

0. What is Unusual About a Monarch? - Story Preface

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Even though Monarchs don't harm anyone, the reverse is not true.

During its migratory journey, the Monarch faces numerous threats mainly from the impact of man on its habitat. Indeed, there has been a decline of as much as 96 percent in the Monarch population. What are some of the hazards migrating Monarchs face?

- Climate change;
- Deforestation in the Mexican forests where they winter; and
- Destruction of milkweed plants by the spraying of chemicals (to eliminate weeds).

The impact of chemicals, on milkweed, is particularly troubling for the Monarchs:

- Milkweed is the *only* source of food for Monarch larvae and caterpillars, and milkweed plants are where female Monarchs lay their eggs.
- Agricultural practices that encourage the use of pesticides (which destroy milkweed) and using pesticides (that kill the butterflies and other insects) also significantly reduce the population.

Other practices and risks are also harmful to beautiful Monarchs:

- Habitat loss, due to illegal logging in Mexico;
- Dangers of freezing winter weather (which Monarchs cannot survive); and
- Use of genetically modified crops designed to kill insects.

The results of these practices and other risks could endanger the harmless butterfly.

Other problems that the Monarch may face is the protozoan parasite *Ophryocystis elektroschirra* (OE) that can affect the pupae and result in deformed wings. You can learn more about this at [Monarch Health and Parasites](#).

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/What-is-Unusual-About-a-Monarch-The-Ultimate-Relay-Race-The-Monarch-Butterfly-Story>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/What-is-Unusual-About-a-Monarch-The-Ultimate-Relay-Race-The-Monarch-Butterfly-Story>

Media Stream



Types of Milkweed

<http://www.esbtrib.com>,

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