

ONE OF THE MOST AMAZING PHENOMENA

in nature is the annual migration of millions of Monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) southward from their breeding grounds in the United States and Canada east of the Rocky Mountains to overwintering sites in the mountains of southern Mexico. Hundreds of millions of Monarchs fly along the Gulf Coast, or across the Gulf of Mexico, to eventually reach the belt of high volcanic mountains which stretches across the southern end of the central Mexican plateau.

AT ABOUT A DOZEN ISOLATED PLACES WITHIN

the high-altitude fir forests of this zone, Monarchs pass the winter in aggregations that exceed two billion individual butterflies. Throughout periods of sunshine, millions of butterflies will take flight from the roosts and sail to nearby stream banks to drink, then soar again into the air and eventually return that afternoon to their original roost on the surrounding trees. You will have the opportunity to see them packed in the countless millions on the roosts in the early morning, as well as in flight at midday, feeding on wildflowers (which amazingly bloom throughout the year at these elevations in Mexico), and watering at streams.

THE BEAUTY OF THEIR RUSTLING WINGS

clearly audible at times of mass flight, the sprinkling of orange Monarch scales drifting down through the green fir tree boughs, and sheer magnitude of the numbers seen, all combine to make this one of the most amazing experiences imaginable. Bring your best photographic equipment to record this miracle for your friends and relatives to marvel at when you return home!

Meet your leader



Andrei Sourakov

Originally from Moscow, Andrei Sourakov is part of the graduate faculty at the University of Florida's Entomology &

Nematology Department, and since 2005 he has been the Collections Coordinator for the McGuire Center for Lepidoptera and Biodiversity at the Florida Museum of Natural History. He holds his PhD in Entomology from the University of Florida. Andrei has served as editor and is currently associate editor for the journal *Tropical Lepidoptera Research*, and he has been a board member of the Center for Systematic Entomology for over 10 years. His work has appeared in dozens of research journals and other publications.



ENROLL TODAY!

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800-451-7111



MIGRATION OF THE MONARCH BUTTERFLIES IN MEXICO February 14-19, 2021



WITH

FLORIDA MUSEUM OF
NATURAL HISTORY

led by Andrei Sourakov

Collections Coordinator, McGuire Center for Lepidoptera & Biodiversity





2021 Itinerary

Subject to change

MEXICO CITY

FEB
14

Upon arrival in Mexico City you will be met in the airport and transferred to your hotel, situated in the historic district on the Zócalo. The Zócalo is the largest plaza in Latin America and is surrounded by the presidential palace, Metropolitana Cathedral, Aztec Templo Mayor, and many restaurants and historical architecture. This evening meet in the hotel lobby at 7:00 pm for a welcome dinner and program orientation. Check in starts at 3:00 pm. *Overnight at Zócalo Central Hotel. (D)*



ANGANGUEO

FEB
15

Begin today with a short exploration of Mexico City, with a boxed lunch provided. Then, depart for the colonial town of Angangueo, located high in the mountains in the state of Michoacán, about 100 miles west of Mexico City. Check in at Hotel Don Bruno. After dinner, receive a brief orientation lecture on the Monarch sites and our activities over the next several days. Please note that it can get cold at night and in the early morning so it is recommended that you bring warm sleeping clothes. *Overnight at Hotel Don Bruno. (BLD)*

ANGANGUEO

FEB
16



After breakfast, ascend into the mountains to approximately 10,000 feet elevation to visit Sierra Chincua, one of several nearby Monarch sites. The day will start with a hike up to the reserve entrance. Horses are available for rent as an option for this portion. Once at the entrance to the reserve, continue up the mountain on

foot until you reach the site where the butterflies are roosting. The hike is uphill but you will be able to walk at your own pace and stop and rest as needed. The remainder of the afternoon entails walking around the butterfly site on your own and photographing and watching butterflies independently. A boxed lunch will be provided to eat at leisure. Bathroom access is at the base of the mountain and can be reached by walking or renting a horse. There are also vendors at the base selling food, beverages, and local crafts. The site is typically shaded so remember to dress in layers due to high elevations. Late in the afternoon, return to Hotel Don Bruno for dinner. *Overnight at Hotel Don Bruno. (BLD)*

CONTACT INFORMATION:

If you have questions about any aspects of the trip, please contact Lisa Palmese-Graubard at Holbrook Travel at 800-451-7111 x339 or lisa@holbrooktravel.com.

