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NEWS RELEASE

Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever in Missouri heads to the field for monarch habitat research

Biologists and staff to aid Missourians for Monarchs' monitoring efforts for milkweed and other wildflowers

COLUMBIA, Mo. – July 31, 2020 – For the second straight year, Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever in Missouri is helping Missourians for Monarchs (M4M) with its annual monitoring as it assesses the quality of monarch and pollinator habitat on partner acres.

The M4M collaborative consists of 45 partner organizations, including Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever in Missouri. M4M's mission is to engage Missourians to increase and sustain habitat for monarch butterflies and pollinators through citizen involvement, and to seek ways for partners, communities and agencies to coordinate similar efforts.

M4M set a goal to have 385,000 acres of monarch and pollinator habitat on the ground within 20 years, with that habitat averaging 200 stems per acre of milkweed. The collaborative and its partners have exploded out of the gate to create more than 450,000 acres of pollinator habitat. Now, those acres need to be monitored for quality.

The monitoring started in June and will continue through September. Teams of Farm Bill Wildlife Biologists are taking to the field to assess milkweed stem density, as well as monitor other blooming wildflowers. The information Pheasants Forever and Quail Forever staff collect will help inform M4M's efforts to improve habitat on collaborative acres.



“It’s critical for us to have the monitoring data so we can gauge how close we are to our goal of 200 milkweed stems per acre,” said M4M Monarch and Pollinator Coordinator Donnamarie Duffin. “We can begin making informed, scientific decisions about how to improve this habitat.”



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Milkweed is critical to the monarch butterfly because it is the sole plant it will lay its eggs on, as well as the only food source for the caterpillars. Missouri is situated in the middle of the eastern monarch's flyway as it migrates to and from Mexico, which means quality habitat in Missouri can positively impact the butterfly's survival."



Why is Quail Forever and Pheasants Forever in Missouri participating in these monitoring efforts and involved in pollinator habitat conservation? It's simple. Monarch and pollinator habitat features many of the same elements that are required by quail and pheasants. The wildflowers that provide nectar to butterflies also provide brood rearing and nesting habitat for upland birds, as well as drop seeds for the birds to feast on. These pollinator plots also contain native warm season grasses and woody-stemmed plants that create diverse, high-quality habitat benefitting an array of wildlife.

"When we invest in habitat for pollinators," said Missouri State Coordinator Casey Bergthold, "we are investing in habitat for the upland birds our organization works to conserve."

The monitoring relies on volunteers to collect data. M4M is always accepting citizen scientists and provides the needed training. Contact Donnamarie Duffin at dduffin@quailforever.org to learn more or sign-up to help monitor.

About Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever

[Pheasants Forever](#), including its quail conservation division — [Quail Forever](#) — is the nation's largest nonprofit organization dedicated to upland habitat conservation. Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever have more than 138,000 members and 760 local chapters across the United States and Canada. Since creation in 1982, Pheasants Forever has spent over \$900 million on 550,000 habitat projects benefiting 19 million acres nationwide. Visit the [Pheasants Forever & Quail Forever in Missouri website](#) or follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#).

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