



SCIENCE NEWS

adapted from **Monarch Butterflies at Risk** By Jill Egan

Severe weather conditions and other dangers are harming the monarch butterfly population.

Monarch butterflies are one of the largest butterflies in North America. Each year, millions of the colorful butterflies flock back north to the United States after spending the winter in Mexico. Monarchs are one of the most well-known butterfly species. However, severe weather conditions and habitat destruction are putting the delicate butterfly population in jeopardy. Some butterfly experts say that the number of monarch butterflies has been cut by twenty-five percent.

Monarch butterflies are creatures of habit. Each November, the orange and black butterflies fly to the mountains of central Mexico. They return to the U.S. in April. During the journey north, the butterflies lay eggs on milkweed plants and then die. That's when the life cycle begins again. In recent years, the weather has been hard on the fragile insects. Experts say that unusually cold temperatures, rain and droughts have caused monarchs to die in large numbers. These severe conditions have also prevented new butterflies from hatching.

Weather isn't the butterflies' only problem. Illegal logging and pesticide use in the forests of Mexico are also killing the butterflies. The monarchs showed signs of coming back in 2003. But the past two winters in Mexico have been so cold that the butterflies have suffered a setback. Scientists worry that monarchs won't produce as many offspring as a result of these problems. "If we lose the whole migration, we lose one of the nation's most magnificent phenomenon" said Chip Taylor, a professor at the University of Kansas. "These butterflies are the symbol of richness of biological diversity and marvelous scientific aspect."

Name _____ Date _____



Monarch butterflies are in danger because _____

Monarch butterflies are in danger but _____

Monarch butterflies are in danger so _____

Name _____ Date _____

Write sentences using the following words about Monarch butterflies.



Photo of a monarch caterpillar



Photo of a Monarch butterfly on milkweed

endangered / although

migrate / consequently

habitat / for example

Name _____ Date _____



They are at risk.

what?

why?

Expanded Sentence
