

# WHERE TO SEE THE MONARCHS IN CALIFORNIA

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Twenty-five Selected Sites



# Introduction

The mystery of migrating monarch butterflies has captured the attention of people throughout the world. East of the continental divide in North America, monarchs generally migrate to central Mexico from as far away as Ontario, Canada. Monarchs west of the divide fly to the coast of California to spend the winter. They cluster together on tree limbs during the winter months in California by the thousands, and in Central Mexico by the millions.

In California, migrating monarchs begin appearing along the coast in October. There are over 300 overwintering sites from south of Ensenada, Baja California, to north of San Francisco, in Sonoma County. By mid-November, most monarchs have chosen their winter homes. The butterflies diapause (hibernate) for several months. In late January warmer days and the advent of spring stimulate mating activity. Female monarchs are the first to disperse from overwintering sites. They fly inland, looking for early sprouts of milkweed (*Asclepias* species) to deposit their eggs. By early March, overwintering sites are abandoned.

Most overwintering sites in California are on private property and not easily accessible to the general public. The Monarch Program recommends public viewing at the overwintering sites listed below. The time to see the greatest numbers of butterflies is mid-November to mid-December. In late December through January, some monarchs shift to other sites, or disperse, others die. However, some sites may have butterflies into early March. All populations are estimates for the 1997/98 season.

Follow the directions to the sites below and look on the southeast side of the roosting trees. Many listings are on park grounds, thus, a docent or ranger may direct you to the roosting trees. On cool days, the monarchs will look like leaves with their wings closed, hanging from tree branches. A sunny afternoon is a good time to visit a site if you do not know where the roosting trees are located. In the late afternoon, you can follow the monarchs' flight to their selected trees.

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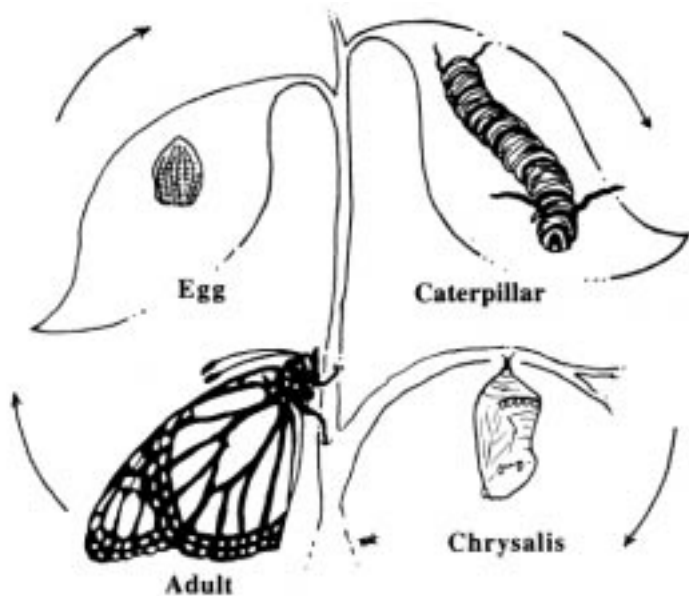
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Published by the Monarch Program

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October, 1997 (1st Edition)



**Life Cycle and Autumn Migration Movements:** Monarchs that emerge in late August through October and migrate to their chosen overwintering destinations may live 7 or 8 months. Their "children" and succeeding generations only live 4-5 weeks. By the time the 4th or 5th generation emerge, it will be September again and these great-great grandchildren will migrate and live through the winter as adult butterflies. This is a good example of strategy for survival since native larval plants are dormant throughout the winter months. In the late spring and summer months, the time from egg to butterfly is about 4 weeks: egg (4-6 days); caterpillar (12-16 days); chrysalis (9-12 days).

# Twenty-five Selected Sites

Population estimates are based on multiple years of data; including early autumnal migration reports this season, and our 1997 reports from volunteers who monitored summer breeding habitats west of the Rockies. Listings begin at the southern sites near the Mexican border, and continue to the northernmost range, in Sonoma County. Overwintering habitats in Baja California, Mexico have been excluded since they are on private property. All sites in California were carefully chosen for easy access onto public property, to foster family events, and educational activities. Please respect all parking and trespassing laws near overwintering sites.

