





# The Monarch



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The Monarch is one of the best-known butterfly species around the world. In Canada, it can be found in almost all provinces except Newfoundland.



The Monarch relies on milkweed plants for breeding and is found where milkweed grows. Monarch eggs are cream or white-coloured with ridges running from top to bottom. They are the size of a pencil tip and are usually laid on the underside of milkweed leaves. As a caterpillar, the Monarch is distinctively white, yellow, and black-banded. It transforms into a large, showy butterfly with orange and black wings, bordered with white spots.

## Migration



Unlike most butterflies, the Monarch migrates every year to and from Canada to several different locations. Monarchs migrate south to spend the winter in California and in Mexico. The ones we have in New Brunswick migrate to and from the mountains of Central Mexico. The Monarch typically begins its migration southward in late summer or the fall and return to Canada in May or June, of each year. Although the average lifespan of the Monarch is only 2 to 6 weeks, the migrating generation can live up to 6 to 7 months through the fall and winter.

The most interesting part about the monarchs is that the individual Monarchs leaving Canada in the late summer or fall are not the same Monarchs that return in the spring. In some cases, the Monarchs that arrive in Cana-

da in the spring could be the second generation after departing Mexico.

The Monarch lives and helps pollinate during the spring and summer in Canada. The adult monarch feeds on flower nectar, and by doing so they transfer pollen from one flowering plant to another. This fertilizes the plants so they can produce the seeds and fruit we recognize and consume. Without pollinators, many crops and wildflowers would have difficulty surviving. Protecting Monarch and their habitat contributes to the conservation of biodiversity of Canada.

## Sources of information

Government Of Canada Monarch Butterfly: profile of a species at risk.

