

Royal Wind Vanes Visit Oklahoma
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NORMAN - It is the second week of September, and the advance fleet of the Monarch butterfly population is beginning to arrive across much of the state. The larger population is still a couple of weeks away, but you can get a complimentary weather observation from the early-bird (or is it "early-bug"?) butterflies.

Monarchs migrate with the sun: northbound in the spring and southbound in the fall. The groups that migrate through Oklahoma in September and October are on their way to Mexico to fatten up and stay for the winter.

Monarchs are very light and lack the strength to fly against significant winds. In fact, they're programmed to hitch a ride on Mother Nature's zephyrs when conditions are favorable, instead of flapping their way to their destination.

For the next few weeks, take note of what the Monarch population is doing. If the butterflies are sailing high in the air, winds are probably from the north and the royal bugs are covering miles on their journey to Mexico. If the butterflies are fluttering near the ground and feeding, it's a sign that southerly winds prevail. Instead of spending precious energy fighting the southerly currents, they stay near the ground (where winds are normally lighter) and recharge their batteries with some delicious nectar!

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