

GUIDE TO ANSWER EC CONSULTATION ON POLLINATORS

- You will find below a guide to help answers questions from the EC consultation on pollinators.

The EC consultation itself is available in all EU languages [here](#)

- The guide is available in EN online here: <https://www.buglife.org.uk/campaigns-and-our-work/campaigns/help-europes-bees-and-wild-pollinators>

- Please mention Buglife as source if you use this guide on your web platform (in EN or in your language).

- For Q7, Q13: exact translations of the terms from the consultation can be found on the page of the consultation [here](#)

Help Europe's Bees and Wild Pollinators: Guide to help answer EC consultation on pollinators

Bees and other pollinators are essential to feeding the population and maintaining a healthy countryside. Declines in bees, butterflies, moths, hoverflies and other pollinating insects have been occurring across Europe and action is urgently required to address the issues and start to reverse the declines – we want bees, butterflies, moths and hoverflies back everywhere!

The European Commission have started to develop a new 'Pollinator Initiative' – this has the potential to change how the Common Agricultural Policy works and to massively improve pesticide regulation, but the Commission and EU politicians need to see how much the citizens care about bees and pollinators so that the 'Pollinator Initiative' is given adequate priority and resources.

Please fill in the consultation form and let the EU know we all want our bees back!

[CLICK HERE TO SUPPORT WILD BEES](#)

Questions and help with answers

Part I - General information about the respondent

Questions specific to you!

Part II - Pollinators and their role

Qs 1+2 - Questions specific to you!

Q.3 – How important are pollinators.

In all cases, pollinators are indispensable!

Justification –

- Wild pollinators do at least 80% of pollination,
 - 1 out of every three mouthfuls of your food only exists because of pollinators,
 - 90% of crop species are insect pollinated,
 - 62% of wildflower populations are already constrained by the lack of pollinators,
 - we are missing £5 million of Gala apples in the UK because there are no longer enough pollinators, crops such as oilseed rape depend on pollinators,
 - bees, beetles butterflies and other insects are amazing and we must stop driving them towards extinction
- more on the importance of pollinators in the IBPES report [here](#).

Q.4 – Pollinators contribute to human society in different ways. For instance, their contribution to EU agriculture sector has been estimated at around EUR 15 billion per year. Protecting pollinators also involves costs. In your opinion, how do the potential costs of their protection compare with the socio-economic benefits that they provide?

Only a few million EUR are annually invested in supporting wildflowers and pollinators in agricultural settings around the EU, so the 15 billion EUR benefit they provide would be excellent value for money. However, as pollinator declines are impacting on crop production (for instance in Finland) it is clear that there is an under-investment in maintaining this biodiversity and ecosystem service. Investment in pollinators should be lifted to the point that pollinator populations start to recover.

Q.5 – Both wild and domesticated pollinators (like honeybees) pollinate agricultural crops in the EU. In your opinion, how do their respective contributions to crop pollination compare?

Domesticated pollinators contribute a lot less than wild pollinators. While there are few definitive studies, all estimates put wild pollinators as pollinating most insect pollinated outdoor crops and wildflowers, some studies put wild pollinators at over 90%. Domesticated bees can be important pollinators of crops near towns and in greenhouses. A single solitary bee is 300 times as effective at pollinating apple blossom as a honeybee. More on wild and domesticated bees [here](#), [here](#) and [here](#)

Part III - Decline of pollinators, its causes and consequences

Q.6 – In your opinion, the current decline of pollinators in abundance and diversity is:

We think the current decline of pollinators in abundance and diversity is - Alarming!
[Bees](#), [butterflies](#) and [moths](#) are all in steep decline and there is evidence that declines can become [crashes](#)!

Q.7 - The decline of pollinators is due to several causes. Please indicate how important you consider the following causes.

This is a challenging question for anyone other than an expert to answer, because there are thousands of species of pollinators and there are hundreds of causes of their decline. Here is our take on the importance of the decline drivers:

1. Agricultural intensification

___1.1 Simplification of agricultural landscapes (e.g. monocultures) Very Important

___ 1.2 Increased grazing/mowing of grasslands Important to Very Important (but it is complicated!)

___ 1.3 Use of fertilizers Very Important

___ 1.4 Use of pesticides Very Important

2. Farmland abandonment Not Important (may be more so in Eastern Europe)

3. Urbanization Important

4. Pollution (including light pollution) Very Important

5. Invasive alien species Important

6. Diseases (e.g. pathogens, parasites) Important

7. Climate change Very Important

8. Other Important*

* While this is a good list, it is not comprehensive, lack of protection for pollinators (e.g. no bees on the Habitats Directive lists and hence no protected sites for them), farm tidying, brownfield site development (including rural brownfields), atmospheric eutrophication, peat extraction, and a lack of active action plans to save endangered species are all contributing to the declines.

