

# Monarch Butterfly

*Danaus plexippus*

Endangered

Fact Sheet · Colouring Page · Activities

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## Monarch Butterfly — Fact Sheet

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<b>Scientific name</b>	Danaus plexippus
<b>Conservation status</b>	Endangered
<b>Region</b>	North America — breeds from Canada to Mexico; overwinters in Michoacan, Mexico
<b>Habitat</b>	Meadows, fields, and milkweed patches across North America; overwinters in oyamel fir forests of Mexico
<b>Diet</b>	Nectar from wildflowers (adults); milkweed leaves only (caterpillars)
<b>Weight</b>	0.5 grams
<b>Size</b>	8.9–10.2 cm wingspan
<b>Lifespan</b>	2–6 weeks (summer adults); 6–9 months (migratory generation)
<b>Wild population</b>	Declined from ~1 billion to under 300 million since the 1980s

### Did You Know?

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- Monarch butterflies migrate up to 4,800 km from Canada to Mexico — one of the longest insect migrations on Earth!
- No single butterfly completes the full round trip — it takes 3 to 4 generations to complete the journey.
- Monarchs are toxic to predators — they absorb poison from milkweed plants that their caterpillars eat.
- Their striking orange-and-black colours warn predators: 'I taste terrible — do not eat me!'
- Scientists still don't fully understand how monarchs navigate using the sun, magnetic fields, and polarised light.
- A cluster of monarchs roosting together in trees is called a 'roost' — some contain millions of butterflies!

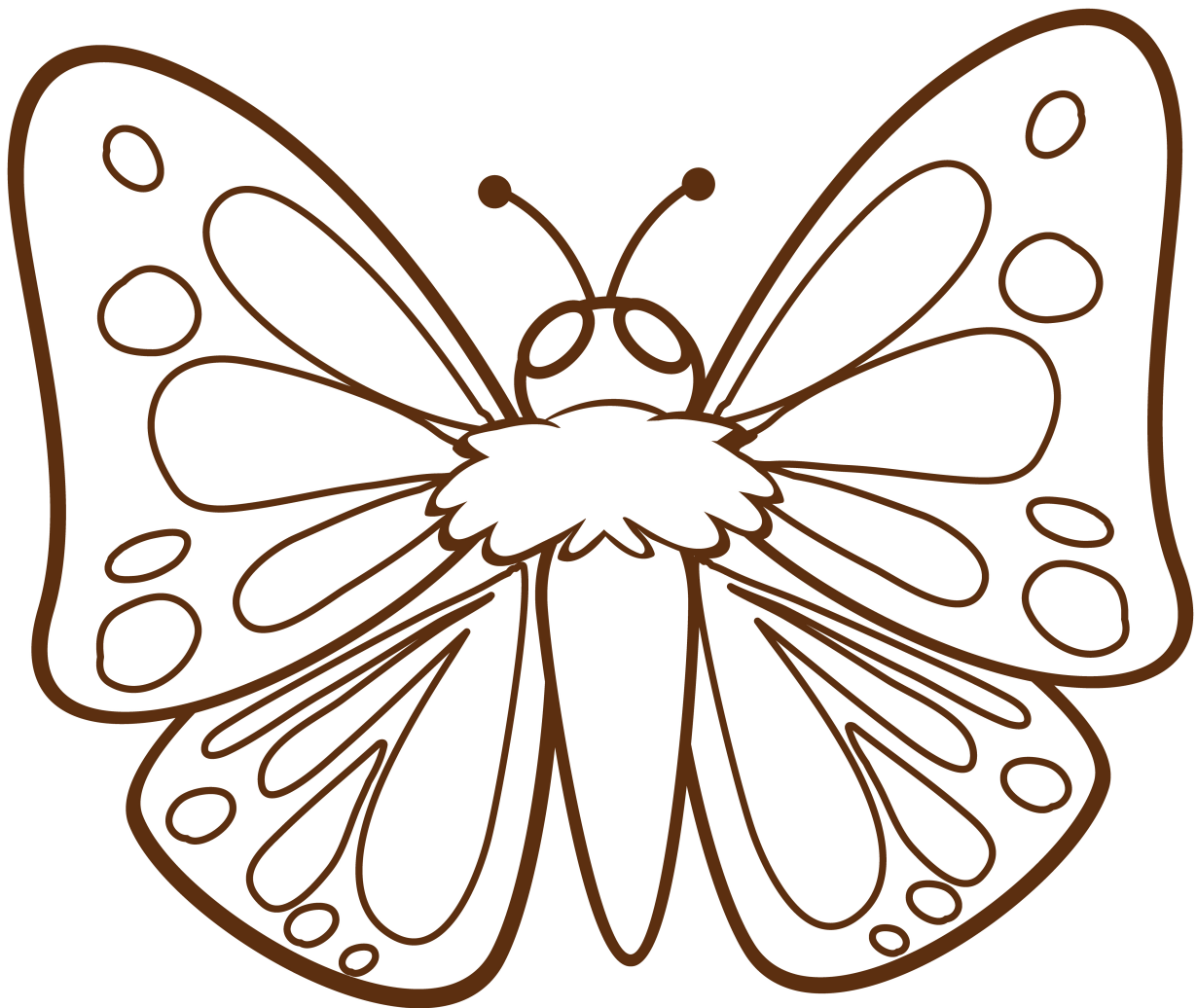
### Threats to Survival

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1. Loss of milkweed habitat from herbicide use and land conversion
2. Deforestation of overwintering forests in Mexico
3. Climate change disrupting migration timing and weather patterns
4. Pesticide use killing butterflies and their food plants

## Colour Me: Monarch Butterfly

*Monarch butterflies are bright orange with bold black borders and veins, and rows of white spots around the wing edges.*



# Monarch Butterfly — Activities

## Word Search

Find all 8 words hidden in the grid.

O	V	F	N	G	V	R	D	C	G	L	G
X	S	S	U	C	S	W	M	A	A	F	I
V	U	D	T	S	M	P	E	T	J	P	X
G	H	D	K	U	O	O	X	E	I	S	U
Y	M	M	J	O	N	L	I	R	R	L	U
W	I	I	L	R	A	L	C	P	E	X	G
N	G	L	Y	A	R	I	O	I	L	H	K
X	R	K	Y	N	C	N	G	L	Q	A	G
R	A	W	T	G	H	A	B	L	X	A	D
M	T	E	Y	E	H	T	E	A	R	S	T
C	E	E	G	J	X	E	W	R	G	S	H
M	H	D	B	U	T	T	E	R	F	L	Y

MONARCH	BUTTERFLY	MIGRATE	MILKWEED
MEXICO	ORANGE	POLLINATE	CATERPILLAR

## Match It Up

Draw a line from each word on the left to its meaning on the right.

<b>Monarch Butterfly</b>		carries pollen between flowers
<b>Milkweed</b>		the butterfly's transformation stage
<b>Migration</b>		makes an epic migration
<b>Pollinator</b>		a long seasonal journey
<b>Chrysalis</b>		the only plant caterpillars eat

## Fill in the Blanks

1. Monarchs migrate up to \_\_\_\_\_ km from Canada to Mexico.
2. Caterpillars only eat \_\_\_\_\_ leaves to survive.
3. Their orange colour warns predators that they are \_\_\_\_\_.
4. It takes \_\_\_\_\_ generations to complete the full migration.

Answers: 4,800 / milkweed / toxic / 3 to 4

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