



Incomprehension and dismay at the Monarch Butterfly Fields

Description

More than 4,000 milkweeds were shredded last week on federal land leased by Aéroports de Montréal

July 4, 2022

The Monarch Butterfly Fields made [headlines](#) last year following a project by **Medicom** to build a surgical mask materials factory on the site, a project that was later abandoned. Located north of the **Dorval Golf Course**, the Monarch Butterfly Fields are an abandoned 19-hectare area that has been left undeveloped and untouched since 2012 ¹, creating an invaluable ecological environment for both field fauna and flora, and for its connectivity to sections of wooded wetlands.



The mowing spared nothing

We were dismayed to discover that the fields had been **mowed in the middle of nesting season**. The question arises: does this action violate the Migratory Bird Treaty in Canada and the United States²? We know, thanks to *eBird* and our own observations, that 150 species of birds can inhabit the Monarch butterfly fields and Golf Dorval³. **Aéroports de Montréal (ADM)**'s own survey shows that Killdeer, Red-Winged Blackbirds, and Song Sparrows can nest at the site.⁴

Let's also think about the potentially huge impact on other species of animals, such as snakes, mice, shrews, and marmots, as well as the multitude of insects, slugs and snails that, among other things, served as food for the birds and wildlife that had reappropriated this wilderness. Shrubs, flowers and plants that were sometimes more than three meters high were mowed down. Several Turkey vultures were on the ground demonstrating the deadly effect of the mowing.

More than 4,000 milkweed plants in bloom, surveyed in 2021, have disappeared from the landscape. Milkweed is an essential plant for the survival of the monarch butterfly. It is used by the butterfly to lay its eggs, and by the caterpillar as its primary food source before morphing into a chrysalis.

Milkweed seeding programs⁵ are organized to help the monarch butterfly, whose population is declining,



demonstrating the importance of this plant. It is important to note that in 2017, the City of Montreal was the first city in the province of Quebec to sign the **Monarch Friendly City**⁶ commitment. But what will happen to the monarch butterflies during the fall migration?



Increased presence of turkey vultures in the area after the mowing

The City of Montreal, which claims to be a leading city for biodiversity, will host the annual convention of the **Ecological Society of America** from August 14 to 19. In addition, Montreal will also host the **COP15**, from December 5 to 17, 2022. This major **UN summit on biodiversity** has been described by **Steven Guilbault** as “a prestigious event for Canada.” The Minister of Environment and Climate Change would have a great opportunity to demonstrate that Canada is concerned about biodiversity in urban areas by announcing that the federal lands north of the airport will be protected.

We would like to understand:

- **Why has ADM confirmed its decision to “maintain” all land leased to Transport Canada and zoned industrial from now on during nesting season ,and for what purpose?**
- **When will Transport Canada and the federal ministry of the Environment and Climate Change decide to protect this unique site by modifying the ADM lease?**
- **Why is this site, which would allow future generations of Montrealers to have access to nearby green spaces that facilitate the survival of biodiversity not already protected**

We must act now to ensure that our green spaces are protected to ensure a healthy future to our children, our fauna and our flora.



A groundhog standing alone in a devastated habitat

So, what can a private citizen do to help move this issue forward? **Write to your [members of the Parliament](#)** to show your anger, dismay and disagreement with the destruction of a major portion of the second “green lung” of the island of Montreal. Also, explain to them that once a green space is destroyed, it will never be available again for our biodiversity and future generations.

For more information, contact TechnoparcOiseaux by email at tparcbirds@gmail.com

¹ For reference see pages 14-38 of the [Mémoire: Caractérisation écologique du Champ des monarques – Projet 81724](#)

² [Loi de 1994 sur la convention concernant les oiseaux migrateurs \(L.C. 1994, ch. 22\)](#)

³ https://www.technoparcoiseaux.org/_files/ugd/c9fed8_97fcfc330cac4876b02581803c4280d3.pdf 10

⁴ [Évolution Environnement. \(2021, 30 juin\). « Étude écologique: Projet de développement Chemin de l'Aviation \(Dorval\) pour Divco »](#)

⁵ [Fondation David Suzuki : Ensemble, créons un « effet papillon » pour la sauvegarde des monarques!](#)

⁶ <https://espacepouurlavie.ca/villes-amies-des-monarques>

Images: courtesy of TechnoparcOiseaux

Feature image: L – Monarch Butterfly Fields, August 2021 and R – Monarch Butterfly Fields, June 25, 2022



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The **TechnoparcOiseaux** movement consists of a group of dedicated citizens demanding the protection and restoration of the Technoparc Mtl wetlands and adjacent areas in the St-Laurent borough of Montreal.



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