

## The Life of the Monarch Butterfly

BY FIRST GRADE

First Grade has been studying Monarch caterpillars and butterflies. In September we collected eleven caterpillars from milkweed plants from the Clark farm. Some of them were big (two inches long). One was so tiny, it was shorter than Logan's pinky fingernail. We fed them milkweed leaves. They ate and ate and grew and grew. When the caterpillar was ready to change into a chrysalis, it crawled to the top of the terrarium and hung upside down in the shape of a J. It hung there for several hours. Then it began to wiggle and shake until it shed its skin. It transformed into a beautiful green chrysalis with golden spots on the rim. We counted the days before the chrysalises changed into butterflies. It took at least ten days before the chrysalis became a butterfly. The longest it took was 14 days. When the butterflies hatched out of the chrysalis shell their abdomens were very fat, and their wings were short and crumpled. They hung onto the chrysalis shell for at least two hours while the liquid in their abdomens pumped into their wings. When the butterfly's wings were

dry, it was ready to fly. We took it outside and waited for it to fly off. Some of the butterflies did not fly off right away. We had to put them on a flower until they were ready to go. Nine of our chrysalises hatched into butterflies that flew south. One butterfly hatched but fell and died. The last chrysalis never hatched. We don't know why.

We learned that the butterflies that hatch in Vermont will fly all the way to Mexico. They will spend the winter in Mexico and then begin to fly North in the spring. When they fly North they will find a mate and the females will lay eggs on milkweed plants. The eggs will hatch into caterpillars who will eat and grow and eat and grow. The caterpillars will transform into chrysalises which transform into butterflies. Then the whole cycle begins again!

Mrs. Hartman helped us write a song about the Monarch cycle. Mrs. Ireton took pictures of first and second grade and the caterpillars. She made a slide show on the computer. Please come see our slide show in the first grade classroom.

## What is a Crayfish?

BY DEVIN STONE

Oh, there it is. Wait - where'd it go? Crayfish: there one minute then gone the next. Crayfish are crustaceans. They look just like lobsters, only smaller. There are at least four different kinds of crayfish. Crayfish live in streams, and rivers. Crayfish live under rocks and driftwood. You may think they look scary, but I personally have never been pinched or bitten. That does not mean that you won't be pinched or bitten. I say you might be able to keep a crayfish as a pet. If you decide to keep a crayfish as a pet do not put it in with your fish, because it will eat your fish. They are omnivorous and will eat minnows, shrimp, meat, vegetables and other crayfish. Crayfish are nocturnal and hide during the day.

Have you ever been crayfish hunting? Well I have. Since I was at least six I've been hunting crayfish. I am thirteen now. All you do is use a net or your hand and then let them go. Crayfish aren't too hard to find. I have found crayfish under rocks, on top of rocks and under driftwood and floating leaves. I have found crayfish at the Green River Dam, the Ten Mile Bridge in Leyden, Massachusetts, and in some local streams.

Catching crayfish is really fun.



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