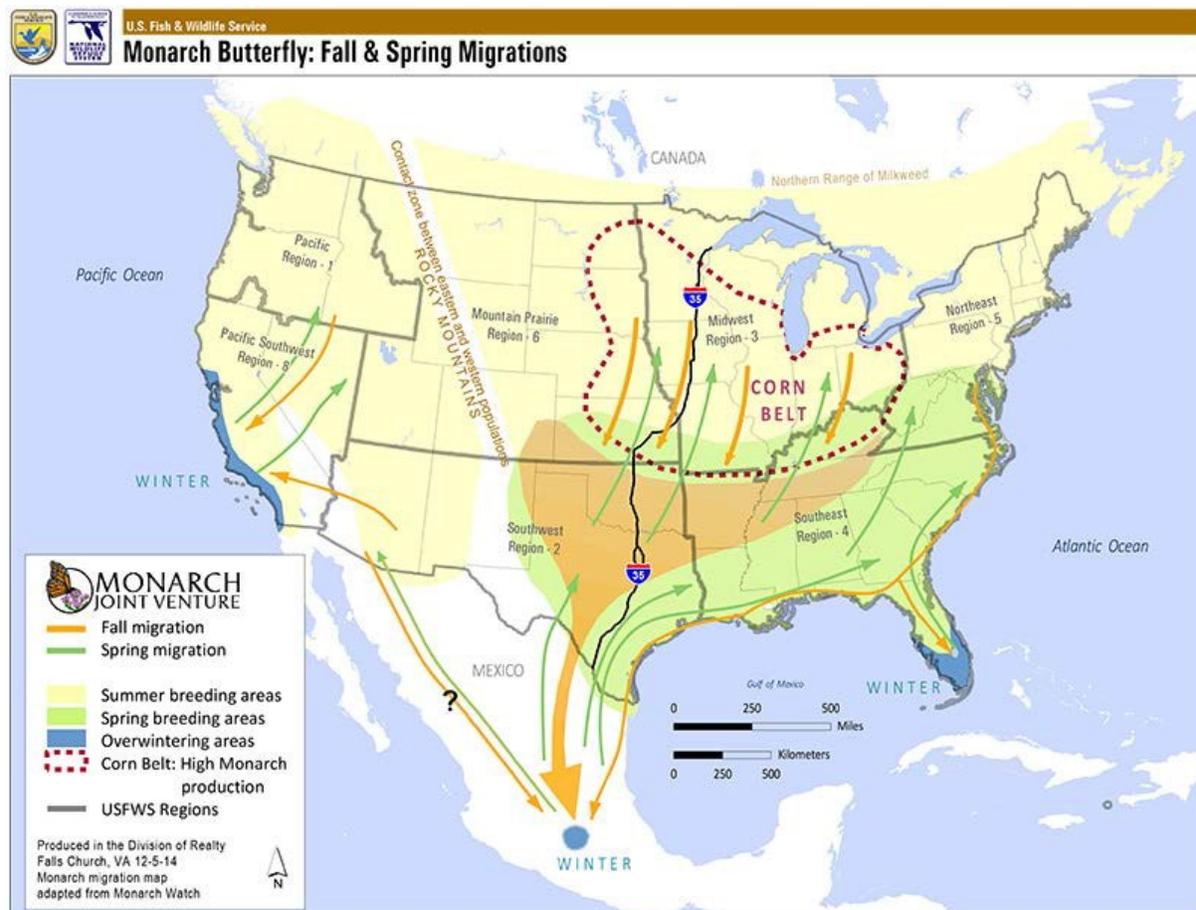




Youth Education & Interpretation *It's in Our Nature*

MONARCH BUTTERFLY MIGRATION

The monarch is the only butterfly known to make a two-way migration as some birds do. Monarchs cannot survive the cold winters of northern climates like other butterflies that can overwinter as larvae, pupae, or even as adults in some species. Using environmental signals, shortened day length and cooler temperatures, the monarchs know when it is time to travel south for the winter. In order to make the long journey, for some as far as 3,000 miles, they must conserve energy. They do so by not mating and not having to use energy to lay their eggs. Monarchs also catch thermal air currents to save energy and retain fat to survive the time they overwinter in Mexico. They remain in Mexico for several months in a few isolated peaks in the cool Sierra Madre mountain range and roost in oyamel fir trees. In the spring they begin their migration north to begin their annual life cycle. To do this it takes 3 generations to move north from Mexico but only one generation to fly all the way back to Mexico. The map below shows the monarch's annual spring and fall migrations.



Annual Monarch Butterfly migration patterns

For more information:

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