

Carlos The 3rd

The Wondering Monarch

Parlee Beach Provincial Park

Where you can experience a true
New Brunswick summer



Darkwood Woodcarving
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After spending two weeks in Hopewell Rocks Provincial Park, it was time to move on. He is now 4 weeks old with a life expectancy of 5 weeks; he now felt the need for one more adventure. He would take a trip to Parlee Beach Provincial Park, where he would spend the rest of his days living on this coastal playground. After all, he has had enough of the constant cameras and being the center of focus day in and day out. It was time for a change; it was time for another adventure. Look out, Parlee Beach Provincial Park, Carlos and his roost are on their way.

The sun was starting to peek over the Bay of Fundy; the cool breeze was now being replaced with the dry heat of the dog days of summer blowing in across the bay. Carlos sensed the winds were now just about right. He could see the treetops bending in the wind. The apples on the local apple trees were starting to turn red; it was time. He unfolded his wings, letting the early morning sun warm them up. He would need a little more heat before he was ready to take to the skies. Looking around Hopewell Rocks, he knew he would miss this wonderful park, with its majes-



tic rock formations and Mother Nature's timeless patience in sculpting such an incredible place. But adventure awaits!

Carlos jumped off his night roost and immediately caught the dry southern winds lifting him upwards and north towards Parlee Beach Provincial Park. With this wind, he would be at the park within hours, providing nothing tried to eat him on the way. There is always danger with taking that first step into a new adventure, but it is always worth it.

Carlos was now once again riding the wind for his next destination and had hit cruising altitude, you could say some 400 meters above the ground. He could see the humans scurrying around doing their daily activities, walking their large furry creatures, picking up after them. Driving their technological devices, their cars, they call them. Poor creatures can't fly, always to be trapped on the ground with all the obstacles that grow like trees. They have to make their way around them, where Carlos flies over them. He could now see large black spot in the distance, about 5 km from where he was. It looked like a large eagle from his

vantage point, meaning he would have to keep an eye out for larger birds on the way to the beach. The issue is that if he goes too low, he can be seen by predators such as yellow jackets and other wasps, along with birds such as young Blue Jays that will eat monarchs from time to time. But as he started to get closer to the young eagle, he decided to go lower, just above the treetops. There he could still ride the wind and perhaps avoid being eaten.

Carlos came upon a very tall spruce tree; he would have to either go above it and perhaps get in the way of the eagle, which was now above him or risk going around the tree and running into other predators. In the end, the winds made his decision for him. Just then he was caught in a stiff breeze that forced him around the tree, and wouldn't you know it, a very large wasp nest was suspended on the outer branches of the tree. Carlos had to turn hard to the right to avoid running directly into the swarm of wasps congregating around the nest. Unfortunately, a couple of yellow jackets saw him as he darted past the nest, and with that, the hunt was on. It was now all about speed and Carlos's ability to be creative, as his survival depended on it.



Carlos dived hard at the same time, twisting left to right, trying to shake off the wasps. He turned into the tree, pulling off several G's (gravitational force units or G-forces), hoping the hard turn into the tree branches would slow them down. It did in fact do just that; two of the four yellow jackets crashed into the branch and were now out of the fight. But there were still two on Carlos's tail. So he dived again; as he did, he followed a circular path around the massive tree trunk, thinking the remaining yellow jackets would crash and burn. It worked; one more wasp was down, now only one more to go; however, the last one was much more skilled at flying. Carlos noticed they were dangerously getting close to the ground. He could see what looked like what the humans call a roadway, where they use their cars to get around, because they couldn't fly. If Carlos could grin, he was doing it now. For now, Carlos had a plan, a dangerous plan that could be the end of him, but it was a plan. He turned towards the roadway at just above ground level and flew straight down the road about 2 meters off the hard, now very hot surface of the roadway. Thinking to himself, "Now let's see what you're made of,

