



NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL
THE EARTH'S BEST DEFENSE

The Natural Resources Defense Council works to protect wildlife and wild places and to ensure a healthy environment for all life on earth.

Nuclear Energy, Waste & Weapons

Vanishing Bees – March 2010

Honey bees are disappearing across the country, putting \$15 billion worth of fruits, nuts and vegetables at risk. The list of crops that simply won't grow without honey bees is a long one: Apples, cucumbers, broccoli, onions, pumpkins, carrots, avocados, almonds ... and it goes on.

Without bees to pollinate many of our favorite fruits and vegetables, the United States could lose \$15 billion worth of crops -- not to mention what it would do to your diet.



Honey bees are important pollinators for both flowers and agricultural crops.

Beekeepers first sounded the alarm about disappearing bees in 2006. Seemingly healthy bees were simply abandoning their hives en masse, never to return. Researchers call the mass disappearance Colony Collapse Disorder, and they estimate that nearly one-third of all honey bee colonies in the country have vanished.

Why are the bees leaving? Scientists studying the disorder believe a combination of factors could be making bees sick, including pesticide exposure, invasive parasitic mites, an inadequate food supply and a new virus that targets bees' immune systems. More research is essential to determine the exact cause of the bees' distress.

Although the U.S. Department of Agriculture has allotted \$20 million over the next five years for research, that amount pales in comparison with the potential loss of \$15 billion worth of crops that bees pollinate every year. And the USDA has so far failed to aggressively seek out a solution.

If we don't act now to save the honey bee, it might be too late. And no honey bees will mean no more of your favorite fruits and vegetables.

Here's a list of what bees pollinate:

Take Action Now!
and crops.

URGE USDA TO ACT

Tell the Department of Agriculture to act now to save bees

▶ TAKE ACTION NOW!

Read "The Vanishing" in OnEarth magazine

Fruits and Nuts

Vegetables

Field Crops

Almonds

Asparagus

Alfalfa Hay

Apples

Broccoli

Alfalfa Seed

Apricots

Carrots

Cotton Lint

Avocados

Cauliflower

Cotton Seed

Blueberries

Celery

Legume Seed

Boysenberries

Cucumbers

Peanuts

Cherries

Cantaloupe

Rapeseed

Citrus

Honeydew

Soybeans

Cranberries

Onions

Sugar Beets

Grapes

Pumpkins

Sunflowers

Kiwifruit

Squash

Loganberries

Watermelons

Macadamia nuts

Nectarines

Olives

Peaches

Pears

Plums/Prunes

Raspberries

Strawberries

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Fact Sheet: Why We Need Bees

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