

Biology Seminar



Western
UNIVERSITY · CANADA

12:30 - 1:30 pm
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via ZOOM



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Monarch butterflies were just listed as Endangered in Canada, but are they really in trouble?

We've all seen the headlines that scream how the sky is falling on the beleaguered monarch butterfly, especially in early 2024, when it was announced that their wintering colonies in Mexico were exceptionally small recently. In Canada, it was just announced that monarchs have been officially upgraded to "endangered" status, based on recommendations by COSEWIC. Add to this, recent public announcements of endangerment by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, and possible uplisting by the USFWS in the United States, and it seems that this species is doomed. In this seminar I will present information, data, and statistics on the monarch population in both Canada and the U.S., that have largely been ignored by these organizations. The majority of this information is peer-reviewed and published, by myself and colleagues. Collectively, this information points to a shift in migratory behavior in the species, rather than a population decline, and which also shows how monarchs are even doing very well in Canada! These studies call into question the listing decision(s). Moreover, I'll also show, using peer-reviewed studies, how the campaign to save the monarchs is the very thing that is causing these changes to the population. This is a story about science, politics, and public messaging, gone awry.

