



Your Fall Report

Why wild bees need our help the most

By Steve Blackledge, director of our national conservation program

Our members know that bees are indispensable pollinators, vital to the health of wild flowering plants and food crops alike. But “bee” is a big category—holding everything from buzzing hives of honeybees, to round fuzzy bumblebees, to metallic blue mason bees, and more.

So we know that saving the bees is important. But which bees need our protection, and how can we help them?

Most people think of one species

The first animal many of us think of when we think “bee” is the European honeybee, also known as the western honeybee, *Apis mellifera*. These black-and-yellow striped insects live in densely populated hives that turn pollen and nectar into the honey you buy at the farmer’s market or grocery store.

The western honeybee is common in the U.S. because it is the species most frequently kept by beekeepers. Domestic honeybee hives are important pollinators of some specific crops, including almonds and lemons, but they are not native to America. These bees were imported here from Europe in the 17th century and have worked as partners to humans in agriculture ever since.

But there are thousands of species of wild bees

Honeybees are far from the only species of bee here. There are over 4,000 species of native bee that lived in America before



Environment America’s Steve Blackledge huddles with staff during our D.C. lobby day to advocate for America’s wildlife.

the honeybee arrived and that still live here today.

Our native bee species are a magnificent kaleidoscope of diversity. They range from less than 2 millimeters in length (the world’s smallest bee, *Perdita minima*), to over an inch in size (the shiny black common carpenter bee, *Xylocopa virginica*), and everywhere in between. Their colors range from the familiar black and yellow to the magnificent blue of the orchard mason bee, *Osmia lignaria*.

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Thanks
for making it
all possible

Hundreds showed their support for protecting California's desert

Triple digit temperatures didn't stop hundreds of people from lining up outside the Riverside County fairgrounds to support the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument.

For nearly three hours, staff from the Bureau of Land Management listened as speaker after speaker asked them to protect more than 600,000 acres of desert landscape in Southern California.

wastewater frequently bypasses the system entirely, in violation of federal law.

Stormwater pollution after rainfall frequently forces closure of Southern California beaches. Inner Cabrillo Beach, located at the edge of the Los Angeles Harbor and just downstream from the Port, was ranked as one of the beaches with the most potentially unsafe days in Environment America's 2023 "Safe for Swimming?" report.

"This is a classic case of 'pay-to-pollute,' where the Port habitually violates its Clean Water Act permit, pays a slap-on-the-wrist penalty, and then, undeterred, just goes right on polluting," said Laura Deehan, Environment California's state director. "It is long past time for the Port to take responsibility for its pollution control failures and stop, once and for all, contaminating our waters and beaches."

Why we don't need to mine the deep seas

A recent report released on June 18, co-authored by Environment America Research & Policy Center and our research partners at U.S. PIRG Education Fund and Frontier Group, outlines how seabed mining would be not only hazardous, but unnecessary.

Deep-sea mining would irreparably alter hundreds or thousands of square miles of seafloor and create plumes of sediment and mining waste that could spread even further.

We don't need deep-sea mining to transition to clean energy. The world currently discards more of some critical minerals in electronic waste each year than the annual supply expected from proposed deep-sea mining in the central Pacific over the next decade.

"Deep-sea mining would devastate ancient, slow-growing and remote ecosystems that are home to deep-sea coral, anemones, sponges and more," said Kelsey Lamp, one of the report's authors and the director of oceans campaigns at Environment America Research & Policy Center.

"Seabed mining would strip these habitats of life, introducing noise, light and pollution to places that are not equipped to handle it. We don't know if these places will ever recover from mining damage—and that loss could have consequences for marine ecosystems beyond the seafloor."

Get more updates on our work online at <https://environmentcalifornia.org>.

Steven Gaskin



Environment California staff at a public hearing in support of the proposed Chuckwalla National Monument in June.

"Nature has been fragmented into many pieces by roads, fences and other development that blocks the movement of animals. This can knock whole ecosystems out of balance and leaves species more susceptible to disease and climate change when they are sectioned off into small populations," said Environment California State Director Laura Deehan during her public comment delivered at the event. "The proposed Chuckwalla National Monument would be a big step toward preventing this problem from becoming worse in the California desert."

Environment California sues Port of Los Angeles over Clean Water Act Violations

On July 23, Environment California announced that it has filed a federal lawsuit against the Port of Los Angeles for allegedly violating the federal Clean Water Act with over 2,000 illegal discharges of pollution over the last five years alone.