Q.8 – To which extent do you consider that the decline of pollinators affects you in your private life?

A question about impacts on your private life! Think about reduced availability of fruit, increased costs of food and the pleasure you get from seeing bees, butterflies and other wildlife thriving!

Q.9 –To which extent do you consider that the decline of pollinators affects you professionally?

A question about impacts on your professional life. Think about the costs of food production, the health of the environment, and future risks associated with the continued decline in pollination services. What impact might this have on your organisation's reputation, turnover and functioning?

Part IV - How to halt the decline of pollinators

Q.10 – In your opinion, how do the EU policies currently address the decline of pollinators?

'Not well' to 'Not at all well' – Pollinator decline is the result of an EU agriculture policy that has failed to sustain wildlife. The recent EU 'greening' initiative was supposed to provide benefits for pollinators, but it backfired when the EU decided at the last minute to allow 'ecological focus areas' to be sprayed with insecticides. The EU has failed to secure sufficiently increased resources through CAP funding for pollinator initiatives. There are also no bees on the Habitats Directive and little benefit to pollinators from the EU Biodiversity Strategy.

Q.11 – In your opinion, how do the policies of your country or region currently address the decline of pollinators?

Question relates to your own country (or region) – Different countries have different approaches, only the Netherlands, England, Scotland, Wales, All Ireland, France and Norway have national pollinator plans in place. Countries without a plan are unlikely to be doing

‘adequately’, indeed as there are no countries that can say they have reversed their pollinator declines, it is difficult to mark any higher than ‘Not well’!

Q.12 – In your opinion, how much should the efforts to halt the decline of pollinators be stepped up at the following levels?

A lot – at all levels! (Except perhaps in some leading cities – e.g. [Urban Buzz](#))

Q.13 – In your opinion, how important is to include the following actions in the EU Pollinators Initiative?

All of the listed actions would help pollinators. We would say that those below are essential (i.e. ‘Very important’), the others are important, perhaps very important, but either not essential for EU action, or having the potential for alternative approaches.

1. Assess and monitor the decline of pollinators
2. Analyse threats to pollinators and the consequences of their decline
3. Promote innovation for the conservation of pollinators
4. Protect and restore pollinator habitats in Natura 2000 sites
5. Protect and restore pollinator habitats in rural areas outside Natura 2000 sites
6. Protect and restore pollinator habitats in urban areas outside Natura 2000 sites
7. Assess risks of pesticides to pollinators
8. Implement Integrated Pest Management
9. Combat invasive alien species
10. Mitigate climate change impacts on pollinators
11. Reduce pollution (including light pollution)
12. Protect pollinators from diseases
13. Support the efforts of the private sector
14. Create market incentives for pollinator friendly activities
15. Engage local communities
16. Support knowledge sharing among stakeholders
17. Support collaboration among Member States
18. Support the development of local/regional/national strategies

Recent [research](#) has revealed that light pollution can result in a 13% reduction in pollination because of its [impacts on moths](#).

Part V - Final Remarks

This is what Buglife said, but if you have time please make your own comments:-

“It is essential that the EU takes firm and strong action to reverse pollinator declines.

This must as a minimum include 1) restoring an EU wide network of wildflower habitats, 2) redirecting CAP payments to support pollination services, 3) reforming pesticide regulation to prevent future harm to bees, and 4) improving bio-security of soil and in the pot plant trade.

So that it is possible to judge if the EU has reversed pollinator declines it is essential that a long-term, taxonomically broad, systematic EU wide pollinator monitoring program is established.

This is an opportunity to show how the EU can live up to its environmental commitments, including that "environmental damage should as a priority be rectified".”

Source for this guide: www.Buglife.org.uk

For more about the threats facing pollinators in Europe and the resulting solutions for the EU and Member States please download the [joint position paper](#) submitted by Buglife and Butterfly Conservation Europe.