

## **Pollinator Week Podcast Transcript - Monarch**

**Narrator:** Hello all and thank you for joining us on this podcast report for the Fish and Wildlife Service. I am Kim Betton reporting for the Fisheries and Habitat Conservation program in the Washington, DC area. This is Pollinator Week! We have some great podcasts lined up for you, so you want to stay tuned in for interesting details about pollinators and how you can help and they can help you. Joining me now is Robin Will. She is the Supervisory Refuge Ranger for St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge in the great state of sunny Florida. Thank you for joining us Robin. How are you doing today?

**Robin Will:** I'm doing just wonderful, Kim. I'm so glad to be on.

**Narrator:** Thanks! So tell us about the specifics of monarchs.

**Robin Will:** It's the very first butterfly we all remember seeing when we were little. They're big with orange wings and black lines and they always come out around Halloween. So that makes it great – orange and black! Here at St. Marks we look forward to them migrating through because they travel all the way from Canada down through the United States to the mountains of New Mexico. The other cool thing is the butterflies that return in the spring are not the same ones that went down in the fall. It's several generations later so a completely brand new generation goes all the way back up north, lays eggs, and those young will start flying south, completely separated from any other adult that's ever made the migration. Pollinators can be bats, butterflies, moths, ants and all of these move pollen from one flower to another flowering plant to start fruiting.

**Narrator:** What's going on at St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge for Monarch activities?

**Robin Will:** We are very blessed. We are right in the little nook of the corner of Florida where the Peninsula hangs down and we're in the Panhandle and all the butterflies that migrate from the New England area and down through the Carolinas end up dropping out and falling on the bushes and shrubs along St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge coastline. They come about the 3<sup>rd</sup> week in October so we started scheduling a festival because we've already had thousands of people to express interest in the migrating Monarch. So about 24 years ago we started having a festival on third Saturday in October. Then we noticed that butterflies weren't really here on the third Saturday so we moved it to the fourth Saturday. Now we're kind of wondering do I need to move it into November. But the festival is for everyone that loves butterflies, wild flowers, pollinators. People come out in droves to see the tagging demonstrations to learn about the monarch butterflies. You can just stand there in front of the shrubs and just watch hundreds of them at a time, feeding before they start their journey to Mexico.

**Narrator:** Very good. Tell us where is your website so we can learn more about your Monarch activities?

**Robin:** Sure! It's [www.fws.gov/saintmarks](http://www.fws.gov/saintmarks) . We will have all of our festival information there and tagging information as well.

**Additional Website information:**

[www.fws.gov/pollinators](http://www.fws.gov/pollinators)

<http://www.pollinator.org/>