

**PS
LA**
Spring 2024

SEMINAR SERIES

Dr. Kelsey Fisher

Conservation and restoration recommendations that align with monarch butterfly behavior and biological needs



**Friday January 9, 2024
12:15-1:15pm**

YNG 132

**Lunch with the
speaker to follow**

Host: Sohyun Park

WebEx

s.uconn.edu/psla_seminars

Monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) are a charismatic lepidopteran species, known for their characteristic orange and black coloration, annual multi-generational migration across North America, and obligate host relationship with milkweed (*Asclepias* spp.). Since the 1990s, a significant population decline has been observed due, in part, to land conversion that diminished breeding habitat with milkweed in the United States. The approximate 1.6 billion stems of milkweed in the summer breeding range are estimated to support an overwintering population of 3.2 hectares of monarchs in Mexico. To support a resilient overwintering population in Mexico (a long-term average of 6 hectares of overwintering monarchs), an additional 1.3 billion milkweed stems need to be established within the monarchs breeding range. A twenty-year strategic plan for monarch butterfly habitat establishment is underway from 2018-2038. Here, I will discuss a series of research projects that were conducted to answer practical questions that arise while designing monarch butterfly habitat establishments. Questions include: 1) where should we plant habitat, 2) what should we plant in addition to milkweed, 3) what density of milkweed should we include, and 4) how should we maintain the habitat? Results from these projects provide biologically informed strategies for establishing and maintaining monarch butterfly habitat.

Kelsey E. Fisher is an Assistant Agricultural Scientist II in the Entomology Department at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station. Kelsey served as a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Iowa State University (ISU) under the guidance of Steven P. Bradbury from 2021-2022. She earned her PhD in Entomology from ISU in 2021 where she studied monarch butterfly conservation, MS in Entomology from the University of Delaware in 2015 where she studied European corn borer management, and BS in Biology from Widener University in 2013.



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