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**I**F THE thousands of monarch butterflies that winter in Santa Cruz County are to continue brightening gray winter skies, humans must help safeguard local eucalyptus groves that make up the insects' "temporary bivouacs" and "permanent roosts" where the butterflies gather.

Monarchs flutter into Santa Cruz, Pacific Grove and Monterey in the hundreds of thousands each fall, part of a Canada-to-Mexico migration (a theory recently challenged) that may include 10 million butterflies.

Unable to survive freezing weather, the cold-blooded animals must seek out a limited number of areas, such as Santa Cruz, that offer "optimal environmental conditions," according to a report prepared by the Oregon-based Monarch Project. Such conditions include a source of fresh water, proximity to the ocean, protection from strong winds, and an abundance of eucalyptus, Monterey pine and Monterey cypress trees.

As these sites are altered by agricultural and residential development, industrialization and brush clearing, the migratory spectacle "may disappear in the near future unless dramatic and immediate actions are taken," the Monarch Project report warns.

Wintering-over sites are designated as "temporary bivouacs" or "per-



## Monarchs seek shelter in local eucalyptus trees

manent roosts," with the former generally serving as short-term "nectar stops" for butterflies who will later gather at permanent roosts to mate before dispersing inland in February and March, the report said. The largest winter roost in Santa Cruz — and what is thought to be the second largest in the world — is Natural Bridges State Park, where ranger Chic Gordon fixes the annual Monarch population at 150,000 to 200,000 insects. But he said smaller roosts are found throughout the city, housing from 20,000 to 50,000 insects in some cases.

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# Magic Carpet Monarch Flock Still In Danger

**MONARCH** butterflies have two weeks to decide whether they want to spend the winter at the Magic Carpet motel's eucalyptus grove on West Cliff Drive, or the stately — but messy — trees will fall victim to chain saws.

Magic Carpet owner Bippen Patel, who obtained a tree removal permit from the city, began cutting the grove two weeks ago because they mess his parking lot, damage paint on customers' cars, and pose a hazard to hotel guests who could slip on the sap and leaves.

However, Patel agreed to halt the cutting until early October after the city was alerted that the Magic Carpet Grove may be an important wintering site for the butterflies.

Jason Crane, who lives next door to the motel, said the grove is an important wintering site for the monarchs. "The trees house a lot

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