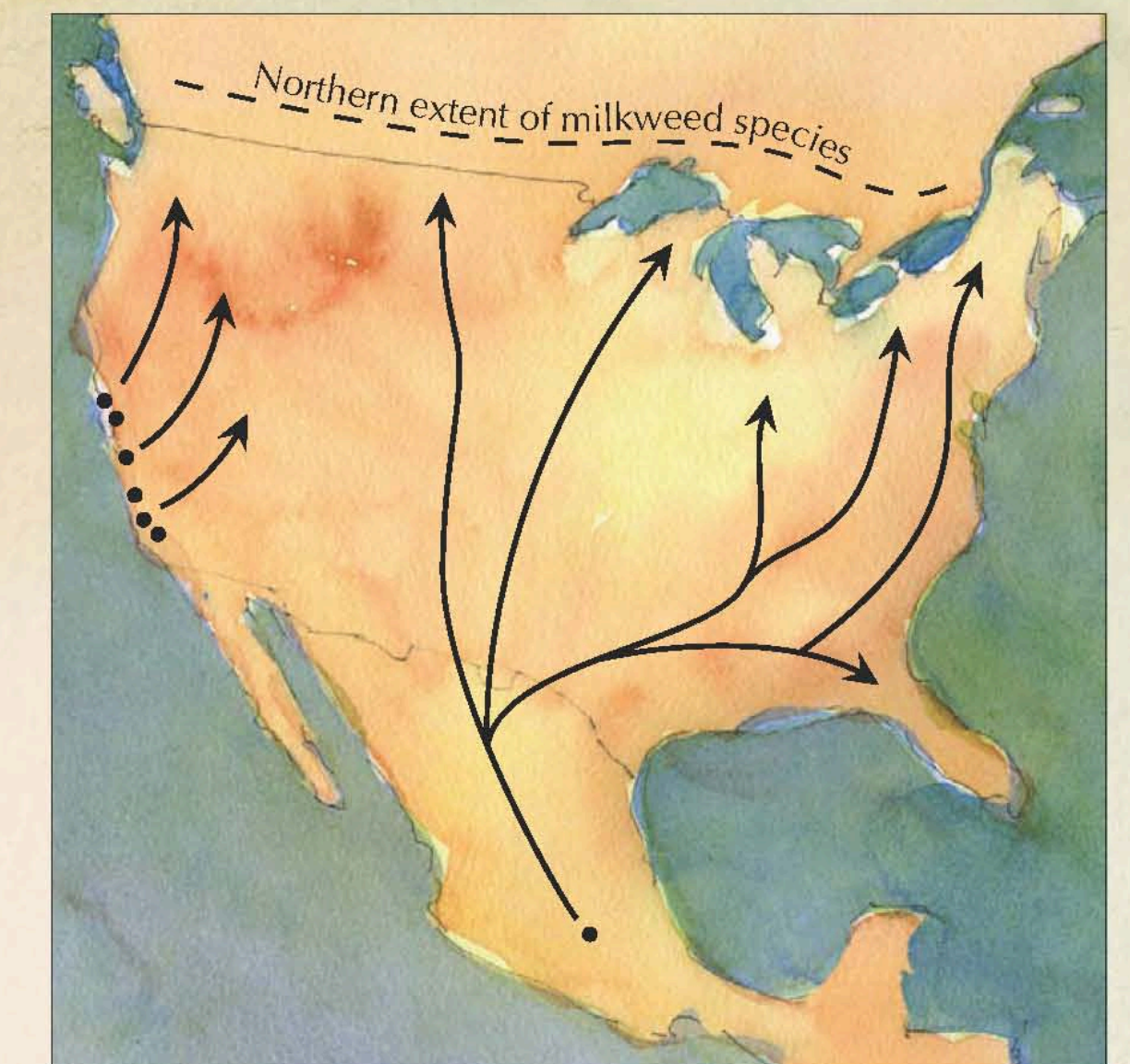
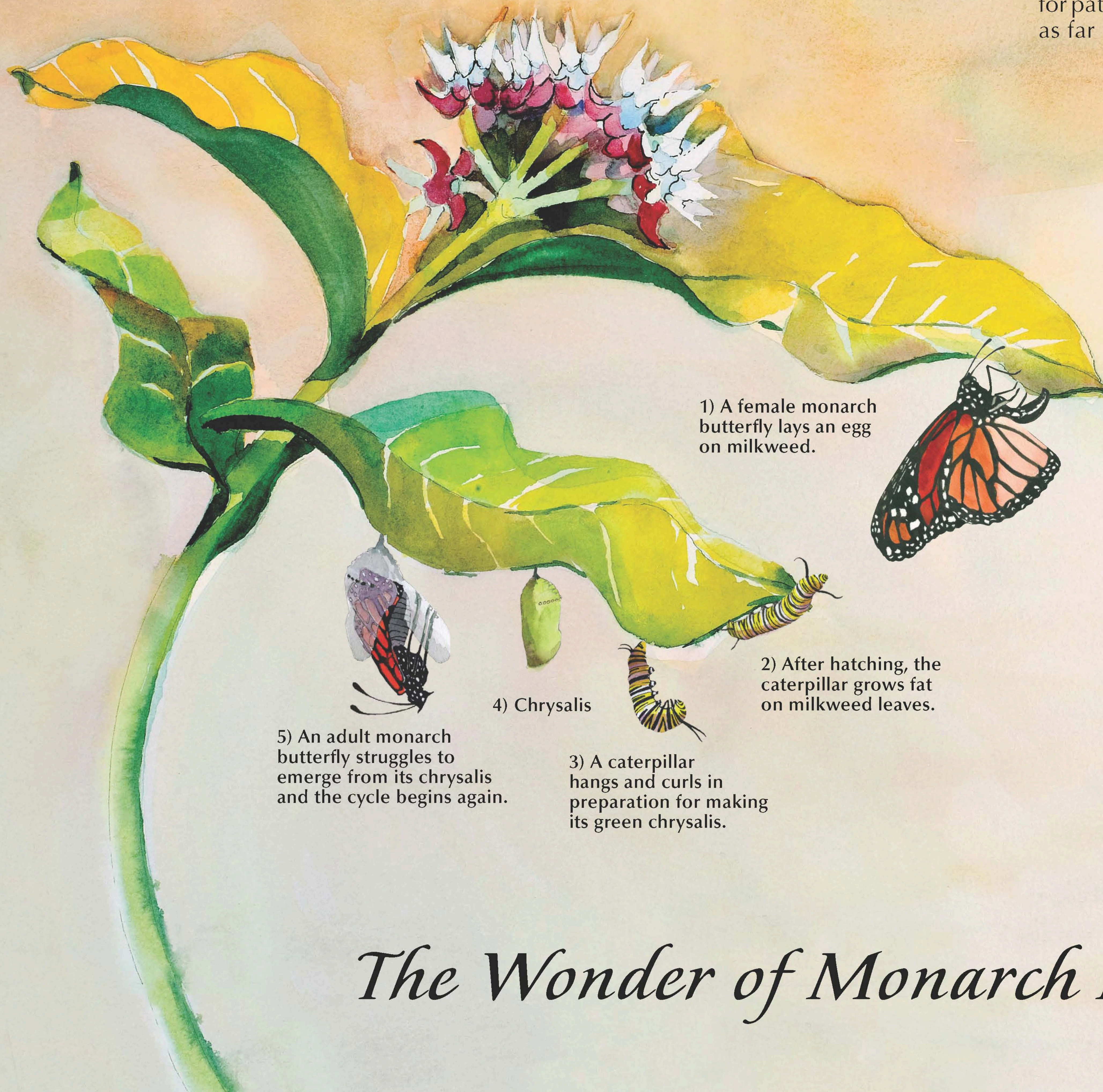


