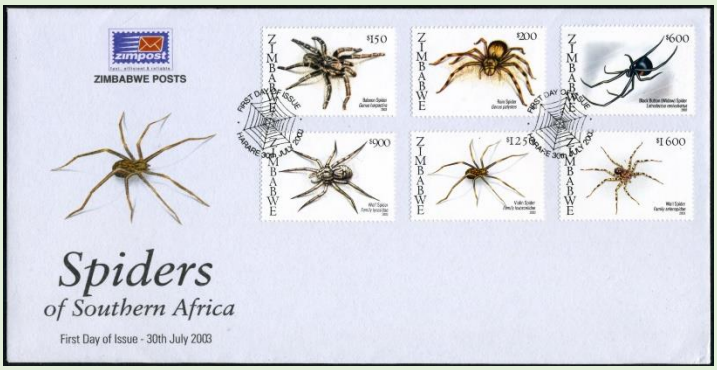
First Day Cover

The cover numbering comes from the catalogue produced by Geoff Brakspear.

A pictorial first day of issue canceller was produced for this issued and was used by the Philatelic Bureau. Other first day cover cancellers continued to be used at main post offices.

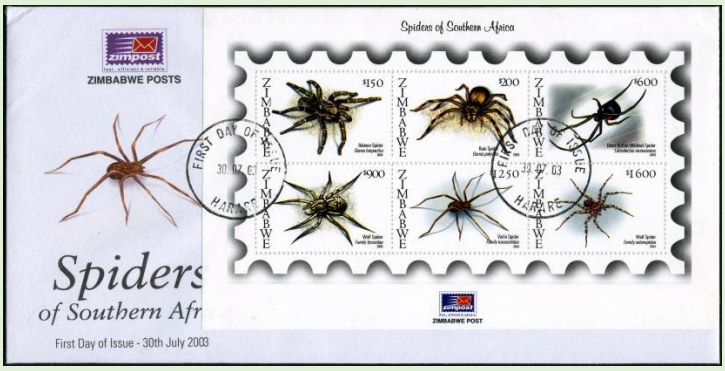


ZW103.1 (Zimpost)



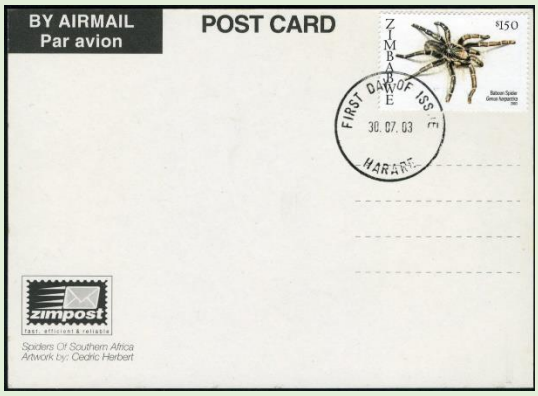
Cover with set of stamps, placed on cover using Autophix machine and printed pictorial cancellation.
220 x 110 mm

ZW103.1 (MS) (Zimpost)



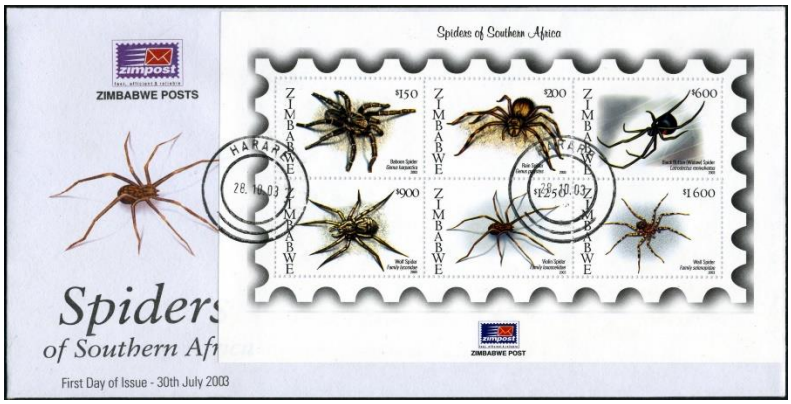
Miniature sheet with hand struck
First Day of Issue, Harare, cancellation for 30th July, 2003

