

The Wandering Butterflies

Each fall, monarch butterflies from the western U.S. and Canada migrate hundreds of miles to the California coast. They are seeking protection from freezing temperatures and winter storms in sheltered groves such as this stand of eucalyptus.

These overwintering monarchs will stay in this protected area until longer days signal the start of mating. Fertilized females will then disperse in search of milkweed, where they will lay their eggs.

Four or more future generations of monarchs may hatch before the return trip to Ardenwood is made next fall.

The butterflies you see today will never return.

Where they end their life cycle or how far they travel are questions still being researched by scientists today. How far do you think they go?