mister wasp!” Carlos turned to the right following the roadway and slowed down just enough to make sure the wasp was dangerously close to him. Carlos could see the wasp was within striking distance. He pushed his wings a little harder, making sure there was a couple of mm between him and the wasp. That way the wasp could not see past Carlos as he blocked his vision. Another minute of hard flying and Carlos’s plan was coming together. Just as he and the wasp came around the next corner of the roadway, Carlos banked hard right, just missing a very large human car windshield. The wasp, however, was not so lucky; the wasp impacted the windshield and disintegrated, it was more like a splash of a yellow jacket. Carlos looked back and shrugged, thinking to himself, “So that’s what you’re made of!” And splash goes the last wasp.

Now that this ordeal was over, Carlos pushed his wings to gain more altitude and regained his position above the trees, away from the wasps and the eagle. In the distance, he could now see Parlee Beach Provincial Park; it is one of the most popular beaches and campgrounds in New Brunswick. It had everything a butterfly like him was looking for: a new waystation for pollinators, a garden, and

endless wildflowers along the beach.

Carlos, from his current altitude, could now see the complete park laid out in front of him. What would he do first? His body, which was now running on empty due to the yellow jacket battle, would now need nectar and lots of it, not to mention a little rest. He could see the garden area by the information centre coming into view—a perfect place for a young monarch to stop in for dinner.

Carlos started to glide into the park area, passing just over some very strange-looking cars. They were much bigger than the ones he had seen in the past, and they had doors and windows in them. Carlos considered this as he glided in. “They must be where the humans sleep or go at night. Strange creatures the humans are; they drag their homes around with them. Now, if they could fly, they could find a nice tree branch for the night, and roost like the rest of nature”

Carlos was coming into the garden area. He could see lots of bees flying around a very well-groomed garden, gathering pollen; bees love that stuff. But Carlos and other butterflies, such as the

Canadian Tiger Swallowtail, Black Swallowtail, Painted Lady, and of course the Viceroy, which looks like a monarch but is in disguise, look for nectar, that sweet, sugar-rich liquid produced by plants called nectaries. To Carlos, they were just dinner, lunch, breakfast, and snacks whenever needed, which was normally once a day unless he was on the move.

Carlos landed on a blooming Milkweed plant and began to feed on its sweet nectar. He stayed alert after his recent close call, keeping an eye out for predators as he drank. There was always a chance a female monarch might visit the garden, and he wanted to help his species survive. But for now, he would enjoy the sweet nectar as he considered exploring more of Parlee Beach Provincial Park. As the cool night winds started to pick up, he knew he would soon need to find a place to rest for the night and maybe meet other monarchs and butterflies. Exploring would have to wait until morning.

After several minutes, he had reached his fill of nectar and could see a tall Pine tree perfect for the night's roost. Car-



los lifted off the milkweed and made his way up the towering pine tree, looking for the local roost where all the butterflies in the area would head for the night. Halfway around the towering pine, he found the popular Canadian Tiger Swallowtail roost. He could make out 10 or 15 of them on a branch tucked away, covered by the pine needles, but no monarchs. He made a couple more loops around the tree and was just about to give up hope when he came across a small roost of 6 monarchs: 2 male and 4 female butterflies on a short branch tucked in and around the pine needles. It had a spectacular view of the park area and the massive sand beach overlooking the saltwater named the Northumberland Strait; it was breathtaking and the perfect place to spend the night. So Carlos picked a spot on the inner branch and started into his rest cycle as the cool breeze pushed across the sandy beach and the last glimmer of sunlight disappeared behind the horizon. Tomorrow would be a new and exciting time for Carlos and another adventure.

The next morning, Carlos, could feel the sun warming his wings and the cool night breeze changing direction and becoming warmer as the

sun moved up in the sky. It was early morning before Carlos and the rest of the roost could take to the sky once again. But this time he was not alone; he now had friends to share in his experiences.

