



The Ontario Wildlife Foundation
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Conserve Natural Habitats • Promote and Participate in Conservation Education • Encourage Outdoor Recreation

Monarch Butterfly

The orange and black wings of the Monarch butterfly were once a very common sight. However, the use of herbicides on milkweed and other wild plants has greatly reduced food sources for the Monarch Butterfly. The destruction of migratory sites, urban sprawl and other factors like climate change have also played a role in the diminishment of Monarch Butterflies and their migration patterns.

We can help by building backyard butterfly gardens with flowers and milkweed plants.

Did you know that butterflies are the second largest group of pollinators... next to bees?

What to consider when planning a butterfly garden

- **WIND** - choose a spot that is sheltered from the wind.
- **SUNSHINE** - the spot should get 5-6 hours of sunshine. Butterflies like to sun bath on rocks to warm their wings for flight. They cannot fly if their body temperature is too low.
- **WATER** - have a water source nearby. Its best to add sand to the bottom as male butterflies use sand for it's minerals and salt.
- **PLANTS** - use large groupings of brightly coloured flowering plants. Butterflies feed on nectar found in plants with clusters of tiny flower and plants from the daisy family. Aster, Coneflower, Rudbeckia, Black-Eye Susan, Jo-Pye Weed, Buddleia, and Butterfly Bush to name a few, will do well in your butterfly garden. They also like Aspen and Cherry trees.

Bike to Work Day

An annual event held on various days in the Spring across the United States and Canada, it promotes the bicycle as an option for commuting to work.

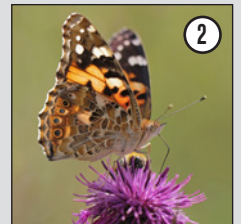
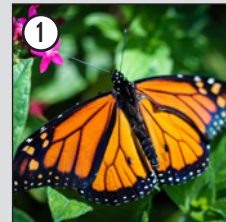
Bike Month is May

Bike to Work Week varies from city to city.



Butterfly Quiz

Name these butterflies!



- Answers:**
 1. Monarch
 2. Painted Lady
 3. Viceroy
 4. Red Admiral

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Toad Houses for your garden

They can be made from clay or plastic flower pots or even large coffee cans. Clay pots make for a cooler home in the summer. Whichever kind you pick make sure you place it in your garden in a shady area, such as under a shrub or plant with low hanging leaves.

A pot can be placed on its side with the lower half buried in the dirt, like a little cave. If the pot is placed upside down you can tap or cut out an opening, at least 4-5 inches wide and 3 inches high. If you don't want to break the pot you can place stones under one side to keep it up off the soil and make an entrance for the toad. Be sure the stones are secure as you don't want the pot to fall and trap the toad inside.

Place a water source for the toad near the toad house. A birdbath or a small dish (like the bottom dish of a clay pot) would work well.

Remember that too much handling can cause the toad to secrete a toxin that irritates your skin and may cause him to look elsewhere or a place to live.

DID YOU KNOW?

Toads eat 100 or more insects every day!



Snapping Turtles



As Canada's largest freshwater turtle, the Snapping Turtle grows to an average length of 20-36 cm and can weigh from 4.5-16.0 kg. The most prehistoric-looking of all of Ontario's native species, the snapping turtle has a large black, olive or brown shell (which is usually covered in algae or moss), and triangular spikes along its tail. Hatchlings are about the size of a loonie and are smaller and darker than adults, with pronounced ridges along the length of their shell.

Snapping Turtles spend most of their lives in water. They prefer shallow waters so they can hide under the soft mud and leaf litter, with only their noses exposed to the surface to breathe. Not the strongest of swimmers, these aquatic turtles are usually observed walking on the bottom of small ponds and rivers or crossing roads.

During the nesting season, from early to mid summer, females travel overland in search of a suitable nesting site. Snapping Turtles often take advantage of man-made structures for nest sites, including roads (especially gravel shoulders), dams and aggregate pits.

Why are they called Snapping Turtles?

Because of their size, they cannot fit inside their shell so they snap at perceived threats to protect themselves.

What threatens it

Snapping Turtles take 15 to 20 years to reach maturity. As a result, adult mortality greatly affects the species' survival. During the summer, many turtles cross roads in search of mates, food and nest sites. This is risky for turtles as they are too slow to get out of the way of moving vehicles. Eggs in nests around urban and agricultural areas are subject to predators such as raccoons and skunks.

If you must pick up a Snapper by hand, do so by sliding fingers behind the turtle's hind legs, with the tail between your hands and gripping the shell between your fingers and thumbs, then slide one hand under the turtle's belly to grab a hold of the plastron (the belly shell). Snappers are very strong and will squirm and thrash their hind legs making it difficult to hold on. A Snapper can reach its midpoint so do not pick it up near its middle. Never pick up a turtle by the tail; you may damage its spine.

Status: Special Concern

"Special Concern" means the species lives in the wild in Ontario, is not endangered or threatened, but may become threatened or endangered due to a combination of biological characteristics and identified threats.

Date added to the Species at Risk in Ontario List: September 10, 2009