

Western Monarch Mystery Challenge

Project Summary

The migratory western monarch has declined by more than 99% since the 1980's. The Xerces Society, an international invertebrate conservation nonprofit, reported that the total number counted in 2020 was down to 1,914, a drop by more than 90% from the prior year — a count already below the threshold at which scientists warned the migration may collapse.

To help scientists gain insight into migratory monarchs this spring, researchers are inviting the community to participate in the **Western Monarch Mystery Challenge**. The challenge was started by a group of researchers from Washington State University, Tufts University, University of California at Santa Cruz and the Xerces Society to help fill a critical gap in knowledge about habitat needs of migrating monarchs in the spring. Running from Feb. 14 (Valentine's Day) to April 22 (Earth Day), the challenge is a call to action to report a monarch if you see one. Once you report a sighting, you will be entered to win prizes.

How to participate:

1. If you see a monarch outside of overwintering groves, take a picture! (Don't worry, it can be far away and blurry).
2. Report it through the following options, and be sure to include date and location:
 - iNaturalist (the app is free)
 - Western Monarch Milkweed Mapper OR
 - Email it to MonarchMystery@wsu.edu
3. Be entered to win a \$50 REI gift card every week you report a sighting.

Sample Photo:



Original photo taken from far away to avoid scaring the monarch



The photo above is a closeup of the monarch from the original photo. It is blurry, but clear enough that we can tell that it has the right species of butterfly

If you upload a monarch photo - from outside the overwintering sites - you will be automatically entered in a weekly prize drawing. We will choose winners every week from Valentine's Day (Feb. 14) to Earth Day (April 22).

By reporting an observation, you will be adding to our community science program, the [Western Monarch Milkweed Mapper](#), a great way to see our knowledge of western monarch grow.

Here's how the entry process works:

- Each photo is an entry. So if you submit 3 photos in a week, that is 3 entries for the prize that week.
- Each week you are eligible for new prizes, even if you submitted sightings and won prizes the week before. (No duplicates of the same monarch in the same place in the same week)

*Please do not submit sightings from monarch rearing projects. They skew data and could jeopardize the quality and legitimacy of conservation plans. Only "wild" monarchs will be entered for prizes.

Media accounts, hashtags, and contacts:

(bolded hashtags are necessary)

Facebook: @monarchmystery

Instagram: @westernmonarchmystery

Twitter: @wmonarchmystery

#monarchmystery #communitysciene #citsci #westernmonarchs #savethemonarchs
#savemonarchs #savetheplanet #science #nature #climatechange

Please direct questions to:

Lianne de la Espriella

MonarchMystery@wsu.edu

5619297764



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