



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

New energy bill encourages clean energy in Massachusetts

Massachusetts residents will find incorporating clean and renewable energy into their lives easier than ever. The new bill passed by the Massachusetts Senate on June 25 is an important step in the state's development and expansion of a transportation and energy infrastructure based solely on clean energy.

Three provisions of the bill stand out in particular: the MOR-EV program will en-

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."

Your next new car is likely to be better for the planet

New Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) rules promise a brighter future with less pollution.

In March 2024, the EPA adopted new rules that will drastically reduce soot pollution from the average car by 95%. The rules are also expected to save Americans \$6,000 over the lifetime of a new car or light truck.

"In 2024, it's possible to power more cars, buses, and even pickup trucks with clean electricity," said Lisa Frank, Environment America's executive director. "A brighter future without dirty tailpipes is within reach."

Environment Massachusetts and our national network are working for a future free of dirty tailpipes. We're thankful to the millions of Americans who are making environmentally conscious consumer choices, as evidenced by a record of 1.4 million plug-in electric vehicles purchased in 2023.

Thanks to your action and support, we will continue to advocate for policies that help all of us get where we need to go with less air pollution.

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

Tim O'Connor



Environment Massachusetts staff and volunteers celebrate the rise of renewables in the state.

courage people to turn to electric vehicles with a cash reward for each purchase; the use of methane gas will be reduced in the state; the space offered by commercial parking lots will be utilized for solar canopies.

The passing of this bill will bring Massachusetts closer to 100% clean energy, a goal that Environment Massachusetts is consolidating support for by canvassing door-to-door and collecting petition signatures.

In response, Senior Director of the Campaign for 100% Renewable Energy at Environment Massachusetts Johanna Neumann commented, "Lawmakers are positioning Massachusetts to get more of its energy from renewables. That's good news. The sooner we cut energy waste and harness the sun and the wind and heat of the earth to power our lives, the better."

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

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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.

For years, our staff and volunteers have been building support to save the bees. Now, 1 in 4 Americans live in a state that has restricted the use of bee-killing neonicotinoids.



Marc Olivier Le Blanc
Bee photos: Chase Danimullis via Shutterstock

Right: Common carpenter bee, *Xylocopa virginica*. Actual size.
Above left: American bumblebee, *Bombus pensylvanicus*. Actual size.

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 Massachusetts, Inc., a project of Environment America, Inc. We focus on protecting Massachusetts' air, water and open space. 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

Johanna Neumann
Senior Director, Campaign for 100% Renewable Energy, Environment America

Johanna directs strategy and staff for Environment America's energy campaigns at the local, state and national level. In her prior positions, she led the campaign to ban smoking in all Maryland workplaces, helped stop the construction of a new nuclear reactor on the shores of the Chesapeake Bay and helped build the support necessary to pass the EmPOWER Maryland Act, which set a goal of reducing the state's per capita electricity use by 15%. She also currently serves on the board of Community Action Works. Johanna lives in Amherst, Massachusetts, with her family, where she enjoys growing dahlias, biking and the occasional game of goaltimate.

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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: EnvironmentMassachusetts.org/take-action.



Why we knocked on doors to save Right whales

Right whales are in danger, and your support can change the tide.

This summer, Environment Massachusetts launched a door-to-door campaign to protect the critically-endangered North Atlantic Right whale. The initiative aims to raise awareness about the threats these majestic creatures face from boat strikes and fishing gear entanglements.

Staff and volunteers spoke with New England residents, seeking to build public support for policies that mandate slower boat speeds in whale habitats and safer fishing practices.

The campaign underscores the urgency of conservation efforts, with fewer than 400 Right whales remaining. By fostering community involvement and advocating for stronger protections, Environment Massachusetts hopes to create a safer environment for these whales to thrive—ensuring their presence for future generations to marvel at.

Kelsey Lamp, director of our Protect Our Oceans campaign, emphasizes the importance of collective action: “With your support, we can hopefully ensure that, in the coming decades, the sight of a Right whale breaching in the surf isn’t as rare—just amazing.”

This summer, Environment Massachusetts campaign staff advocated for protections for the endangered Right whale.

Staff

