

Kaleidoscopes Monarch Project



Research question: what factors, be it landscape or weather, influence Monarch Butterfly roost size and length of stay?

When Monarchs migrate south to Mexico at the end of the summer, they actively migrate during the day and form roosts at night. **A roost is a cluster of butterflies on a tree or shrub.**

These roosts may last a single night or multiple weeks and fluctuate in size over time. Our previous research (made possible by citizen scientists like yourself) examined how the landscape influenced roost site selection, however, the Monarch roost sightings were single snapshots in time. We would like to expand our knowledge about roost site selection by recording roost size over time to try and determine the factors that influence roost size and length of stay.

While roosts can be observed nearly anywhere in southern Ontario, they occur much more frequently along the shores of the Great Lakes. Locations such as Point Pelee on Lake Erie and Presqu'île Provincial Park on Lake Ontario are excellent locations to observe this phenomenon.



Monarch Butterflies roosting on a Maple branch

Collecting Data

WHEN: End of August through end of September. The peak time for Monarch migration in southern Ontario is roughly the first two weeks of September. Roosts form in the evening, so are most likely to be found in the last few hours of light or at first light in the morning. Roost surveys should be done within three hours before sunset, or within one hour after sunrise.

WHERE: Anywhere in southern Ontario.

HOW: We do not expect participants to spend time specifically searching for Monarch roosts (although you can!). If you encounter a roost while out enjoying nature, walking the dog, biking to work, etc., then please submit information about the roost and, if you can, revisit the roost location at a later date.

1. **Submit the roost to iNaturalist Canada** in our “Monarch Migration in Ontario” project
2. If possible, re-visit the roost location on subsequent days (whether it’s one or three days afterwards, or every day for a week, anything helps)
3. Submit a new iNaturalist observation for each visit where Monarchs are observed at the roost location

The iNaturalist project will prompt which information to collect.

WHAT: If you can't use iNaturalist, then record and send us the following information (spreadsheet preferred, but any format will be accepted):

- Location (latitude and longitude) of the roost observation
- Date and time of the observation
- Estimated number of Monarchs in the roost
- Whether it is a repeat observation of a previously observed roost

Using iNaturalist to submit Monarch roost observations

STEP 1: Install iNaturalist app on your device.

- iPhone: <https://apps.apple.com/us/app/inaturalist/id421397028>
- Android: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=org.inaturalist.android>
- It's also possible to upload observations using the iNaturalist Canada website

STEP 2: Sign in to iNaturalist (or first create an account) and join the "Monarch Migration in Ontario" project.

- To do this, click on the menu button at the top left
- Next, select "Projects"
- Search for, and join, "Monarch Migration in Ontario"

STEP 3: Back on the main iNaturalist menu, add a Monarch observation by clicking on the + in the bottom right.

- To add the Monarch observation to the Monarch Migration in Ontario project, select "Add to project(s)" at the bottom of the observation page and select the appropriate project
- Fill out the details required by the project and submit the observation

Questions? E-mail rownetwork@cwf-fcf.org

Want to share or register a friend?  Canadian Wildlife Federation: