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1: [Annu Rev Entomol.](#) 2008; 53: 191-208.

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Decline and conservation of bumble bees.

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Declines in bumble bee species in the past 60 years are well documented in Europe, where they are driven primarily by habitat loss and declines in floral abundance and diversity resulting from agricultural intensification. Impacts of habitat degradation and fragmentation are likely to be compounded by the social nature of bumble bees and their largely monogamous breeding system, which renders their effective population size low. Hence, populations are susceptible to stochastic extinction events and inbreeding. In North America, catastrophic declines of some bumble bee species since the 1990s are probably attributable to the accidental introduction of a nonnative parasite from Europe, a result of global trade in domesticated bumble bee colonies used for pollination of greenhouse crops. Given the importance of bumble bees as pollinators of crops and wildflowers, steps must be taken to prevent further declines. Suggested measures include tight regulation of commercial bumble bee use and targeted use of environmentally comparable schemes to enhance floristic diversity in agricultural landscapes.

PMID: 17803456 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

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