

'Butterfly Trail' Draws Crowds

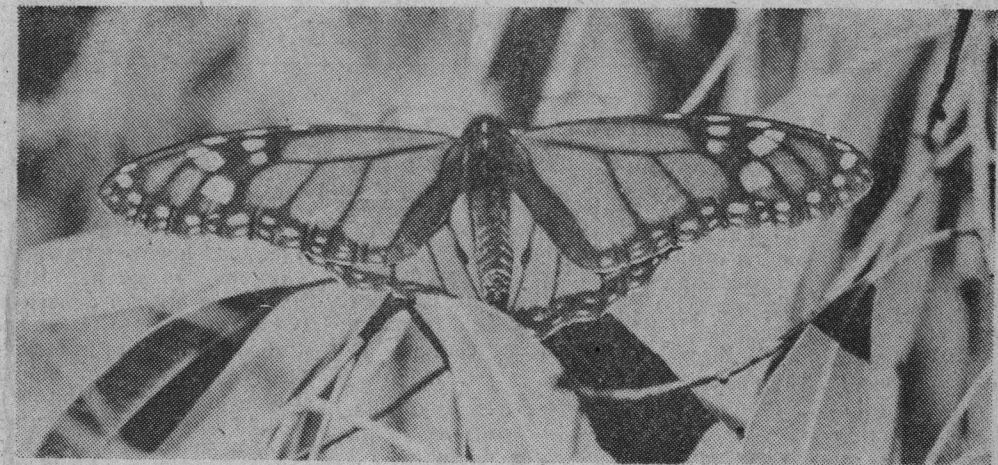
The "Butterfly Trail" at Natural Bridges State Beach is leading hundreds of people today and every day to one of the grandest spectacles Nature presents at the northern end of Monterey Bay at this time of year.

The spectacle is composed of thousands of Monarch butterflies, those brilliant orange and black beauties which come fluttering here across the Rocky Mountains and the Sierras to find protection, health and connubial bliss among the Monterey pines and eucalyptus trees of the area.

The in-flight begins in early October and the butterflies remain through December and often until March, at which time they flutter back north and east for their summer residences.

The "Butterfly Trail" is opposite the office at the state beach and carries but a short distance to trees in which the creatures with the 3½-inch wingspread hang by the thousands in a shingled effect such as that in the photo at the left. Each butterfly hangs with its wings over the one below, an arrangement that protects all from rain and cold, according to Ernie Hunter, administrative supervisor for the Pajaro Coast State Parks. Natural Bridges gets from 15 to 20 busloads of students a week and arranges free admission for educational groups if arrangements are made in advance. Slide shows and talks on the Monarch butterflies are available also.

The park office is at 2531 West Cliff Drive. The signed "Butterfly Trail" opposite is available for use from 8 a.m. to sundown every day of the week. School groups should register in advance through 423-4609 to qualify for free admission.



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