

Activists seek endangered status for monarch butterflies, blame pesticides and GMOs

As monarch butterfly populations dwindle to unprecedented low levels, activists say the colorful and far-ranging insects need protection of the Endangered Species Act to survive.

In a formal listing petition to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, a coalition of advocacy groups say the widespread use of pesticides and genetically modified crops are the biggest threats to the butterflies.

In the petition, the Center for Biological Diversity, the Center for Food Safety, the Xerces Society and renowned monarch scientist Dr. Lincoln Brower say monarch butterflies have declined by more than 90 percent in less than 20 years. By some estimates, they may have lost more than 165 million acres of habitat — an area about the size of Texas — including nearly a third of their summer breeding grounds.

“The widespread decline of monarchs is driven by the massive spraying of herbicides on genetically engineered crops, which has virtually eliminated monarch habitat in cropland that dominates the Midwest landscape,” said Bill Freese, a Center for Food Safety science policy analyst. “Doing what is needed to protect monarchs will also benefit pollinators and other valuable insects, and thus safeguard our food supply.”

Read the full, original article: [Biodiversity: Endangered species protection sought for dwindling monarch butterflies](#)