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Site	County	Population
<b>1. Presidio Park</b>	<b>San Diego</b>	<b>900</b>
Presidio Park is located on a hill above Old Town State Historic Park and is accessible from numerous exits near the junction of Interstate 5 and 8. From Taylor St., take Chestnut St. and turn left on Presidio Dr. Travel to the top of the hill and turn left on Cosoy Way. The monarchs roost in the Canary Island Pine trees along each side of Cosoy Way. In November, the butterflies often roost in the eucalyptus trees between Serra Historical Museum and the pine trees (no fee).		
<b>2. UCSD Campus</b>	<b>San Diego</b>	<b>4,500</b>
The eucalyptus groves on the UCSD campus have been the winter home to monarchs long before the campus was founded. Sightings date back to the 1950's. This year's population estimate includes two sites. The main site is located near the Mandeville Performing Arts Center. Take La Jolla Village Dr. west from Interstate 5. Turn right on Gilman Dr. and continue through the UCSD Gilman entrance. Turn left on Mandeville Ln. The monarchs are located in eucalyptus trees along the blue screen art sculpture (parking fee). Another UCSD site is located by the UCSD Coast Apartments. Continue on La Jolla Village Dr., traveling right onto North Torrey Pines Rd., turn left on La Jolla Shores Dr., and turn left on Azul St. The monarchs are located in the eucalyptus grove off Azul St. (no parking 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM, except Sunday, otherwise no fee).		
<b>3. Hosp Grove</b>	<b>San Diego</b>	<b>900</b>
The Carlsbad Hosp Grove was once a very large overwintering site before tree cutting and development. From Interstate 5, go east on Carlsbad Village Dr., left on Monroe St., right on Hosp Way, and turn left at the top of the hill on Grove Ave. Park in the visitor lot and continue walking on Grove Way to the eucalyptus grove at the end of the street. Locate the trail and walk to the right around a large gully. The monarchs are in the trees above the gully (no fee).		



If you are looking for monarchs, you will be greeted with big smiles from rangers, interpretive specialists, and naturalists. Tagged monarchs are also friendly -- they have something to teach us!

**4. Doheny State Beach** **Orange** **1,000**

Doheny State Beach is a great place to bring the family. The monarch roosting trees are next to a sandy beach, water activities, playgrounds, acres of well kept lawns, picnic tables, and nearby ocean front restaurants. Exit Interstate 5 going west on Pacific Coast Hwy. (Beach Cities Exit). At the main intersection, turn left on Dana Harbor Dr. Take the first left into the State Park. Ask rangers to direct you to the roosting trees (entrance fee).

**5. Huntington Central Park** **Orange** **3,500**

Acres of park land, ponds, playing fields, jogging trails, and eucalyptus trees can be found at Huntington Central Park. From Interstate 405, travel west on Warner St. Turn left on Golden West St. The park is on the left. Continue past the park and turn left into the Huntington Central Library. Park in the far northeast corner. There are two roosting sites at the park: the eucalyptus trees near the Amphitheater and a short walk to an area below the parking lot and restrooms off of Gothard St. (no fee).

**6. Norma Gibbs Park** **Orange** **700**

The eucalyptus grove at Norma Gibbs Park is an example of a monarch overwintering site that has been saved from housing development. The property was donated to the City of Huntington Beach as park land, with pathways, picnic tables, and a 400 sq. ft. tile inlay of monarchs and text describing story about the migrating monarchs. From Interstate 5, travel west on Warner St. Turn right after the Meadowlark Golf Course onto Graham St. The park is located on the left. The roosting trees are near the entrance to the park (no fee).

**7. Leo Carrillo State Beach** **Los Angeles** **800**

Located along Hwy. 1, the population of monarchs will be most plentiful at Leo Carrillo State Beach in November and December. The butterflies are located in the eucalyptus trees along the creek next to the campground. Ask a ranger for assistance (entrance fee).