ZW103.3 (Maxi-card) (Zimpost)



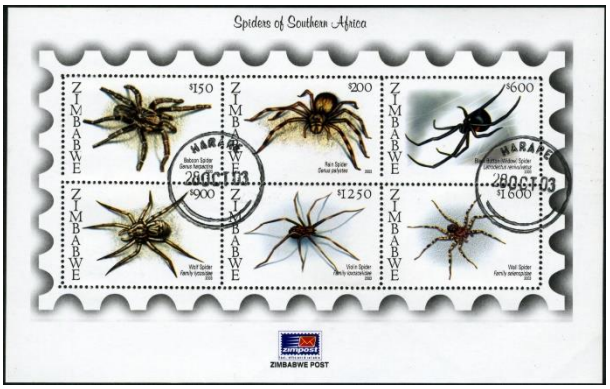
The Philatelic Bureau only intended the $150 stamp to be used
with the First Day of Issue maxi-card, Harare cancellation for 30th July,2003.

Related Material

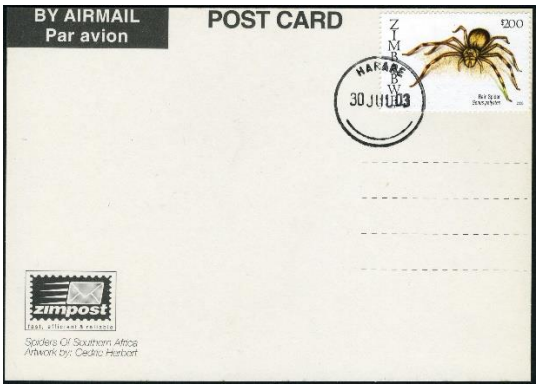


First day cover reflecting the actual date of release of the
miniature sheet, 28th October 2003.

Note postmark was for Harare, and not the First Day of Issue canceller



Miniature sheet, with Harare postmark reflecting
actual date of release 24th October 2003

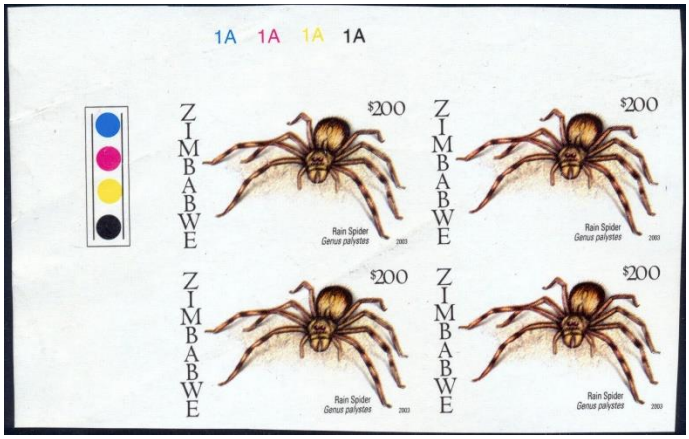


Maxi-cards with each of the stamps on the back of the card,
date stamped Harare 30 JUL 2003.
The above illustration shows the $200 value

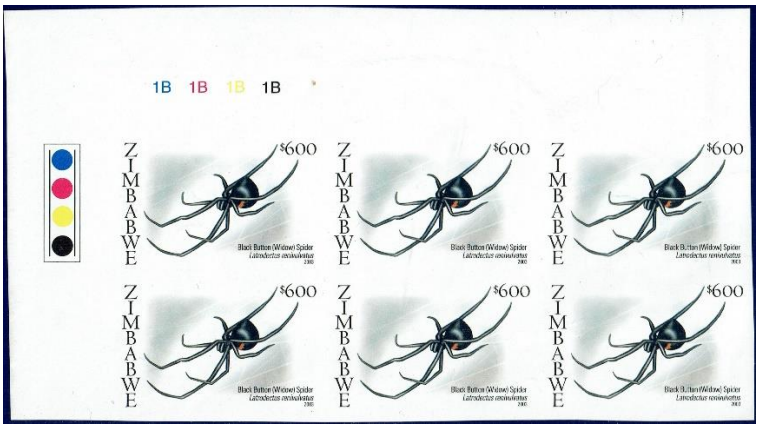


The Philatelic Bureau was requested to produce a maxi-card,
with the correct postage for the actual date of release of the card.
The card forwarded was postmarked with the Harare canceller for 15th July 2003,
which is a date before the release of the stamps on 30th July.
It is probable that with the correct postcard rate would be $300,
the Bureau intended to have the month as September or October.