Carlos and his roost dove off the tall branch of the Pine tree, catching the light winds under their wings as they turned to the beach area. Carlos could now see the humans all doing the same. For them, it would be to stake out the perfect sandy spot for the day. For Carlos, he was not restricted to walking; he could fly above all of that and find the perfect spot from kilometres away. But first he wanted to taste the sweet nectar of the beach's wildflowers. He could see the Canadian Tiger Swallowtails and his new friends from the monarch roost, doing the same.

Carlos would reach the first garden of wildflowers first. He landed on a Beach Pea and could see several Saltmarsh Goldenrods and even Beach Heather. But as he looked around, he could see all of the other butterflies were avoiding this flower garden. Carlos quickly looked around just in time to see a group of humans walking up to him, but they had no cameras... it was a



group of short, grabby humans. Carlos jumped up as a hand swung out, trying to grab him. He then darted to the right just as another set of hands tried to grab him again; this time it was very close. Carlos was now pushing his wings hard to get distance between the short, grabby humans. As he gained safe distance, he could see the other butterflies heading for another garden deeper into the tall grass where they would be safe to enjoy the nectar.

It is said that if a monarch lands on you intentionally, it is a sign of good luck.

But if you force a butterfly or grab one from the air, you will receive the opposite of good luck.

Carlos would spend his last weeks enjoying the beach and all of the wildflower gardens with friends and family. He would even meet a female monarch and start a family of his own.

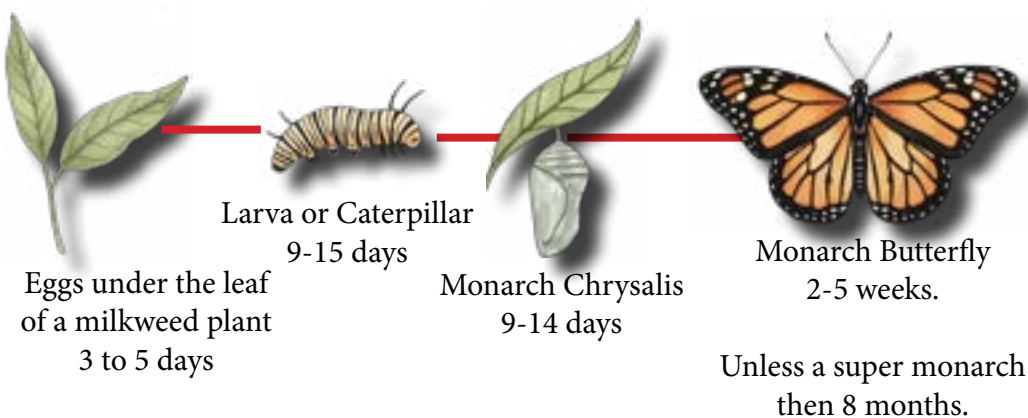


Carlos would never leave Parlee Beach Provincial Park, as a monarch butterfly in the summer will only live 2 to 5 weeks. But rest assured, if we as humans keep increasing the monarch's habitat,

future generations of monarchs will provide nature with this colourful, incredible butterfly.



It takes 30 days for a monarch to go from eggs to a full-grown monarch, which means one of Carlos' first children in Hopewell Rocks Provincial Park is now coming to life and breaking out of his chrysalis. As he climbed out, he would rest and let his wings dry out. This was the son of Carlos, and like his father before him, he would take up the family name Carlos. But he was not just a monarch; he was a super Monarch. He would be the one who flies back to the beginning, back to the mountains of Mexico. Soon he would be on his way to Kings Landing as he starts his journey southward.



The Super Monarchs, as they are called, do not live for 2-5 weeks; they live for 8 months and make the complete flight back to the mountains in Mexico. But first, it's off to Kings Landing for a little taste of history.

If you're looking to visit this incredible Parlee Beach Provincial Park, check out the link below.

<https://www.parcsnbparks.ca>

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Art is Magical