

▲ Photo: Amanda Goble holding a monarch butterfly

Working with Monarchs

photos and article by Abbie Gressley, IWF 2021 summer intern

When Amanda Goble first started raising monarch butterflies three years ago, she only knew there weren't many in her area. Little did she know the process she loves so much would soon be making a larger impact on the monarch population.

"I realize it is a small part to help, but any small thing could make a big impact eventually," says the 46-year-old from Marion, Indiana.

The eastern migratory population of monarch butterflies decreased by 84% between the winters of 1996–1997 and 2014–2015, and the much smaller western monarch population has declined 74% since the late 1990s, according to the [Indiana Monarch Conservation Plan \(IMCP\)](#).

The IMCP was influenced by those interested in monarch butterfly conservation and habitat restoration in an attempt to reverse the population decline of North American monarchs.

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Goble says they had almost lost monarchs in the area due to chemical spraying for bugs on crops and people using them at their own homes without the pollinators. So, she planted milkweed seeds for the monarchs to lay eggs on and had her husband build screened in cages to protect the caterpillars and cocoons from other bugs.

"I have an abundance of praying mantis in my yard, and they will eat them, so this gives them a safe place to stay in hopes that they will make it to butterflies," she says.



Goble starts her process in the spring to make sure the milkweed is growing and plant more if needed. In July, the monarchs start showing up for nectar and begin laying eggs on the plants. She then watches for caterpillars and takes them to the cages to finish growing. It takes about fourteen to twenty days for them to eat before creating a J with their bodies and forming a cocoon. The cocoon will hatch within seven to nine days.



"Finding the caterpillars and letting the butterflies go is about all the hands-on work you need to do, the rest they do on their own," Goble says. "I try not to interfere with their process too much."

Goble says she loves the whole process and only wishes to help them grow to adulthood.

"I think it's fascinating how an egg the size of a pinhead can grow to a caterpillar then change into a butterfly out of a small cocoon," she says. "Watching them fly away is my favorite part; I say goodbye to each one and wish them well on their journey."

According to the IMCP, Indiana, along with other Midwestern states, comprises a particularly important portion of the range of the eastern population of monarch butterflies, supplying much of the breeding and migrating habitat that produces the migratory generation of the eastern monarch population.

Goble is one of many in Indiana playing a small role for a much bigger cause for these butterflies.

"I just let the butterflies fly away in hopes that they will live to make new caterpillars and butterflies," she says. "I hope to continue to give the butterflies a chance to survive and keep coming back to our area."

See more photos from this story on our blog: <https://indianawildlife.org/?p=3357&preview=true>

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear IWF members and friends,

It looks like we have made it through all cacophonous Brood X Cicadas and a summer of exciting programs and policy is heating up.

We have been busy getting a new [short video](#) about the impacts of climate change on fishing on the White River with our friends at [Two Forks Guide Service](#). I wanted to make sure our members and partners got a sneak peak of the new video as well as a suite of resources to take action on climate in Indiana. Check it all out on our website at www.indianawildlife.org/climate.



Another major priority at the top of our list has been continued engagement on Recovering America's Wildlife Act. The Recovering America's Wildlife Act, just introduced in the U.S. Senate ([S. 2372](#)), will catalyze collaborative, on-the-ground habitat restoration projects, help with species reintroductions, tackle disease, and boost other much needed conservation efforts to match the magnitude of the wildlife crisis. Indiana has two U.S. Senators that need to hear from you.

"Senator Braun/Young, please join your colleagues Senators Martin Heinrich and Roy Blunt in cosponsoring the common-sense Recovering America's Wildlife Act (S. 2372)."

We also have a handy [Indiana fact sheet](#) and [blog post](#) on our website.

Senator Todd Young: 202-224-5623 | [EMAIL](#)

Senator Mike Braun: 202-224-4814 | [EMAIL](#)

Thank you for all that you do for Indiana wildlife!

Yours in conservation,

Emily Wood, Executive Director

Monarch Tagging

Our award winning Monarch Tagging is back again in 2021! This will be our fifth year tagging monarch butterflies as part of the Monarch Watch citizen science effort. If you have never participated before, this is a unique opportunity to get hands-on with the conservation of these incredible insects.

These migratory butterflies pass through Indiana on their way to Mexico in mid September. They can travel upwards of 100 miles a day at an altitude of thousands of feet. In the evening, they make their way down to rest and eat.

For more details, please visit our [events calendar](#).

