

Butterflies



More striking in color than any Christmas tree decoration, the Monarch butterfly is marking time in Santa Cruz County by the uncounted thousands.

They will gladden the blue Santa Cruz skies until January, then, roosting, they'll wait their way south





in January, then, rested, they flying their way south to Pacific Grove, then upward across the Coast Range mountains to San Joaquin Valley in the spring to plant their eggs on milkweed plants. Then they die.

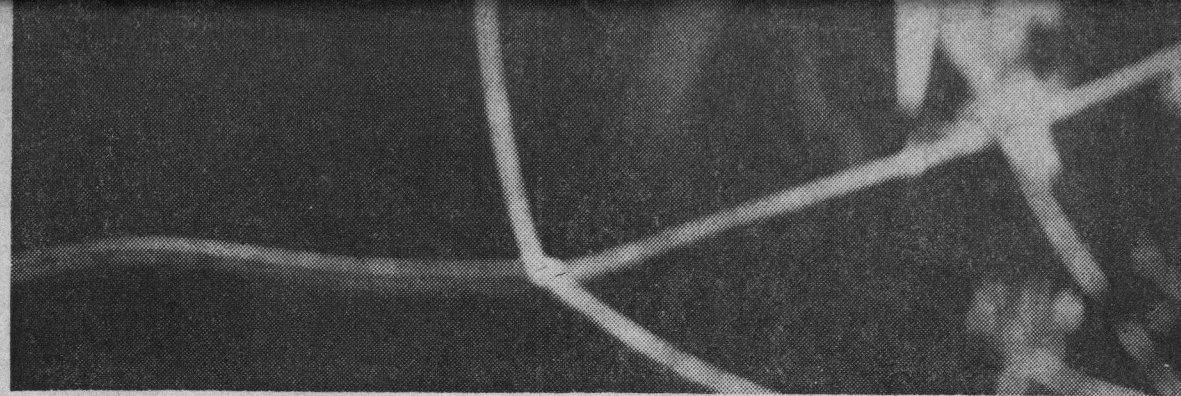
In generation cycles, these beautiful insects will continue their rounds between Canada and California, breeding, laying eggs, clustering always moving in a gigantic circle.

By the thousands they are here now.

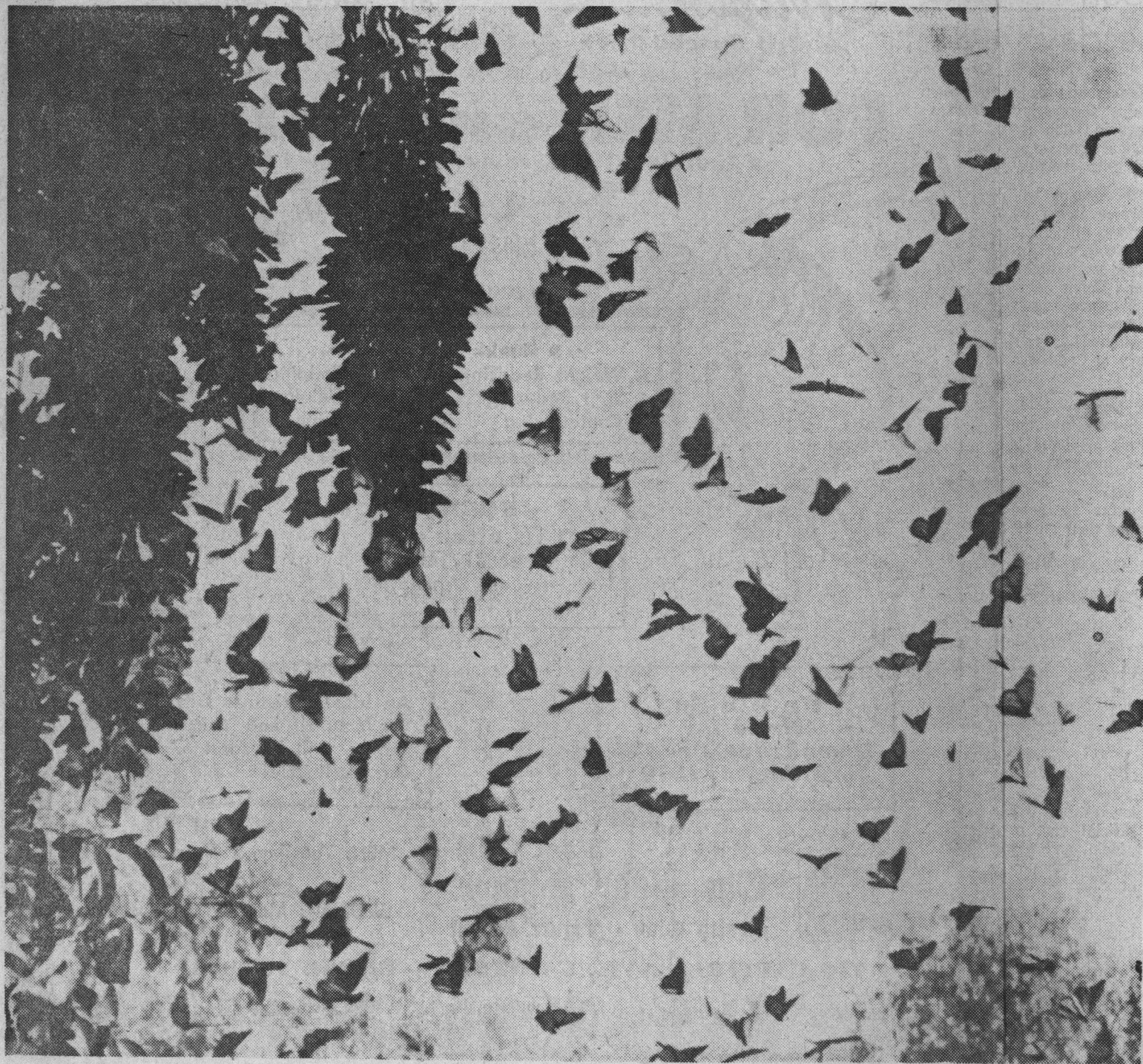
Among the best viewing sites, made accessible to the public, are the eucalyptus groves at Natural Bridges State Park at the end of West Cliff Drive.

A special path leads down to where the butterflies cluster in great packs on the branches and dot

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Photos By Pete Amos



**Tref'n'Sea
Living**

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Along the Monarch Trail

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the air like colored snowflakes.

Ranger - Naturalist Bill Coleman says they will be most abundant for the next two weeks.

"They like the red gum eucalyptus because of the lacy leaf structure, making it easy to grip and hang. They cluster for protection against the cold and to weigh down a branch so that it does not whip in the wind," he said.

On sunny days they flit about in all directions, seeking the nectar of the red-gum blossom and the honey suckle, unleashing their long tongues into the depth of the flowers.

Colorful when they fly, they fold their wings in clustering, giving the appearance of dead leaves on a limb.

But when they alight individually on a pine or eucalyptus, they unfold their wings to the sun, thus the color, like a bloom.

The male has two spots on its wings. They contain scent which is rubbed on a tree, which somehow draws the butterfly back the next year.

All butterflies are protected by law, said Coleman, and anyone seen killing or harming them will be arrested.

The Monarch also may be seen at New Brighton Beach State Park and in various other wooded areas in the county.

