Orange and Black

Quick, what's orange and black and soars high above others? If you guessed the Princeton or Oklahoma State football teams (both of whose colors are orange and black), you may be reading the wrong magazine (actually, if you guessed that the Princeton football team soared above others, you may be taking the wrong medication).

Monarch is probably the only butterfly name that the great majority of Americans know. Or think they know. In my experience many people use the word Monarch as a synonym for butterfly. If one points out a tiger swallowtail, many people will say "Is that a Monarch." Smaller butterflies, such as Cabbage Whites, are assumed to be moths. On the other hand, a surprisingly high percentage of people know that Monarchs migrate (of course, because of this, most people also believe that most butterflies migrate).

This issue of *American Butterflies* is devoted to Monarchs, the first issue of *American Butterflies* ever devoted to a single species of butterflies. I suspect that most readers will not already be aware of the fact that redder Monarchs live longer than do yellower Monarchs (page 18) and the complex story of the northward migration of Monarchs (page 4) is fascinating. You'll learn why the fir trees at the Monarch overwintering grounds in Mexico are crucial to Monarchs' survival (page 8), and of plans to help these fir trees survive the expected changes in the Earth's climate (page 14).

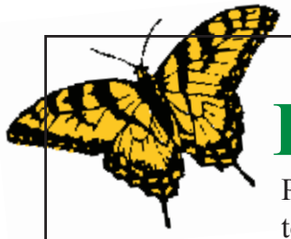
Two articles explore Monarchs' relationships with milkweeds (pages 20 and 26) and the Art of the Butterfly (page 34) features a Monarch as does the You Are What You Eat feature (page 42), initiated in the last issue. Lastly, this issue's Taxonomists Just Wanna Have Fun feature (page 46) looks at English names that have been used for Monarchs.

Years ago I felt that Monarchs were such a cliche — the only one of more than 700 United States butterfly species that received any publicity — that it wasn't until 1995 that I went to the Monarch overwintering sites in the mountains west of Mexico City. It was awesome! Along with the migrations of herd animals on the African savanna, the overwintering aggregations of millions and millions of Monarchs is truly one of the great natural spectacles on the planet. The experience was so amazing that I went back in 1996. That second year was also incredible, but the number of Monarchs was down significantly from the previous year.

And, this long term downward trend in North American Monarch populations is troubling. Clearly, the amount of suitable habitat available for migratory Monarchs, in their northern breeding areas, in the areas through which they migrate, and in their Mexican overwintering grounds, is continually decreasing. In addition, commercial butterfly farming businesses encourage ignorant, but well-meaning, people to spread deadly diseases, including *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* as well as heretofore unknown diseases, to wild Monarchs by dumping farmed butterflies into the environment. So, Monarch populations are under a lot of stress.

NABA works to increase public knowledge and conservation of all butterflies, but is also involved in some programs intended to specifically benefit Monarchs. NABA, along with the USFWS, the US Forest Service, the USDA and other NGOs, is a member of the Monarch Joint Venture and NABA has been working with the National Park Service to increase Monarch monitoring and habitat in south Texas.

So, although the United States is a democracy, it still believes in Monarchs!



The North American Butterfly Association (NABA)

For the Love of Butterflies

Please photocopy this membership application form and pass it along to friends and acquaintances who might be interested in NABA

Yes! I want to join NABA, the North American Butterfly Association, and receive *American Butterflies* and *The Butterfly Gardener* and/or contribute to building the premier butterfly garden in the world, the National Butterfly Center. The Center, located on approximately 100 acres of land fronting the Rio Grande River in Mission, Texas uses native trees, shrubs and wildflowers to create a spectacular natural butterfly garden that importantly benefits butterflies, an endangered ecosystem and the people of the Rio Grande Valley.

Visit our web site at www.naba.org

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Name: _____

Address: _____

_____

Special Interests (circle): Listing, Gardening, Observation, Photography, Conservation, Other_____ _____

Tax-deductible dues enclosed (circle): Regular $30 ($60 outside U.S., Canada or Mexico), Family $40 ($80 outside North Am.). Special sponsorship levels: Copper $50; Skipper $100; Admiral $250; Monarch $1000. Institution/Library subscription to all annual publications $50 ($80 outside U.S., Canada or Mexico). Special tax-deductible contributions to NABA (please circle): $125, $200, $1000, $5000.
Mail checks (in U.S. dollars) to: NABA, 4 Delaware Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960

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American Butterflies welcomes the unsolicited submission of articles to: Editor, *American Butterflies*, NABA, 4 Delaware Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960. We will reply to your submission only if accepted and we will be unable to return any unsolicited articles, photographs, artwork, or other material, so please do not send materials that you would want returned. Articles may be submitted in any form, but those on disks in word for windows 7.0 are preferred. For the type of articles, including length and style, that we publish, refer to issues of *American Butterflies*.

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES

If you have questions about missing magazines, membership expiration date, change of address, etc., please write to: NABA, 4 Delaware Rd., Morristown, NJ 07960 or email to naba@naba.org.

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