Urban Wilderness Trail - From 6:00pm - 7:30pm on September 11 (rain date September 25)

Tryon Farm - From 6:00pm - 7:30pm on September 18

Sycamore Land Trust - 6:00pm - 7:30pm on September 22

Wolf Run - 6:00pm - 7:30pm on September 9 (rain date September 13)



▲ Tagging and releasing monarch butterflies on the Urban Wilderness Trail

Marott Woods Night Hike

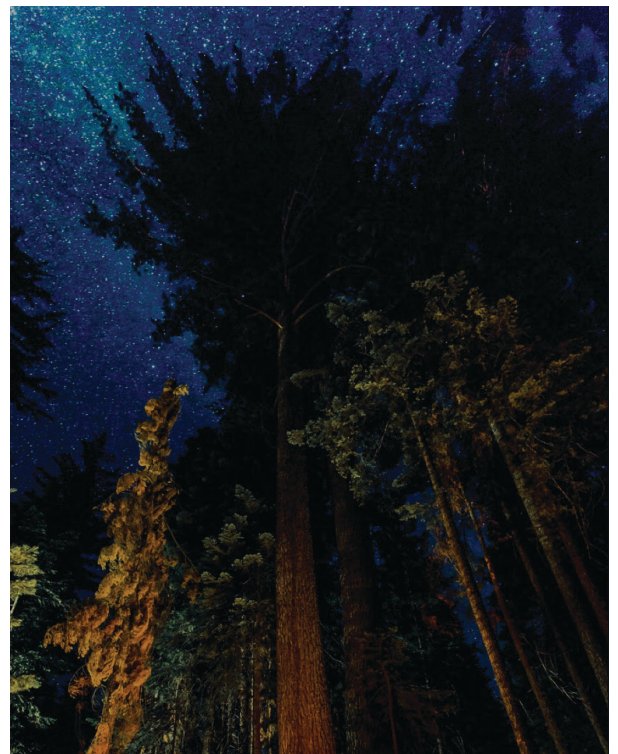
August 27 8pm - 9pm

Marott Park 7347 N College Ave, Indianapolis

We often miss some of the most fascinating wildlife because we go in when the sun goes down. Come explore the night life with us!

Join IWF, Land Stewardship, and Friends of Marott Woods Nature Preserve as we explore the Marott Park trails at dark to discover the creatures of the night! We will listen for nocturnal animals such as owls, and use UV lights to search for caterpillars, moths, and other nighttime activity. Please bring a flashlight and wear sturdy shoes.

Our group will meet in the Marott Park parking lot at 8:00 pm. The hike will start at sunset and last approximately 1-1.5 hours.



Stick Insects

Introducing Indiana's chameleon of the insect world, *Diapheromera femorata*, more commonly known as the Northern Walking Stick. Masters of camouflage, these bugs hide in plain sight among most of the United States and some parts of Canada. Walking sticks prefer deciduous forests, specifically oak and hazelnut trees, but can be found in urban gardens and agricultural fields. Stick insects are herbivores and tend to feed on one leaf at a time---with their favorites being hazelnut and oak. They also feed on white oak, strawberry, and blueberry plants. As such, their host plants consist of white oak, black oak, and black cherry.

Measuring 3-3.5 inches (the females are larger than the males), their elongated cylindrical form resembles a small greenish brown twig. To add, their heads are tiny, but bear antennae 2/3 the length of their entire body.

Breeding season typically starts in late August and can continue until late October (or until there is no longer any green foliage). However, females can produce unfertilized eggs on their own which will hatch and grow into new females.

As we approach their breeding season, venture out and look for these well-disguised insects and share your pictures on our [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) pages!



Our New Website is Growing!

Our new website is getting more content every day. Here are just a few of the new features we hope you will find helpful.

[Native Plant Finder](#) - Our [native plant sale](#) has doubled in size every year for the past few years and now we have a tool to help you learn about the plants we sell and many of the others you will find on your hike.

[Bill Tracker](#) - Advocacy is vital to protecting our outdoors. Stay up to date on important legislation and what position IWF takes.

[Video Library](#) - Check out our expanding library of educational videos and fun wildlife spotlights.



IWF is proud to announce our new video on how the climate crisis is affecting Indiana. Take a trip with flyfishermen Jason and Cory as they discuss what they're seeing as a result of our changing climate. Click the thumbnail above or visit youtu.be/tv6hqX8OP7Y.

Bird Feeder Update

The recent songbird deaths which swept across parts of the country and much of Indiana have disrupted many bird watcher's favorite hobby. For the safety of our beloved birds, we've suggested following DNR's recommendation to remove feeders. While many counties are no longer under that recommendation, the following counties are still recommended to leave bird feeders down: Allen, Carroll, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Lake, Marion, Monroe, Porter, St. Joseph, Tippecanoe, Whitley.

While infected songbirds have tested negative for a wide range of viruses, the cause is still under investigation. Please follow DNR's updates on their website; in.gov/dnr/fish-and-wildlife/wildlife-resources/wildlife-diseases-in-indiana/songbird-deaths/

Habitat Programs Updates

For the safety of our staff, we will be easing back into in-person workshops based on information from health experts. While outdoor workshops may be possible, we encourage you to consider one of our virtual options as well. We hope 2022 will be a vast improvement over last year and we will be able to get back to normal as soon as possible.

To request a workshop or learn more about them, please visit our new website at indianawildlife.org/education/workshops/



Corporate Sponsorship for Conservation

Does your business share the IWF vision of sustainable wildlife and wildlife habitats for Indiana? If your business would like to show its commitment to conservation and be highlighted for doing so through our communications and website, please contact us by email at info@indianawildlife.org.