

New data, novel research approaches help tackle declining monarch butterfly mystery

Monarch butterflies are an icon of nature: spectacular in form, known for their unfathomable annual migration, and frequent visitors in our backyards. It is no wonder they are a darling among invertebrates. And what has now captured our attention is the striking and precipitous decline of monarch populations over the past two decades. So much of the decline in biodiversity, part of the current mass extinction, seems abstract to us—the polar bear floating on an iceberg in the arctic, or the slash and burn of tropical rain forests.

But the decline of monarch butterflies has been observed like a “silent spring,” with biologists and casual observers alike noticing the missing butterflies from so many of our recent summers, especially in the northeastern and midwestern United States. Two new studies published in PNAS add fresh analyses, considerably new data, and novel approaches to tackle the monarch mystery

Read full, original article: [Advances in understanding the long-term population decline of monarch butterflies](#) (behind paywall)