**8. Camino Real Park** **Ventura** **10,000**

This is a popular site for residents of Ventura because it is easily accessible and a quiet place to take the family for a picnic. The roosting trees are eucalyptus and located above the creek, across from the Patrician (gated community) at 4700 Aurora Dr. From 101, go north on Victoria Ave., left on Telegraph Rd., left on S. Bryn Mawr, and right on Aurora Dr. to the Park (no fee).

**9. Harbor Blvd.** **Ventura** **23,000**

This site is easy to get to if you can find an accessible entrance. The butterflies roost in eucalyptus trees along an agricultural dirt road parallel to Harbor Blvd. in Ventura. From Hwy. 101 take Harbor Blvd. south, turn right on Oyster, park immediately and look east across Harbor Blvd to a grove of eucalyptus trees. It is dangerous to access the site crossing Harbor Blvd. We recommend





Watermelon is a favorite source of energy for monarchs living in the Monarch Program's Butterfly Vivarium. Often called the butterfly house, the Vivarium is a 1,200 sq. ft. x 14 ft. high structure that houses various species of native butterflies in all stages of life. It produces a model ecosystem for butterflies, creating an educational environment for over 6,000 children that visit annually.



located just east of Morro Bay. Continue on South Bay Blvd. to Santa Ysabel Ave. and turn right. Turn left at 7th St. and right onto Ramona Ave. The site is located on the right (north) side of Ramona Ave. A prominent sign shows the entrance to the trails. The site is part of an Audubon Nature Preserve, featuring a vegetative restoration project and access trails to monarchs and other scenic areas within the preserve (no fee).

**16. Andrew Molera St. Park      Monterey      10,000**

Located along the scenic coast Hwy. 1, near Big Sur, Andrew Molera State Park is an easy short stop to see thousands of monarchs. Traveling north, turn into the park on the right side entrance and park your vehicle. Walk through the walk-in-campground to Cooper's Cabin. The butterflies roost in eucalyptus trees in the vicinity of Cooper's Cabin (entrance fee).

**17. Pacific Grove      Monterey      45,000**

The Monarch Grove Sanctuary in Pacific Grove has often been referred to as "Butterfly Town, U.S.A." The town has a long history of being the most popular place to see 10's of thousands of monarchs roosting on Monterey pine trees. From Hwy. 1, take Route 68 west to Pacific Grove. After Route 68 becomes Forest Ave., turn left on Lighthouse Ave., pass Seventeen Mile Dr., turn left on Ridge Rd., and park by the red school building. Docents are available weekdays from 12:00 PM to 3:00 PM, and on Saturday and Sunday from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. Another nearby overwintering site is George Washington Park. Please ask docents for directions and population counts (no fee).

**18. Lighthouse Field St. Beach      Santa Cruz      50,000**

From Natural Bridges State Beach (see directions below, # 19), follow West Cliff Dr. (going east) to the Light House. Park at the Light House parking lot. Continue walking along the coast, cross Hwy. 1, and go left on Pelton Ave. The monarchs will be in Monterey cypress and eucalyptus trees in a grassy field near Pelton Ave (no fee).

**19. Natural Bridges St. Beach      Santa Cruz      95,000**

Hwy. 1 turns into Mission St., when traveling west through the Santa Cruz business district. After the Safeway market, turn left at the first traffic light onto Swift St. Follow it to the ocean and turn right on West Cliff Dr., which ends at the State Beach. You will be greeted by friendly docents who can educate you about the monarchs' migration. The Visitor Center has educational materials, butterfly gifts, and memorabilia (entrance fee).

**20. New Park Mall      Alameda      500**

Located near Newark, the New Park Mall site was once a large grove of eucalyptus trees and a winter home to thousands of monarchs. Today, monarchs can still be seen in a small grove next to the New Park Mall. From Interstate 880, go west on Mowry Blvd. and turn left on Cedar St. Park in the Mall parking lot

and walk across Cedar St. to the eucalyptus grove (no fee).