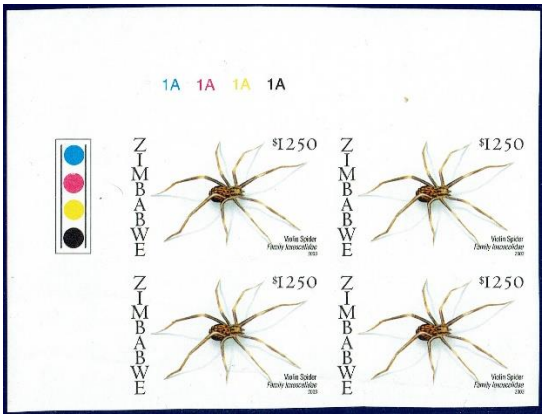
Proof material



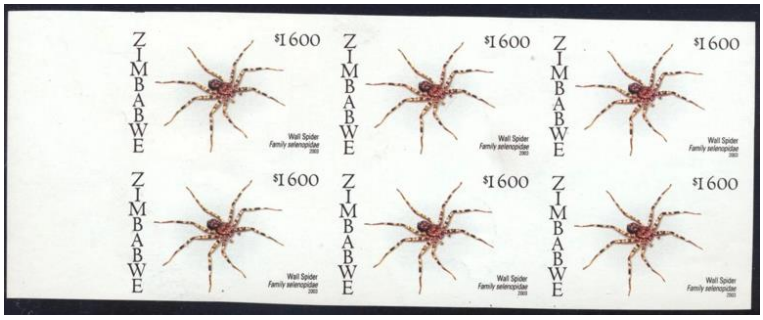
$200: Cylinder 1A imperforate proof block
(Source eBay October 2023)



$600: Cylinder 1B proof block
(Source eBay December 2023)



$1,200: Cylinder 1A imperforate proof block
(Source eBay February 2024)

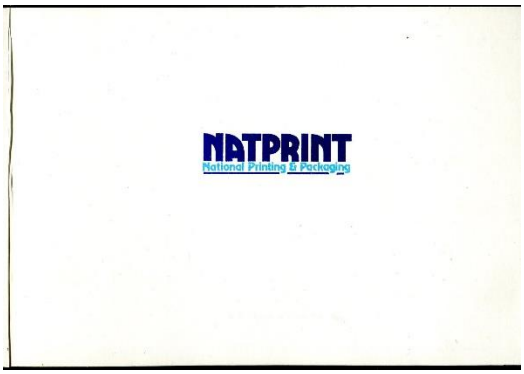


$1,600: Imperforate proof block
(Source eBay June 2025)

Natprint Proof Presentation Cards

Presentation cards produced by Natprint with imperforate proofs of the stamps to be issued. The presentation cards were forwarded to the PTC for approval of the final product. The value on five of the proof stamps were to change to alternative values. The values of the proof stamps reflected postal rates effective from 1st May, 2003.

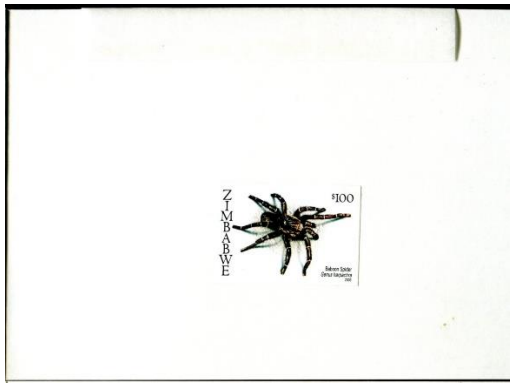
(Courtesy of Jefferson Ritson)



