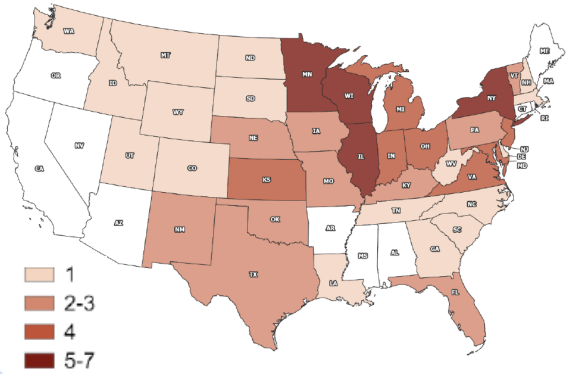
2023 Annual Summary

Introduction

2023 marked the fourth year of implementing the Nationwide Candidate Conservation Agreement with Assurances for Monarch Butterfly on Energy and Transportation Lands (Monarch CCAA). The Monarch CCAA is a unique partnership between the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and dozens of transportation agencies and energy companies. In exchange for voluntary conservation commitments, energy and transportation organizations (Partners) receive regulatory certainty and operational flexibility in the face of a potential federal endangered species listing. For more information, contact Megan Petraitis at mpetrait@uic.edu.

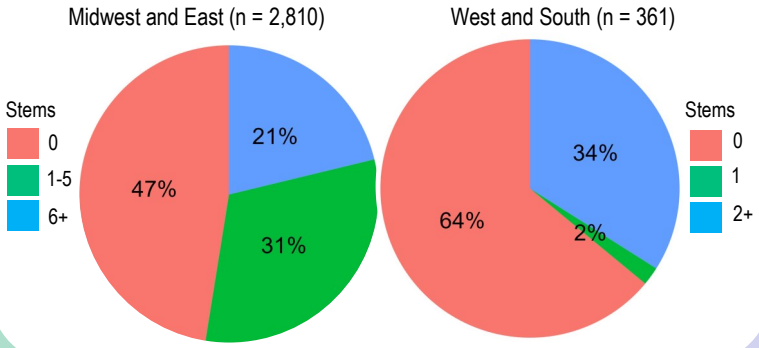
Partners by State



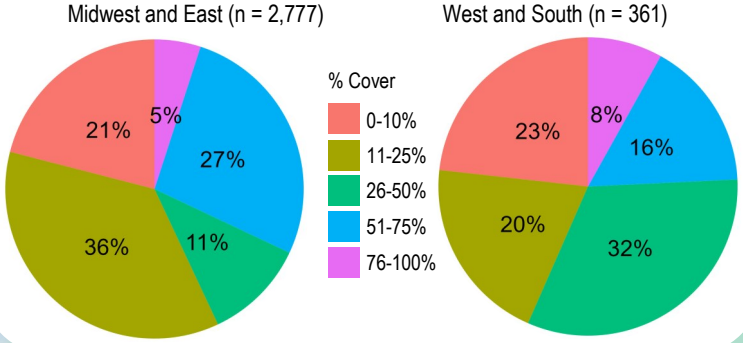
Conservation

- The Monarch CCAA reached 982,410 adopted acres, exceeding the 2023 target of 413,048 by 238%.
- Partners monitored 3,139 plots on adopted acres, an increase of 9% from 2022.
- Monarch butterflies were observed on 11% of survey plots.
- 31% of plots in the Midwest and East, and 34% of plots in the West and South met or exceeded the region milkweed stem targets.
- 79% of plots in the Midwest and East and 77% of plots in the West and South met or exceeded the nectar plant cover target.

Milkweed Abundance



Nectar Resource Cover



Administration

- UIC received twelve new applications, finalized six new CIs, and accepted nine implementation plans from existing Partners.
- Six new representatives were elected to the CCAA Advisory Committee, which met twice in 2023.
- UIC hosted six bimonthly meetings with Partners and other interested stakeholders.
- UIC and Monarch Joint Venture held the first in-person meeting in Phoenix, AZ for Partners and other interested stakeholders. This meeting was attended by 167 registrants, and had 37 presentations.

Outreach

- UIC began working with the Department of Defense and the Forest Service to conduct outreach to managers with overlapping lands.
- The Monarch CCAA program was shared with industry and NGO professionals at twelve different conferences and events throughout the year.
- UIC continued work with the Department of Energy to encourage pollinator habitat and CCAA enrollment of utility scale solar facilities.

Tools and Resources

UIC has continued to develop and publish resources in the Monarch CCAA Toolkit, including:

- Improvements to the online annual reporting tool,
- Adaptive management for nectar plants addendum,
- Conservation mowing implementation guide, and
- Added case studies and webinars