ANGANGUEO

FEB
17

Today visit El Rosario Reserve to see a second Monarch colony and the one most generally accessible to the public. The journey begins with a hike or you can rent a horse to journey up to the site. This large overwintering colony normally contains well over 100 million adult Monarchs and has an excellent trail system winding through the fir-covered slopes on which the colony is located. Additionally, there is a nearby stream where the butterflies may fly at midday to drink water. Have a simple picnic lunch while enjoying this spectacular phenomenon and watch the butterflies go through their daily cycle of activities. At this time of year, they may take flight for an hour or more to secure water, nectar, etc., before returning to their roost on the tree limbs or trunks. Please be prepared to be independent again today during butterfly watching. Dr. Sourakov will also be available to answer questions. In the late afternoon, return from the mountains to the picturesque colonial town of Angangueo. You will have free time to enjoy the hotel gardens, walk and photograph the interesting scenes and people in this beautiful town, or to just relax. *Overnight at Hotel Don Bruno. (BLD)*



MEXICO CITY

FEB
18

After breakfast, depart for the Mexico City area and the pyramids at San Juan Teotihuacán. After a delicious lunch near the pyramids, you'll have the afternoon to explore this world-famous archaeological site, which covers 32 square miles and contains many structures including two large pyramids. The Pyramid of the Sun, at a height of more than 200 feet, is one of the largest structures created in the pre-Columbian New World. After time to explore the ruins on your own, return to your hotel located on the Zócalo for a farewell dinner. *Overnight at Zócalo Central Hotel. (BLD)*

MEXICO CITY / DEPART

FEB
19

This morning you will be transferred to the airport for your flight home. Check out is at 12:00 pm. Breakfast will be included depending on your departure time. Please be aware that you need to be at the airport 3 hours ahead of your scheduled departure flight time. This goes for the flight to Mexico as well as on the way back. Please pay careful attention when you book your return flight, as a 7:00 am departure from Mexico City means that you will need to have to wake up at 3:30 am to get to the airport by 4:00 am. If you choose to make an early morning booking there is no problem in terms of getting you to the airport on time, but we want you to be aware of the 3 hour check in time. (B)

More information

LAND COST:

\$1,925 per person (double occupancy)

Includes: Accommodations (double occupancy), in-country transportation*, travel protection, meals and activities as listed in the itinerary, most gratuities except for main guide and driver, bottled water on the bus, and carbon offset.

**Please note that airport transfers are included only on February 14 and 19. If you plan to arrive before the start of the program or stay later, you will need to pay for a private transfer.*

Not included: Items of a personal nature, flights, gratuities, alcoholic beverages, trail horse rental (approximately \$5 each way), or gratuities for main guide and driver.

ESTIMATED AIRFARE COST:

\$675 round-trip from Gainesville. Holbrook can assist with your flight arrangements from the airport of your choice if desired.

THE FINE PRINT:

Price is based on double occupancy; for a single room add \$385 per person. A completed enrollment form and \$200 deposit are required by Oct. 17, 2020 to hold your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable minus a \$100 cancellation fee until Nov. 11, 2020, at which time final non-refundable payment is due.

TRAVEL PROTECTION:

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more. Visit holbrooktravel.com/travelprotection for more details. Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

ACTIVITY LEVEL:

This is an active adventure in high-altitude conditions (over 10,000 feet). Participants should be in good health and able to hike for a distance of 2-3 miles to the colony site and then back the same way (could be around 5 miles of hiking in one day). Typically, the hike takes between one and two hours, but the colony site varies throughout the season, so hiking times and distances may vary.

ADDITIONAL NOTES:

Please note that this program visits the Mexican state of Michoacán which the US State Department has long designated a level 4 due to criminal activity. The state of Mexico City is a level 2. You are advised to visit <https://travel.state.gov> for more information. The Florida Museum has safely operated this trip for over 20 years.

During site visits, the days entail walking around the butterfly sites on your own and photographing and watching butterflies. Please be prepared to be independent during butterfly watching. Bathroom access is at the base of the mountain and can be reached by walking or renting a horse. There are also vendors at the base selling food, beverages, and local crafts. Dressing in layers is important due to weather at mountain elevations. Please be advised that Hotel Don Bruno does not have a heating system. It can be cold at night so warm sleeping clothes are recommended.