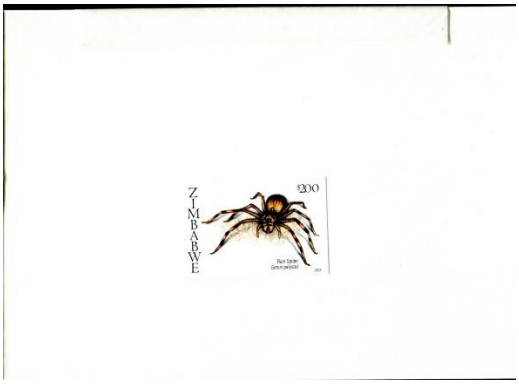
Front cover



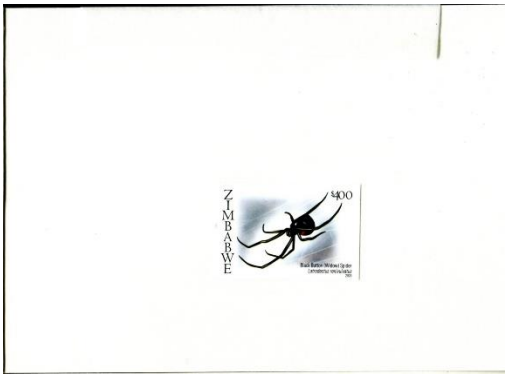
Inside front cover



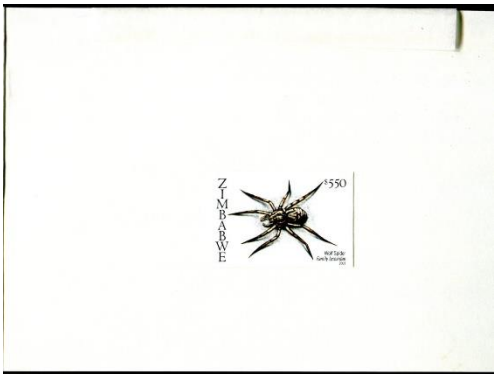
$100 stamp (changed to $150)



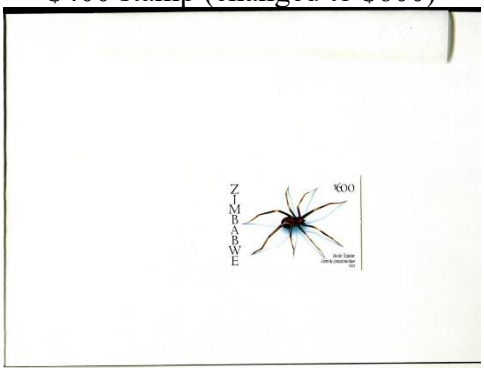
$200 stamp (value not changed)



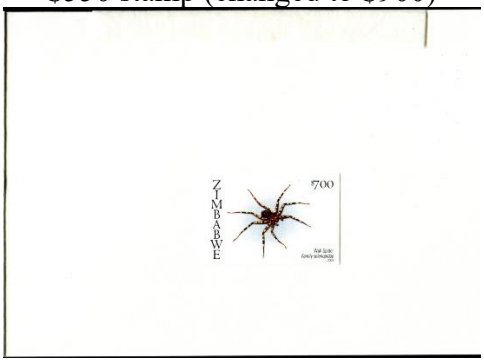
$400 stamp (changed to $600)



$550 stamp (changed to $900)



$600 stamp (changed to $1,250)



$700 stamp (changed to $1,600)



Specimen First Day Cover



Miniature sheets:

Printer's waste

(Courtesy of Pat Flanagan)



Bibliography:

1. "The Zimbabwean Concise Postage Stamp Catalogue", published by Harare Stamp Company, edited by Ken Allanson, Mike Amos and Geoff Brakspear. The catalogue continues to be updated and expanded by Geoff Brakspear
2. Zimbabwe Post, Philatelic Bureau Bulletin No 3 of 2003 (Note the Additional Definitive issue of 24th June, had its bulleting as No 3 of 2003, this issue should have been No 4 of 2003)

Additions/Changes since December 2020	
12/2021	Specimen FDC
3/2023	Miniature sheet printer's waste
12/2023	$200 & $600 imperforate proof material
4/2024	Replaced $600 proof block, added £1,200 proof block
8/2025	$1,600 proof block