



Monarch Butterfly Festival

Late October brings a kaleidoscope of colorful wildflowers, migratory birds and hundreds of butterflies to the St. Marks National Wildlife Refuge. One of the most anticipated fall events is the arrival of the brilliant orange and black monarch butterflies, traveling thousands of miles from America's Midwest south to a small area in the mountains of central Mexico. Monarchs have a 4-inch wingspan and weigh 1 gram (less than a dime) and travel with cold fronts, often at speeds of 10-30 mph, covering up to 80 miles in one day. They may fly at 3,000 feet and higher, and will "fall out" onto goldenrod and saltbush plants blooming along the coast and at the lighthouse, and feed hungrily for their long trip.

For the last 22 years, a festival has been held at the refuge to celebrate the arrival of the butterflies. This year, on **Saturday, October 23, 2010**, join refuge staff and volunteers to experience monarch magic from 10:00 am – 4:00 pm. The daylong festival offers butterfly tagging, butterfly walks, butterfly crafts for children, van tours and wagon tours, exhibits on "people tagging," and butterfly plants, and an opportunity to talk with butterfly researchers. The refuge bookstore will be a great place to stop and purchase monarch t-shirts and monarch gifts! Everything is open to the public as space allows and reservations for tours will be taken on site the day of the festival. There is no cost for any of the tours or programs; however, the regular entrance fee of \$5/car will be charged.