

"Giving thanks fills you with light and joy so you can shine like the bright star you truly are."

- Amy Leigh Mercree

Lake and Farm



Public's help needed in reporting Winter monarch sightings

We asked and, thankfully, you delivered. Now we need your help again. Last Winter, volunteers from across the Southeast and Gulf states provided more than 5,800 observations of monarch butterflies. This Winter, the partnership of universities, agencies and other organizations called Monarchs Overwintering in Southeastern States is requesting the public's continued involvement in reporting sightings.

Sonia Altizer, a University of Georgia ecology professor and director of Project Monarch Health, said the information can help scientists determine if these iconic but declining butterflies "can overwinter as non-breeding adults in the southern U.S. and how this might affect future population numbers." The monitoring will also help document how winter-breeding activity might be affecting the annual migration to Mexico.

Understanding migration and overwintering behavior is crucial to conserving monarchs, a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act.

Thousands of monarchs stream across the South each Fall on their way to wintering grounds in central Mexico. In the Spring, this eastern population of the butterfly returns to the U.S. and Canada to breed.

But not all monarchs migrate to Mexico. Volunteer observations over the past two decades have helped scientists better under-



stand how and why some monarchs breed throughout the Winter in the southern U.S. Scattered reports also suggest that some monarchs can overwinter in coastal regions in a non-breeding state, similar to their wintering behavior in Mexico.

The goal this Winter is to collect more data for a growing partnership that has expanded to include organizations such as Florida Natural Areas Inventory and the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program.

Gabriela Garrison of the North Caro-

lina Wildlife Resources Commission said the monarch is a species of greatest conservation need in North Carolina's Wildlife Action Plan, as in the action plans of many other states. "So monitoring overwintering populations and learning more about their behavior is critical."

The public is encouraged to report monarch sightings from December 1 - March 1 in North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana and Texas.

Observations are entered in Journey

North's online data portal, where they are transformed into real-time mapping visualizations of monarch migration and breeding. Journey North is an organization designed to engage people across North America in tracking wildlife migration and seasonal change.

Program coordinator Nancy Sheehan said the public has a long history of being a part of scientific discoveries. "Journey North is excited to provide a platform for engaging citizen scientists in this targeted monitoring effort."

Susan Meyers, cochair of Monarchs Across Georgia agreed. "Volunteers are vital to this effort. If you enjoy being outdoors and exploring your local ecosystem, this is an easy activity that can be done alone or with your family."

Wildlife biologist Anna Yellin of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources said project partners are grateful to all who reported sightings last Winter. "When we come together as a community as we have with this effort, we stand a better chance of protecting the monarch butterfly for future generations."

How to take part

- Step 1: Create a free account at journeynorth.org/reg.
- Step 2: Learn how to report monarch sightings at journeynorth.org/monarchs.
- Step 3: From Dec. 1-March 1, submit monarch observations at journeynorth.org/sightings.

Waterfowl hunters head to wetlands as duck season opens

Georgia waterfowl hunters headed to their favorite wetland locations when duck season opened last Saturday November 20, according to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division (WRD).

"The waterfowl seasons and bag limits are basically the same this season as they were last season," said Kara Nitschke, migratory game-

bird biologist. "Atlantic Flyway breeding populations fared quite a bit better this summer than mid-continent and western birds. If we can get cold weather in the Great Lakes, New England, and mid-Atlantic regions, southern hunters can expect a good number of wood ducks, ring-necks and teal."

Duck season dates are Nov. 20-28 and Dec. 12 - Jan. 31. Full migratory bird

hunting regulations can be found at <https://georgiawildlife.com/hunting/waterfowl>.

Youth, Active Military and Veterans can take advantage of two early Waterfowl Hunting Dates on Nov. 13-14. On these two days, youth age 16 or younger (or active military or veterans) may hunt specific migratory birds, such as ducks, Canada geese and mergansers. Youth must be accompanied by

an adult of at least 18 years of age (only the youth may hunt).

To hunt waterfowl in Georgia you will need a Georgia hunting license, a Georgia migratory bird license, and a federal duck

stamp (now available when you purchase your other recreational licenses). WRD has made your purchase decision even easier by the creation of the Waterfowl Hunter Package at www.GoOutdoorsGeorgia.com,

which includes all you need (and includes a convenient plastic card).

For more information on Georgia Hunting Regulations for waterfowl, visit <https://georgiawildlife.com/hunting/waterfowl>.

How's my deer season going so far?

Well, it's been slow, not seeing much but enjoying being outdoors hunting anyway.

If the deer are not active, I get active after sitting for a few hours. There's always plenty to do at home, but such chores can be done year round. Deer season only lasts a couple months or so.

Middy, I usually take on tasks like working on food plots or tractors. One small diesel Kubota has been giving problems; it will run for about twenty minutes then lose power. We've drained the fuel tank, blew the lines out, changed filters and checked the ventilation of the fuel cap. The problem continued, so researching I went to see if this was a common problem for a BX2200 and found it was. Now the injector pump is in focus. That will be the next thing we will check.

But back to deer hunting, it's picked up a bit. One morning this past week found me slipping through the woods on the way to a favorite stand. Before I got to the stand, I noticed some movement up ahead of me. After a while a doe stepped into view about 50 yards away, just what I was hoping for. One shot made sure she would have a ride in my truck.

I continued on to the stand, climbed in and got settled. Soon after, deer began coming into view, pass-



ing by like they were lost or something. There was a six point buck, a doe, and a four point buck milling around



**Son of
Seminole
Son Anderson**

out in front of me like it was a family reunion or something. The young bucks and doe began to scatter and began leaving. That's when a nice eight point walked into view. I had been taking photos of the young bucks and doe, so I took some photos

of the eight point. He had a nice rack, perfect, well balanced but not what I was hoping for. Then the big buck walked into view where I could see his whole body and that's when things changed. I decided he was worth taking, so I got his attention, then put him down.

Two deer down, so my hunting buddies said, "Now you've got your work cut out for you." That's just half of it; I also had five nice big shoats in a hog trap. Luck-

ily I could call for some help with those, and only had to put up two fine gilts for myself.

Might say, I'm into the meat and don't have to worry about getting skunked this season. Processing my own, it took most of one day and half of the next to process into ground meat, sausage and cubed steaks.

I have one more buck to go to have the buck limit, so I'm going to be very selective in choosing the next buck. I already have a couple of bucks the trail cameras have taken photos of, that I would like to pick one from. Of course I've been after those two for at least two years now and have not seen them in person yet. But that could change; I know where they like to hang out, maybe the rut will help me out this season. Rutting bucks lose almost all caution, let their guard down, ramble more and that gives hunters the best chance of tagging a mature buck.

Patience, time in the woods, and being in the right place at the right time will all come together before the season ends. I'll let you know.

See you outdoors.

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