

Monarch butterflies need our help

Butterflies represent rebirth, change, transformation, and hope. To many Mexican Indigenous cultures, monarchs are the souls of deceased loved ones, returning to Earth to provide comfort to their living descendants each year during Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) (1). The monarch inspires ceremonial dances of the Hopi and Cherokee tribes (2). And the Blackfoot people look to the butterflies for restful sleep and dreams (3).



Not only do monarchs play an important role as cultural symbols, but they also serve as critical pollinators and contributors to biodiversity.

They are considered an indicator species, meaning their presence (or lack thereof) reflects the health of their habitats. They let us know when something is wrong, and right now, they are sending us a clear message.

There are two populations of monarchs in the United States: Eastern and Western. In the 1990s, the Eastern population was close to 1 billion and the Western population numbered nearly 1.2 million. Both populations have seen major declines. **Eastern numbers are now close to 225 million, representing a total loss of over 77%. Western Monarchs are at record lows with less than 30,000 counted during winter 2018, a 99% drop** (4). Although monarchs were petitioned to be listed under the Endangered Species Act in 2014, they have yet to receive protections.



Less than **1%** of the Western monarch population **remains**.

The main threats to monarchs include:
- habitat loss - pesticides/herbicides
- fragmentation - climate change

For more information about the threats facing monarchs, please visit endangered.org/monarchconservation.

For this project, we were inspired by Sadako Sasaki, a young girl who survived the bombing of Hiroshima. However, years later she was diagnosed with leukemia. In an attempt to get better, she sought out to fold 1,000 origami cranes, a sacred bird in Japan. The legend explains that a crane “lives for a hundred years, and if a sick person folds 1,000 paper cranes, then that person would soon get well” (5). Unfortunately, Sadako died of her illness. **She folded 644 cranes.**



In honor of Sadako Sasaki, we are attempting to fold thousands of origami monarch butterflies in an attempt to heal the dwindling monarch population.

Using art and origami as a mechanism for change



By using community activism, art, science, and civic engagement, we can elevate the monarch butterflies, and move our elected officials to make decisions that strengthen monarch conservation and the Endangered Species Act.

You have received this toolkit because you have pledged to fold a certain number of monarch butterfly origami. First, we'd like to **THANK YOU** for using your valuable personal time to help wildlife. Now, let's get folding! Please read the below instructions thoroughly and reach out to Hailey Hawkins (hhawkins@endangered.org) if you have any questions.

Let's get started!

1 Upon receiving your monarch origami supplies, please ensure you have the following: 1) monarch origami sheets, 2) this toolkit, 3) folding instructions, and 4) a return envelope (if requested).

2 Use the printed instructions or the instructional video that can be found at endangered.org/monarchorigami to begin folding your monarchs. Since the origami will be delivered to our elected officials, please make sure to fill out the blank spaces before you start folding, which includes your name, zip code, and a personal statement about why you care about the Western monarch population.

3 Have fun folding your monarchs!



4 Once you have completed folding all your monarchs, gently put them in the pre-addressed, pre-paid return envelope and place it in your mailbox. Your monarchs will be sent back to us and compiled with thousands of others from across the state.

5 The Endangered Species Coalition will then deliver your monarchs and your well-wishes for the Western monarch population to our elected officials, demanding that they **take action to protect the 1% of Western monarchs that remain.**