

Dark Larvae Study

MTN-C wanted to share an opportunity for our educators to be involved in a research project about dark larvae. The project comes to us from a researcher and monarch enthusiast in Germany.

Researcher Torsten van der Heyden is trying to gather information about dark larvae (with a high percentage of black) of the monarch, *Danaus plexippus*, found in the wild. The project started with a paper about very dark larvae in Central America which will be published soon.

If you find a dark monarch larvae Torsten is asking that you record the following information: location, date, number of (dark) larvae, instar(s), temperature/climate conditions. Photos would be appreciated as well.

Data/information can be send to the following email address: tmvdh@web.de

This could be a great opportunity to teach about morphology in a high school science classroom or a fun activity for younger students. If you can keep your eyes peeled for dark cats in your rearing cage (eggs collected from the wild) and during your visits to the milkweed patch Torsten would really appreciate it!

About the Researcher:

Torsten van der Heyden, apart from being a teacher of Biology and Geography, is a German independent researcher specialized in Lepidoptera and Heteroptera. He has published papers about butterflies, moths and true bugs - focussing on their biology, ecology and distribution as well as papers about several butterfly centers/farms and their impact on conservation and protection. He is a member of various scientific associations/societies - e.g. he is a fellow of the Linnean Society of London and the Royal Entomological Society and a member of the Spanish Real Sociedad Española de Historia Natural. Furthermore, he is a member of the editorial boards of *Atalanta - Zeitschrift der "Deutschen Forschungszentrale für Schmetterlingswanderungen"*, *BV news Publicaciones Científicas* and *Lepcey - The Journal of Tropical Asian Entomology*. Website: <http://www.vanderheyden-vonseth.de>.