Monarch butterflies lay eggs only on milkweed plants. They search for patches of milkweed that grow as far north as southern Canada.



- Monarch Overwintering Populations
- ← Spring and Summer Migration Paths



1) A female monarch butterfly lays an egg on milkweed.

2) After hatching, the caterpillar grows fat on milkweed leaves.

4) Chrysalis

3) A caterpillar hangs and curls in preparation for making its green chrysalis.

5) An adult monarch butterfly struggles to emerge from its chrysalis and the cycle begins again.

Monarch butterflies travel all the way from Mexico to Wisconsin every summer. This journey may take 3 or 4 generations. They come here seeking the native Common and Swamp Milkweeds, on which they feed, grow, and thrive.

The Monarch's life cycle (as seen on the left) takes 3 to 5 weeks to complete. None of these stages can withstand Wisconsin's winter, so the last Monarchs to emerge at summer's end must fly south to survive. They migrate to the Sierra Madre Mountains of Mexico. On their way, they find shelter in conifers, sustain their energy on flower nectar, and sip the morning dew. Breezes and thermal winds help them on their way. Upon reaching their destination in Mexico, they cluster by the thousands in humid fir forests, conserving their energy until spring.

Once the days lengthen and the air warms, this same generation of Monarchs begins its migration northward, breeding and laying eggs along the way. Several generations later, they reach Wisconsin, milkweeds, and the beginning of another summer in the North.

The Wonder of Monarch Migration

