

Read the following article about the Monarch Butterfly and then do the exercise that follows.



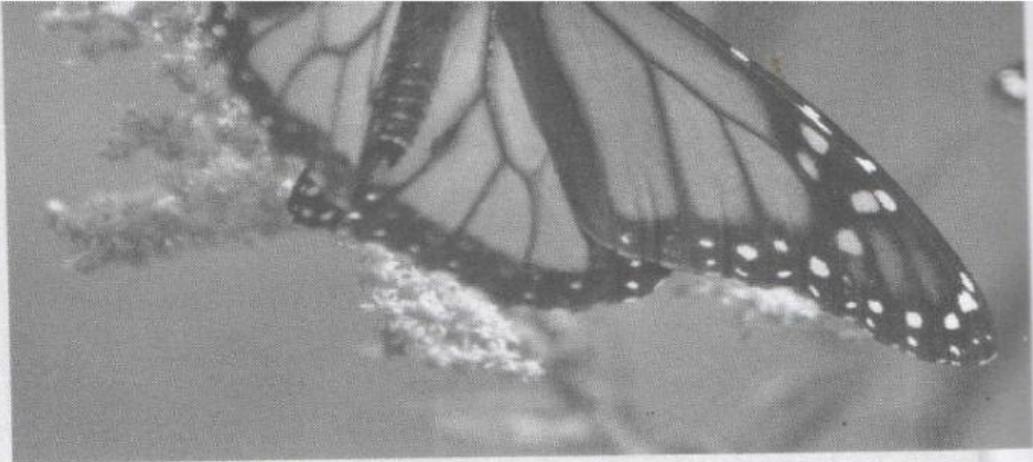
The Monarch Butterfly

The Monarch butterfly is one of the most beautiful insects on our planet. It lives in North and South America and in autumn, about 100 million monarchs travel to their winter habitat in Mexico. The Monarch has orange, black and white wings and they are about ninety to a hundred millimetres wide. The bright colours tell predators that the Monarch tastes horrible and is poisonous.

Each year, four to five generations of Monarchs are born. Most of them live only two to five weeks, but the last generation of the summer lives for six to seven months. These long-living butterflies make the long journey from North America to the centre of Mexico. They travel three thousand five hundred kilometres or more.

Scientists believe that Monarch butterflies are the only species of butterfly that travel between a summer habitat and a winter habitat. They usually travel about eighty kilometres a day. However, some butterflies fly nearly 130 kilometres in a day. Monarchs fly alone but on the same path. They only fly during the day, following the sun and at night they stop in forests with other Monarchs. During this period, one tree may have thousands of butterflies on it. There are about fourteen different forests where they usually stop on their way to Mexico.

Monarchs are plant eaters. They spend most of the spring and summer looking for and eating food. One of the plants it eats has poison in it. This poison doesn't hurt the Monarchs, but it makes them taste terrible. For this reason, most birds do not eat Monarchs. However, during winter, predators eat about fourteen percent of Monarchs. Recently, extreme weather conditions have been a problem for the butterflies. Heavy rain in Mexico killed about



at fifty percent of the Monarch population last winter. If the winters become wet and cold because of climate change, the Monarchs will freeze to death.

Y The Monarch is not endangered, but unfortunately, its habitat is in danger at the moment. Modern farming has changed their habitat and many flowers and trees have disappeared. The Mexican government have created a programme to protect the habitats of the Monarch butterfly. They will help to protect the forest that is their home during the winter. Without this, the Monarchs will not survive.

Are the following sentences true or False. Click and T or F

The bright colours of the Monarch butterfly has a special meaning for predators. T F

The maximum length of a Monarch butterfly's life is five weeks. T F

It is usual for all species of butterflies to have winter and summer habitat. T F

When they travel to Mexico, Monarchs all follow the same route. T F

The monarch butterfly only eats poisonous plants. T F

Monarch butterflies can survive in cold and wet weather conditions. T F

Monarch butterflies may be endangered in the future because their habitat is disappearing.
T F

The Mexican government wants to protect the Monarch's winter habitat. T F

Writing :

Write and then send an e-mail to your teacher.

Say if you enjoyed reading about the Monarch butterfly and why. Do you think you may tell a friend or a family member about it ?