

Listing the Monarch butterfly will not create habitat, education will.

Education is best achieved through hands on experience by creating public awareness of the Monarchs plight. Public awareness will create more habitats to be planted at the home, school and municipal levels. I say this after 30 plus years of raising butterflies and presenting over 4,000 school programs, Garden Club lectures, seminars and workshops.

My name is Richard Mikula and I am President of Butterfly Rescue International and owner of Hole-In-Hand Butterfly Farm. I also maintain the largest and first educational butterfly website in the world that is visited by over 1 million visitors per month. In the past I have served as President of the International Butterfly Breeders Association, Vice President of the Canadian Butterfly Breeders and Exhibitors Association, Secretary and Treasurer for The New Jersey Lepidopterist Society, and served on the Board of Directors for the Center for Landscape Design and Stewardship. I am a veteran of Monarch tagging programs for both the University of Toronto and Monarch Watch. I have authored several butterfly books and served as staff writer for various magazine.

In the past I have consulted on butterfly habitat construction for scout troops, schools, national hunting organizations, and commercial entities such as the creating of walk through butterfly exhibits. I have delivered butterfly programs to every age group from pre-K day care centers to the university level. I have dealt with every type of group ranging from dementia wards and nursing homes to working with inner city prevention and intervention program with Rutgers University's Kids at Risk initiative. For several years I also conducted butterfly classes at the Monroe Township County Correctional Facility in Jamesburg, New Jersey.

Education is only one of several reasons why the Monarch butterfly should not be listed.

The one sole factor that peaked and held the interest of each and every group was being able to see live Monarch butterflies up close and personal. Listing the Monarch would end the possibility of anyone else ever experiencing the wonders of butterflies by being introduced to the most famous and familiar of all, the Monarch.

The Monarch is not endangered or threatened but rebounding from an unusual population bloom in the early 90's. Prior to the 90's the population of the United States was still in shell shock from DDT and began to become more organic and green. Farming practices relied on rotation of a variety of crops as opposed to today's endless horizon of corn and soy. Roadside spraying and cutting were at a minimum and urban sprawl had not consumed the northeast habitat corridor. This led to a record numbers both in the US and Mexico. As with any and all animal population, all blooms in numbers are followed by declines.

A major decline in numbers of Monarchs butterflies is due to loss of habitat is at reentry points in southern Texas There is a vital 10-14 day period where eggs need to be deposited to create the next generation. If temperatures are too warm the Monarch is wired to shut down and not lay eggs. If the temperatures are too cold they become physically repressed and also unable to lay their eggs. This is all contingent on the availability of egg worthy milkweed plants in the critical areas. If egg laying is suppressed at this point the number of the next generation of migrant Monarchs will be reduced. A secondary factor was the converting of countless acres of grasslands and meadows to eventually supply the demand for corn and soy that began with western expansion and Manifest Destiny.

Listing the Monarch butterfly is actually harmful to its wellbeing.

- Listing will not encourage farmers to plant more milkweed but rather to eradicate it, while still legal, through the use of herbicides.
- Listing will not replace lost habitat due to urban sprawl, the paving of America, or mono cultured farming practices.
- Listing will not replant lost habitat due to drought causing climate change in critical reentry areas.

Listing the Monarch butterfly is harmful to everyone

- After 100 plus years commercial butterfly farmers and livestock suppliers will no longer be able to supply furnish school and butterfly exhibits with a much needed learning tool.
- After 30 plus years charity fund raisers, funeral memorials and various celebrations will now become illegal.
- Elementary students may never realize a future in the biological sciences by being deprived of observing the magic of metamorphosis first hand.
- Nursing home residents will not be allowed to revisit their childhoods for a short precious time.
- Families will no longer be allowed to share the simplest and most unbelievable wonders of nature first hand.

Listing will not increase the number of Monarchs. Educating the public will.

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