

R2 Individual Species Recommendations

TAXON	Scientific Name		Common Name		
	<i>Danaus plexippus plexippus</i>		Monarch butterfly		
FWS	FS	BLM			
Under review (+ 90-day)					
Grank	CO S Rank	WY S Rank	SD S Rank	NE S Rank	KS S Rank
G4T1 (eastern NA pop.) (critically imperiled) G4T3 (western NA pop.) (vulnerable to imperiled)	NSRB (unranked)	NSRB (unranked)	NSRB (unranked)	NSRB (unranked)	NSRB (unranked)
	CO Status	WY Status	SD Status	NE Status	KS Status
	Not SGCN	Not SGCN	Not SGCN	Not SGCN	SGCN Tier III
IUCN	PIF – Area Importance		PIF – Population Trend		
Not categorized					
FS Species Evaluation Preparer			Non-FS Species Evaluation Preparer		
			USFWS Region 6/Colorado FO		
Sensitive Species Recommendation (Please check 1 box below)					
X	R2 Sensitive Species (SS)		Not R2 SS, but should be considered for other Emphasis Species Lists		
	Not R2 SS and Not of Concern Now		Insufficient Information Available to make a recommendation		

As a species the monarch is apparently secure, although the subspecies *D. p. plexippus* in North America and its two populations have experienced substantial declines. The eastern population's primary breeding range is the Midwest U.S. ("Corn Belt"), which has particularly experienced precipitous declines and believed to be critically imperiled. The western population overwinters primarily along the California coast and has experienced a somewhat slower rate of decline but is vulnerable. The monarch's most important breeding locations in the west are not well understood but believed to be most of California, western Nevada, Arizona, and isolated regions of Oregon, Washington, Utah and Idaho. The monarch is entirely dependent on milkweeds in its summer breeding range. The primary cause of its decline is believed to be the substantial loss of milkweeds from conversion of lands to agricultural production and the increased use of herbicides associated with widespread planting of genetically engineered, herbicide-resistant corn and soybeans in the Corn Belt region of the U.S. and genetically-engineered cotton in California. Monarch overwintering habitat is also threatened by development in Calif. and illegal logging in Mexico. Exacerbating threats may include disease, predation, overutilization for commercial and educational purposes, extensive habitat loss, and climate change and extreme weather.

All evidence points to the fact that the monarch in North America and particularly the eastern population associated with the migration phenomena to overwinter sites in Mexico, has declined significantly in a short period of time and appears to be at high risk. The plight of the monarch and all pollinators has caught the attention of the highest levels of government. On June 20, 2014, the President issued a Memorandum directing federal departments and agencies to give heightened attention to pollinator management and conservation. On May 19, 2015, the Administration issued its national pollinator strategy for implementation by federal departments and agencies in cooperation with states and other stakeholders in monarch conservation. It recognizes the importance of both the eastern and western populations to maintaining viability of the monarch on the continent and establishes target outcomes to offset and reverse habitat losses. On 12/31/2014 the US Fish and Wildlife Service issued a 90-day positive finding on a petition to list the North American subspecies under the ESA and will be conducting a full 12-month status review to determine whether protection of the monarch is warranted across all or a significant portion of its range. The FWS also submitted the evaluation for this consideration of the monarch as a Regional Forester sensitive species in Region 2. Kansas identifies the monarch as a Tier III Species of Greatest Conservation Need; the remaining four Region 2 states do not identify it as a SGCN. The FWS and Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies are coordinating to encourage states to include the monarch as a SGCN in their state wildlife action plans.

While the core breeding and overwintering habitats are outside Region 2, monarchs do occur in the Region and the western edge of the migratory pathway of the imperiled eastern population may include particularly the eastern grassland environments and units in Region 2. There is also evidence of genetic interchange between the eastern and western populations, suggesting some overlap of these populations in intervening areas like Region 2. Considering the national viability concerns for the monarch, the potential for Region 2 and activities to contribute to that viability positively or negatively, and the Administration's direction for federal agencies to take a leadership role in the conservation and recovery of the monarch and other native pollinators, the monarch qualifies for special management attention as a Regional Forester sensitive species in the Rocky Mountain Region.

Name/Title	Peter McDonald, TES Species Program Ldr/ Tyler D. Johnson Regional Botanist	Date	May 20, 2015
-------------------	--	-------------	--------------

References

Species evaluation and references therein presented for consideration for Region 2 sensitive species status, USFWS (Region 6), March 4, 2015.

Center for Biological Diversity (CBD), Center for Food Safety, The Xerces Society, Dr. Lincoln Brower. 2014. *Petition to Protect the Monarch Butterfly (Danaus plexippus plexippus) under the Endangered Species Act*. August 26, 2014. 159 pp., and references therein.

Jepsen, S. , D.F. Schweitzer, B. Young, N. Sears, M. Ormes, and S.H. Black. 2015. *Conservation Status and Ecology of Monarchs in the United States*. 36 pp. NatureServe, Arlington, Virginia, and the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, Portland, Oregon.

Pollinator Health Task Force. 2015. *National Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators*. The White House, May 19, 2015, 64 pp. [[http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/Pollinator Health Strategy 2015.pdf](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sites/default/files/microsites/ostp/Pollinator%20Health%20Strategy%202015.pdf)].

Presidential Memorandum -- *Creating a Federal Strategy to Promote the Health of Honey Bees and Other Pollinators*, June 20, 2014. www.whitehouse.gov/the-press-office/2014/06/20/presidential-memorandum-creating-federal-strategy-promote-health-honey-b.