

What Does this Species Look Like?

Size: Wingspan of a little over 3–4 inches

Color: Body is black; wings are orange with black stripes; the edges of the wings are black with white spots

General: 2 black antennae at the top of the head

Usually Found: Grasslands, gardens, open fields



Did You Know?

- Monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) are sometimes called milkweed butterflies, because they feed on the plant. After consuming milkweed, monarchs taste bitter and are poisonous if ingested by predators.
- The monarch begins as an egg that hatches after four days, and then becomes a monarch caterpillar. After two weeks, the caterpillar is transformed into a vibrant and beautiful butterfly!
- Over a one-year period of time, there are four generations of monarch butterflies that will each go through a complete life cycle and die before the next generation is born.
- The first three generations of monarchs live for two to six weeks as adult butterflies.
- The fourth generation of monarch butterflies, however, will live six to eight months, during which time they will make a 2,500 mile journey from North America to the mountains of Central Mexico. Monarchs are tougher than they look!

What am I Observing?

The timing (date) of:

- First sighting of a caterpillar on a milkweed plant
- The first sighting of a monarch butterfly



Why Collect this Data?

This species is being monitored as a part of the Eastern PA Phenology Program to determine if this animal is impacted by environmental changes.

How Do I Report this Data?

Observations can be reported as comments to the Eastern PA Phenology Blog:
<http://watchingtheseasons.blogspot.com/>
or sent to phenology@lgnc.org

Want to Find Out More?

Contact Diane Husic, Audubon *TogetherGreen* Fellow,
phenology@lgnc.org

What is Phenology? According to the National Phenology Network, phenology refers to the study of “recurring plant and animal life cycle stages, or phenophases, such as leafing and flowering, maturation of agricultural plants, emergence of insects, and migration of birds.”

(www.usanpn.org)