

Covid-19 Southwest Monarch Study Field Requirements



The Covid-19 pandemic has created new hurdles for tagging monarchs this year. Yet being outdoors is especially beneficial to our own emotional well-being. We can still tag and monitor monarch butterfly populations in the Southwest with care on our part as well as the communities where we may tag. This can be easy in your own backyard or neighborhood monarch haven but may require more planning for other events. Take a few moments to read our best practices for tagging during the Covid-19 pandemic. We heartily encourage tagging by yourself and members of your own household with PPE (Personal Protective

Equipment) when you are out in the field. Avoid group tagging events this year for everyone's safety. Our field work must include Caution, Safety and Care. (These guidelines are based on a recent Citizen Science Association Townhall for fieldwork during a pandemic.)

- Always follow your local Board of Health and CDC advisories and regulations. Check for updates regularly to ensure your compliance as the recommendations are changing rapidly. When in doubt, always err on the side of safety. We look forward to future years without restrictions in tagging monarchs.
- For your safety and for the safety of the community where you will be tagging, limit travel to the neighboring county to prevent any possibility of transmitting Covid-19 during this time of pandemic community spread.
- If you or any member of your household is not feeling well with COVID-19 symptoms, do not go in the field to tag or monitor monarch butterflies.
- Review all on-line tagging training and data collection available on our website prior to your trip.
- Carpool only with members of your own household. Do not carpool with partners from outside your household such as friends, colleagues or organization members. Limit groups to no more than 10 including trainers.
- If tagging requires permission to access a specific site, call in advance to be certain that the site is not closed to visitors this year.
- Be prepared for "leave no trace" personal care while in the field (e.g. restrooms may be closed): <https://Int.org/why/7-principles/dispose-of-waste-properly/>
- Have a plan for parking, restrooms, meals, etc. that allows you to practice social distancing. If your trip includes a meal, eat outside with a minimum six feet distance between people.
- Limit exposure by reducing interactions at gas stations and stores. Encourage sack lunches/snacks or limit restaurant trips to individual portion takeout only. Plan for any needed space for coolers and individual water containers. Plan ahead to avoid stopping for snacks and other non-essential items.
- Bring your own PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) such as masks and/or gloves – do not share. We ask everyone to wear a mask in the field when you are with others and when stopping at gas stations or stores for your safety as well as the local community.
- Be sure you have all needed equipment (nets, tags, tag data collection forms) and any COVID-related cleaning and disinfecting supplies. Have extra hand sanitizer available for everyone.
- Do not share your nets or others items (pens, clipboards with data sheets, tags, cell phones or cameras) without sanitizing thoroughly after each use. This will be a "selfie year."
- Avoid contact with the public to explain what you are doing. Consider leaving a laminated information sheet in your car window explaining your activity.
- Use hand sanitizer when entering or leaving the field.
- Discuss any tagging concerns with us at Southwest Monarch Study prior to your trip: info@swmonarchs.org