**21. Ardenwood Reg. Preserve      Alameda      20,000**

The Ardenwood Regional Preserve is a 19th century working farm located in Fremont. From Interstate 880, take Decoto Rd. (Hwy 84) west. Turn right on Ardenwood Blvd., and turn right into the preserve. Reservations are required in advance for a guided tour of the monarch habitat. Call (510) 796-0663 for information (entrance fee).

**22. San Leandro Golf Course      Alameda      25,000**

This site is one of the more spectacular sites in California -- imagine standing on a golf course and seeing only a few eucalyptus trees draped with 25,000 monarchs. The City of San Leandro is sponsoring school trips to the site on weekdays. The public is invited on Saturdays. Please call (510) 577-3462 for specific hours, or requests for special visits. To reach the site from Interstate 880 take Marina Blvd. west. Turn left on Doolittle Dr. and right on Fairway Dr. Turn right on Aurora Dr. and an immediate left into a parking lot near the Marina Branch Library. The gate leading to the roosting trees may be locked, so please call before visiting the site (no fee).

**23. Muir Beach      Mann      4,000**

The Elizabeth Terwilliger Grove east of the parking lot has been used by overwintering monarchs for as long as local residents can remember. The roosting trees are Monterey cypress and are located above the old wood stairs on Pacific Way. When entering the town of Stinson Beach on Hwy. 1, go west on Pacific Way and drive to the Muir Beach parking area. Backtrack on Pacific Way by foot until you reach the stairs on the north side of the road (no fee).

**24. Bolinas Terrace Site      Mann      18,000**

From Hwy. 1, turn west on Olema-Bolinas Rd. Travel to the town of Bolinas, continuing left at the junctions. As you enter the town, turn right on Park and continue toward the right onto Terrace Ave. The butterflies will be located near the junction of Terrace Ave. and Mann (no fee).

**25. Bodega Dunes Campgrounds      Sonoma      4,000**

The Bodega Dunes Campground is located north of Bodega Bay on Hwy. 1. The monarchs often cluster on the eucalyptus and Monterey cypress at the lower campsites near the campfire circle. The campground hosts are always helpful and happy to answer questions (entrance fee).

# The Monarch Program


The Monarch Program was established in 1990 as an educational public benefit organization. We are a research and education organization that uses the monarch butterfly (*Danaus plexippus*) as an educational model for learning more about plant and animal relationships. In addition, we study its unique behavior, and follow its phenomenal migration patterns to the coast of California and to the Transverse Neovolcanic Belt of mountains west of Mexico City. Members of the Monarch Program receive a 12 page monthly publication (Monarch News), additional mailings, 10%+ discounts on plants and livestock, invitations to special events, free access to the Butterfly Vivarium, and an the opportunity to participate in field research, tagging monarchs, and volunteering for various projects.

The program is supported by grants, donations, educational institutions, membership dues, and sales of butterfly livestock and plants. Objectives of the program include: preserving monarch breeding and overwintering habitats, monitoring monarch migrations, collecting scientific data, promoting educational programs, supporting related conservancy issues, and encouraging the study of plant and insect relationships through butterfly gardening. We are a young but rapidly growing organization with more than 1000 members in nearly forty states, and five countries. Although our facilities and most of our associates and members are located in California, we offer national information through networking with butterfly organizations and Monarch Program members east of the continental divide.

For more information contact the Monarch Program at P.O. Box 17867 1, San Diego, CA, 92177; or call (760) 944-7113, fax (760) 436-1159, email: [Monarchprg@aol.com](mailto:Monarchprg@aol.com).

*"Lazily flying  
Over the flower-decked prairies, West;  
Basking in sunshine till daylight is dying,  
And resting all night on Asclepias' breast:  
Joyously dancing,  
Merrily prancing,  
Chasing his lady-love high in the air,  
Fluttering gaily,  
Frolicking daily,  
Free from anxiety, sorrow, and care!"*

Professor C.V. Riley, 1898  
U.S. Department of Agriculture



Migrate With The Monarchs  
to Central Mexico

**The Monarch Program Offers Several Trips Every  
Winter To See The Monarchs in Central Mexico**