The group charges that the Port has routinely exceeded legal limits on fecal bacteria, copper and several other harmful pollutants it discharges into San Pedro Bay. Environment California also alleges that the Port's stormwater treatment system is drastically undersized and that, as a result, untreated

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Dave Angelini

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Why wild bees need our help the most

We haven't yet discovered all the wonders our native bees have to offer. But no matter how big or how small, whether they've been discovered or not, every native bee has a job as a pollinator.

More than 700 of our native U.S. bee species are on the decline

That includes the rusty patched bumblebee, whose population plunged 90% before it was placed on the endangered species list. In order to ensure the rusty patched bumblebee's survival, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service needs to protect its critical habitat.

The full list of native bees that need our help is a long one. Protecting bees of all stripes is a good thing to do—but "saving the bees" doesn't mean just honeybees.

A class of pesticides called neonicotinoids (or "neonics") is particularly devastating to all bees. Honeybees exposed to these chemicals can face uncontrollable shaking, paralysis and death. Scientists haven't di-

rectly tested the impacts of neonics on all the thousands of species of native bee in the U.S., but blue orchard bees exposed to neonicotinoids as larvae produced 20% fewer offspring than unexposed bees. Researchers also found that neonics harm baby bumblebee brains. habitat.

Another thing honeybees and wild bees share is that they need nectar and pollen to survive. Native bees are especially vulnerable to habitat loss. A healthy habitat full of flowering native plants is vital to the health of bee populations.

What you can do to save the bees

Cutting back on pesticides, protecting critical habitat and reducing carbon emissions can all go a long way to protect every kind of bee. You can help protect bees in your state by calling on your governor to support cultivating native plants and wildflowers on public lands.

Laura Deehan, Environment California state director, announces the group's lawsuit against the Port of Los Angeles for repeat violations of the Clean Water Act.



Jean Marie Biele

Our mission

We all want clean air, clean water and open spaces. But it takes independent research and tough-minded advocacy to win concrete results for our environment, especially when powerful interests stand in the way of environmental progress.

That's the idea behind Environment California. We focus exclusively on protecting California's air, water and open spaces. We speak out and take action at the local, state and national levels to improve the quality of our environment and our lives.

Featured staff



Kimball Nelson

Laura Deehan
State Director

Laura directs Environment California's work to tackle global warming, protect the ocean, and stand up for clean air, clean water and open spaces. Laura served on the Environment California board for two years before stepping into the state director role. Most recently, she directed the public health program for CALPIRG, another organization in The Public Interest Network, where she led campaigns to get lead out of school drinking water and toxic chemicals out of cosmetics. Prior to that, Laura ran Environment California citizen outreach offices across the state and, as the Environment California field director, she led campaigns to get California to go solar, ban single use plastic grocery bags, and go 100% renewable. Laura lives with her family in Richmond, California, where she enjoys hiking, yoga and baking.

3435 Wilshire Blvd., Ste. 965
Los Angeles, CA 90010
(213) 251-3688

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Your 2024 Fall Report

Take action

Together we can advance policies that put our country and our world on a better path. To find out about the latest ways you can get involved, visit our online action center at: EnvironmentCalifornia.org/take-action.



Californians call for more protections for our oceans

We love the California coast. It's beautiful and home to incredible wildlife, including sea otters, sea turtles and humpback whales. Yet beneath the surface, the future of life in the ocean is at risk. Already, 90% of the world's large fish, such as sharks and tuna, are gone.

This summer, Environment California members and supporters like you helped us call on key state officials to strengthen and

expand California's marine protected areas so that these incredible places will be there for future generations to enjoy. Our campaign team spoke with more than 17,000 Californians across the state about protecting our oceans.

In June, the Assembly Water, Parks, and Wildlife Committee passed a resolution urging our state agencies to prioritize expanding California's network of marine protected areas. In July, our campaign staff met with the state fish and game commission in Santa Rosa where they discussed the next steps for our proposals for marine protected areas and delivered a collage of photo petitions from Californians calling on them to protect our ocean.

Thanks to your support, we'll keep demonstrating to local and state officials that a strong majority of Californians want a brighter future for our state's ocean life.

Environment California campaign staff and members held a media event at a local marine protected area to showcase support we built this summer.



Staff