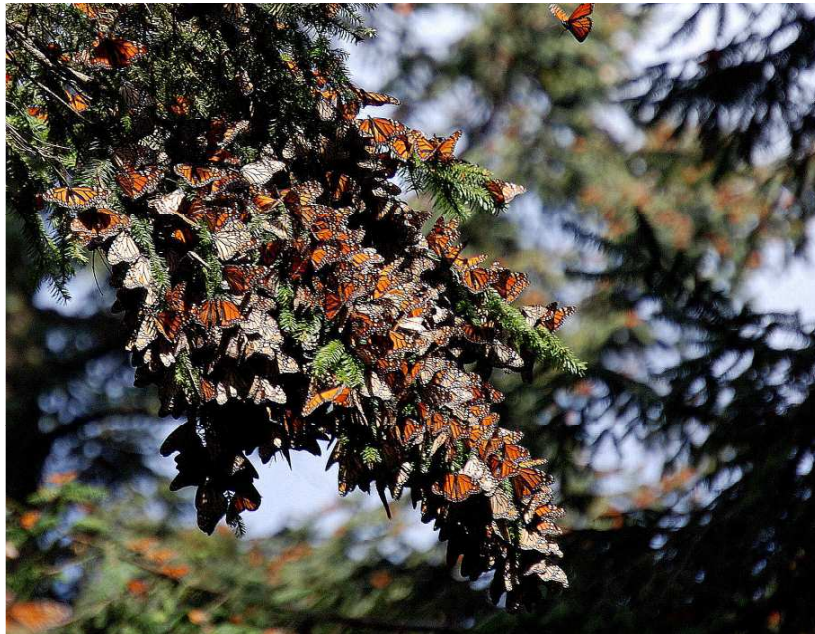


# Trail the Wings of Mexico's Monarch Butterflies

February 25 - March 3, 2012



Every winter, the cloud forests in the mountains of central Mexico play host to millions and millions of overwintering monarch butterflies. The annual migration of these monarchs from the Great Lakes region is one of nature's greatest mysteries. Incredibly, four to five generations separate the monarch populations that make this long and dangerous migration. The monarchs creating the spectacle in Mexico are the great, great grandchildren of the generation that migrated there the year before. Seeing the sheer abundance of monarchs, bending fir branches with their weight and sounding like raindrops as they take to the air, is an encounter not to be missed.

**Mary Ann Hamilton**, Vice President of Science and Conservation at the Butterfly Pavilion in Westminster, Colorado, is accompanying the group on this trip to Mexico. Mary Ann Hamilton has been with the Butterfly Pavilion since May of 2002. She began her work there as a zookeeper of the Curatorial department and worked her way up to VP of Science and Conservation. Mary Ann grew up in south Texas and received a Bachelors of Science in Bioenvironmental Sciences and Entomology from Texas A&M University, College Station and in 2010 received her Master's degree in Education - Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment from Regis University, Denver, CO. Mary Ann has a passion for invertebrates, especially insects, invertebrate research and conservation and environmental education.

## **Itinerary**

### **Saturday, February 25 - Morelia**

Evening arrival to Morelia International Airport from the US. Transfer to Hotel de la Soledad. The rest of the evening is on your own. Overnight at Hotel Casino Morelia. (<http://www.hotelcasino.com.mx/english.aspx>)

### **Sunday, February 26 - Morelia**

After breakfast, you'll set out for a half-day city tour of Morelia, a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Morelia is known for its brilliant colonial structures and remarkable historical churches and boasts a perfect fusion of the Spanish Renaissance and a Mesoamerican experience. Each fragment of standing architecture celebrates the birthplace of many important players in Mexico's rich history. This afternoon, you'll have the opportunity to continue exploring the charms of colonial Morelia on your own. Back at the hotel, a cocktail reception will be followed by a presentation on monarchs. Overnight at Hotel Casino Morelia. (B,L)



**Monday, February 27 – Tlalpujahua Sierra Chincua Monarch Sanctuary**

Depart to Tlalpujahua Sierra Chincua Monarch Sanctuary, a UNESCO World Heritage Site, to observe the overwintering monarchs. For those who prefer not to hike, you can make the trek via horseback. Overnight at Hotel Don Bruno. (B,L,D)

**Tuesday, February 28 – El Rosario Monarch Sanctuary**

Today brings another visit to observe the monarchs at El Rosario, the most famous sanctuary. A government-certified conservationist will accompany the group today during your full day tour. Overnight at Hotel Don Bruno. (B,L,D)

**Wednesday, February 29– Community Visits/ Patzcuaro**

The local communities surrounding the monarch reserves have are working together to promote conservation and sustainable tourism. This morning, you'll get to visit a local school where students are learning about conservation of valuable butterfly habitat. Afterwards, you'll visit a local conservation project where trees are being grown to aid in habitat restoration for monarchs. Afternoon departure to Patzcuaro, also a UNESCO World Heritage Site, where you'll embark on a city tour upon arrival. Overnight at Posada Don Vasco. (<http://www.bwposadadonvasco.com.mx/>) (B,L,D)

**Thursday, March 1 - Patzcuaro/ Janitzio Island/ Yunuen Island**

After breakfast, you'll have a boat tour of Patzcuaro Lake with stops at Yunuen and Janitzio Islands. On Yunuen you'll learn about local flora and fauna and community members will share how they are living sustainably on the island. Overnight at Posada Don Vasco. (B,L,D)



**Friday, March 2 – Tzintzuntzan Archaeological Site/ Morelia**

This morning you'll visit Tzintzuntzan Archaeological Site. The name Tzintzuntzan comes from the P'urhépecha language, meaning "place of the hummingbirds." The pre-Hispanic city of Tzintzuntzan extended from Lake Pátzcuaro to the hills just to the east and had a population of between 25,000 and 30,000 when the Spanish arrived

in the 1520s. Afternoon return to Morelia followed by a final farewell dinner with the group. Overnight at Hotel Casino Morelia. (B,L,D)

### **Saturday, March 3**

Early morning transfer to Morelia International Airport for your flight back to the US.

**Price:** \$2730 per person for Butterfly Pavilion members (double occupancy); add \$100 for non-members

**Single supplement:** \$675

A \$500 deposit is required to reserve your space.

3% surcharge is assessed for credit card payments.

Pricing is based on double occupancy and **includes** private transportation, local guides, entrance fees, horse rental at Tlalpujahu Sierra Chincua monarch reserve, all meals as listed with non-alcoholic drinks, lodging, activities listed in the itinerary, in-country airport transfers, pre-departure gathering in Denver to meet fellow travelers, travel insurance, and donation to the Butterfly Pavilion.

Pricing **does not include** international airfare, alcoholic beverages, optional horse rental at El Rosario monarch reserve, passport/visa fees, pre-departure cancellation and "Cancel for any reason" options on travel insurance policy, items of a personal nature, or gratuities for the local guides.

If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact Sheridan Samano at [Sheridan@reefstorockies.com](mailto:Sheridan@reefstorockies.com) or 303.860.6045.