

Join us for a relaxed nature walk to view the amazing sight of

# Monarch Butterflies Migration

Saturday, December 13, 10.30 at Goleta Butterfly Grove



Each year between November to February the Monarch butterflies migrate to California. One of the best spots to view this migration is the butterfly grove in Goleta, adjacent to Sperling Preserve on Ellwood Mesa.

**Admission:** FREE

**Location:**

We will be meeting at 10.30 at the trail starting point.

Free parking is available in the lot at the Ellwood Mesa Open Space on Hollister Avenue, from there follow the signs to the trail.

Directions: Exit Highway 101 at Hollister Avenue and turn toward the ocean. Turn left onto Hollister Avenue. After 6 miles, turn right at the stoplight for Ellwood School.

**For more information:**

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\* if you are interested in supporting the Monarch Butterfly Docent Program, City of Goleta accept donations.

## The Monarch Butterfly Migration:

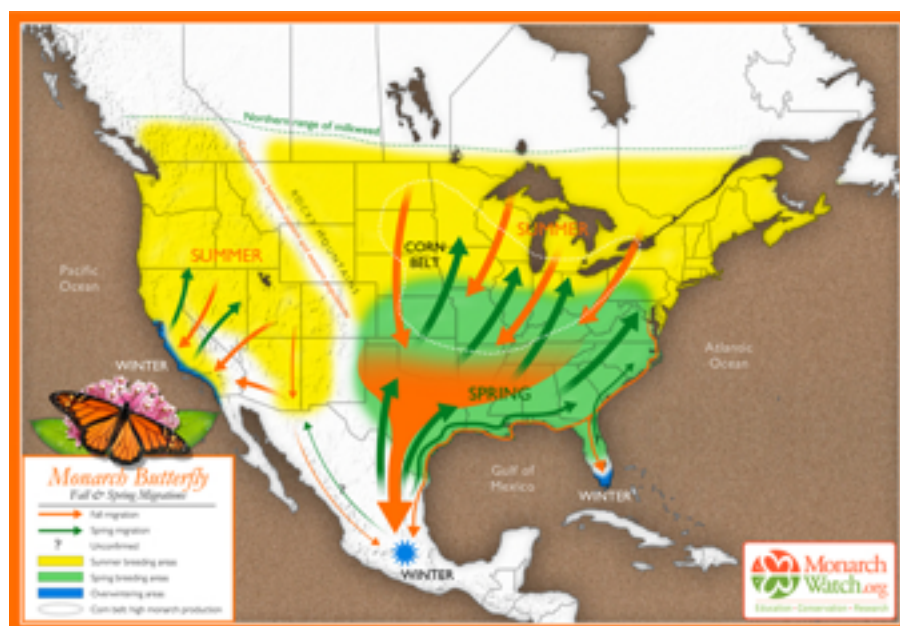
The flight of the butterflies is the longest known distance insect migration on Earth – and it's been occurring for thousands of years. Monarch butterflies are known for the incredible mass migration that brings millions of them to California and Mexico each winter. North American monarchs are the only butterflies that make such a massive journey—up to 3,000 miles (4,828 kilometers). The insects must begin this journey each fall ahead of cold weather, which will kill them if they tarry too long.

Monarch butterflies begin life as eggs and hatch as larvae that eat their eggshells and, subsequently, the milkweed plants on which they were placed. (Monarchs are dependent on milkweed plants, which larvae eat nearly exclusively.)

Fattening larvae become colorful caterpillars, then create a hard protective case around themselves as they enter the pupa stage. They emerge as beautifully colored, black-orange-and-white adults. The colorful pattern makes monarchs easy to identify. The distinctive pattern warns predators that the insects are foul tasting and poisonous.

Butterflies that emerge from chrysalides (pupa state) in late summer and early fall are different from those that do so during the longer days and warmer weather of summer. These monarchs are born to fly, and know because of the changing weather that they must prepare for their lengthy journey.

Only monarchs born in late summer or early fall make the migration, and they make only one round trip. By the time next year's winter migration begins, several summer generations will have lived and died and it will be last year's migrators' great grandchildren that make the trip. Yet somehow these new generations know the way, and follow the same routes their ancestors took—sometimes even returning to the same tree.



## The Monarch Butterfly Conservation Status:

Although the monarch butterfly is not considered to be globally threatened, the North American migration is recognized by the IUCN to be an **endangered biological phenomenon**.

This is mainly due to the variety of threats faced by the butterflies at the winter sites, including logging and clearance for agriculture in Mexico, and coastal land development in California. In addition, outside the wintering sites monarch butterflies are further affected by the use of pesticides, habitat loss, the loss of milkweed populations, parasites, and climate change.

In order to protect migratory populations of the monarch butterfly at the wintering grounds in Mexico, in 1986, the **Monarch Butterfly Biosphere Reserve** was established. This World Heritage property includes more than half of the overwintering colonies of the monarch butterfly's eastern population.

In 2008, the Commission for Environmental Cooperation created **The North American Monarch Conservation Plan**, which details a strategy for conserving and maintaining the Monarch butterfly population through international cooperation between Canada, The United States and Mexico. The plan's aims include the decrease or elimination of deforestation at the wintering grounds; addressing habitat loss and fragmentation along the migratory route and at the breeding grounds; public education about the threats faced by this species; and increased monitoring during migrations. Various governmental and non-governmental organisations, such as The Xerces Society, are currently working to achieve these goals.

Their work will help to ensure that this spectacular butterfly is preserved and that its extraordinary migratory journey will be witnessed by future generations.



## Further reading and educational resources:

Monarch butterflies are the most beautiful of all butterflies, some say, and are considered the “king” of the butterflies, hence the name “monarch”

## Learn about monarch butterfly biology, life cycle and more:

<http://www.monarchlab.org/mitc/>

<http://www.eirc.org/website/programs-services/global-connection/monarch-teacher-network/>



## Learn more about monarch butterfly conservation:

- The Xerces Society - California monarchs:  
[www.xerces.org/california-monarchs](http://www.xerces.org/california-monarchs)
- CEC North American Monarch Conservation Plan:  
[http://www.cec.org/Page.asp?PageID=30107&SiteNodeID=484&BL\\_ExpandID](http://www.cec.org/Page.asp?PageID=30107&SiteNodeID=484&BL_ExpandID)  
[www.cec.org/pubs\\_docs/documents/index.cfm?varlan=english&ID=2300](http://www.cec.org/pubs_docs/documents/index.cfm?varlan=english&ID=2300)
- WWF - Monarch Butterflies:  
[www.worldwildlife.org/species/finder/monarchbutterflies/monarchbutterflies.html](http://www.worldwildlife.org/species/finder/monarchbutterflies/monarchbutterflies.html)
- The Monarch Butterfly Sanctuary Foundation:  
[www.learner.org/jnorth/sm/aboutmbsf.html](http://www.learner.org/jnorth/sm/aboutmbsf.html)

## For information how to get involved:

Plant your own butterfly garden:

<http://www.flightofthebutterflies.com/get-involved/>

