



Monarch

Danaus plexippus (Linnaeus, 1758)

DESCRIPTION

Wingspan: From 8.6 to 10.2 cm. **Open wings:** They are orange and black, with black scales over veins, which makes it wide and striking. The apex and the margins are black with a lot of white dots, which are aligned in two rows on the hindwings. The body is black with white dots. **Closed wings:** Their design is similar to the above one, but the orange colour is fainter, there is less black colour on the apex, and there are more orange spots.

KEY FOR VISUAL IDENTIFICATION

Black body and head with white dots



Wide black veins

Wide black margins with plenty of white dots

Wide orange stretches between the veins

Similar design to the above one, but the orange colour is fainter



SIMILAR SPECIES

Plain Tiger: It is smaller. With open or closed wings, and it has more orange colour on it, as its veins are not black.

The apex on the forewings has large white spots, while the outer margins of both, hind and forewings, have only one row of white dots.



BIOLOGY & HABITAT

In Málaga, several generations exist at the same time, and fly throughout the year, above all at the end of autumn.

Due to their migratory character, Monarchs can be seen at any kind of habitat, from urban areas, where they breed, to the mountains in the inland, which they just visit. Their caterpillars' foodplant is bloodflower (*Asclepias curassavica*), which came from the USA, and it has been used for decorating parks and gardens. It naturalized in several locations in Málaga, such as Marbella, relatively close to the GMP, and it shelters some of the major Monarch's colonies which are known in Andalusia.

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
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DISTRIBUTION

Due to their migratory character, these butterflies can be seen at any point of the trail, dozens of kilometres away from their young colonies. There are no colonies on the GMP, but it is rather common on stage 30 as its large colony in Marbella is close to it. When the year is good for the species regarding the weather, it can also be seen on stages 32, 33 and 34 because the butterflies come from varied colonies on the coast, spread between Marbella and Benalmádena. During some extraordinary favourable years, like 2016, it can even be seen in the Serranía de Ronda. In particular, it was spotted on stage 24 of the GMP, among many other places.

