Meet the bees your action is helping to save

From half-inch honeybees to the endangered rusty patched bumblebee, the best pollinators need our help. Across the country, bee populations are dropping, sometimes at alarming rates. No matter their size or status, these pollinators face a triple threat of bee-killing pesticides, habitat loss and climate change.

If we’re going to save the bees, we’ll need the whole Environment America hive behind us. Let’s meet some of the bees your action is helping to save:

Native bees

Our country's more than 4,000 native bee species are “specialists” in their field—they’re perfectly suited to pollinate only a few specific plants or flowers. The Southeastern blueberry bee, for example, is one hard-working pollinator—visiting as many as 50,000 blueberry flowers and helping to produce up to 6,000 blueberries in its short life.

The squash bee is another specialist (and an early riser, too). In the hours after sunrise, you’ll find them hard at work, buzzing from flower to flower as they gather nectar and pollinate zucchini and butternut squash. By noon, they’ll be fast asleep napping on some flowers.

Most native bees are also highly independent. After a long day of flying solo from flower to flower, these busy bees retire to the nests that they dug or built themselves.

Honeybees

Honeybees are non-native, but they’re some of the sweetest, most social pollinators. Their colonies are also filled with hard workers: In just one year, a colony can make up to 100 pounds of honey. When they’re on duty, honeybees can fly to 100 flowers in a single trip—adding up to thousands of flower visits each day.

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More states wins on the road to renewable energy

Illinois, Oregon, Massachusetts, Connecticut and Maine are among the latest states to advance commitments to renewable energy.

On Aug. 19, Environment America released “The United States of Clean Energy,” a summary of clean energy progress made in state legislatures during this year’s spring and summer sessions. While noting backsliding in some states, the roundup featured state victories such as Oregon’s 100% clean power commitment, Massachusetts’ strengthened renewable electricity requirements, and new energy storage goals in Connecticut and Maine.

“Whenever I’m feeling pessimistic about the slow pace of change in the halls of our federal government, I look to the states,” said Environment America 100% Renewable Campaign Director Emma Searson. “We're not just seeing the steady march of progress, but a real race to the top when it comes to clean and renewable energy.”

Environment America and our 29 state environmental groups continue to advocate for a range of state-level clean energy policies.

Is there trouble in your air? For 1 in 6 Americans, there is

More than 58.4 million Americans experienced at least 100 days of polluted air in 2020.

That was the finding of the 2021 edition of Environment America Research & Policy Center’s “Trouble in the Air” report, released in October. According to the report, 1 in 6 Americans was exposed to harmful pollutants that resulted from wildfires and the burning of fossil fuels last year. Air pollution increases the risk of premature death, asthma attacks and cancer.

“Air pollution can be just as dangerous for our health as smoking,” said Wendy Wendlandt, president of Environment America Research & Policy Center. “Today, air pollution causes hundreds of thousands of people who never took up smoking to die too early each year.”

But it doesn’t have to be that way. While the report finds that air pollution problems persist across the country, the solutions for cleaning up our air are readily achievable if policymakers act swiftly to zero out fossil fuels from all aspects of our lives.

Victory: Biden administration restores three monuments’ protections

When the previous administration shrunk the size of two national monuments by up to 85% and weakened protections for a third, more than 436,000 supporters of Environment America and our national network objected.

On Oct. 7, the Biden administration responded by restoring Bears Ears, Grand Staircase-Escalante and the Northeast Canyons and Seamounts National Monuments. This action restores protections for the monuments’ wildlife, ecological integrity and more than 100,000 archaeologically significant objects.

“Our country has a long history of ensuring ‘America the Beautiful’ exists for generations to come,” said our Conservation Senior Campaign Director Steve Blackledge. “Now we can rest assured that these treasured areas will remain a part of that lasting legacy.”

Not only did our supporters supply hundreds of thousands of emails and comments in support of the monuments, but our staff also met with Department of Interior officials and organized a “Meet the Monuments” webinar to raise public awareness.

Get more updates on our work online at http://environmentamerica.org.
After eight-hour workdays, honeybees go to rest with up to 60,000 family members.

The rusty patched bumblebee

There’s only one type of native bee that is truly social: bumblebees. And under the bumblebee umbrella is the rusty patched bumblebee. Known for their rust-colored backs, they made headlines after becoming the first bee in the continental United States to land on the endangered species list. Now, only an estimated 471 remain.

These bumblebees won’t be last to be listed as endangered if we don’t act. The worst threats facing bees today?

Climate change: As temperatures rise, flowers bloom earlier, which creates a mismatch in timing between when flowers produce pollen and when bees can feed on that pollen.

Habitat loss: As climate change and human development make bee habitat unlivable, bees have fewer flowers to forage and nowhere to lay eggs or raise their young.

Bee-killing pesticides: A pervasive, dangerous class of bee-killing pesticides called neonicotinoids poisons baby bees’ brains, disrupts bees’ sleep, alters foraging, and diminishes bees’ ability to reproduce.

Bees are in crisis. And with native bees pollinating 80% of Earth’s flowering plants, losing bees could be the first domino in a chain of extinctions. So we’re working to ban the worst bee-killing pesticides, restore bee habitat, and get Amazon to protect bees.

As of Oct. 1, more than 47,000 Environment America supporters have urged Amazon to stop selling bee-killing pesticides. If you haven’t already, you can call on Amazon too by going to this link and adding your name: environmentamerica.org/savebees

Our canvassers have gone door to door rallying supporters like you to call on Amazon to stop selling bee-killing pesticides.

Thanks to you, this fall we’ve been able to protect our wildlife and wild places while improving our chances at achieving that cleaner, greener future we all want. In this issue, you’ll learn more about the critical campaigns you’ve helped and the causes you’ve advanced. Thanks for making it all possible.

Wendy Wendlandt  
President
Your Winter Report

Going to court to protect polar bears in Alaska

Polar bears roam throughout the northern part of Alaska, on land and at sea, and far beyond their denning habitat in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

On Sept. 16, Environment America joined the law firm Trustees for Alaska and other environmental groups in filing a lawsuit against the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to protect polar bears from oil and gas drilling. Our lawsuit challenges a regulation that would allow oil and gas companies to undertake drilling and exploration activities that would harm the threatened polar bears in the Beaufort Sea and on the North Slope.

“Polar bears are already struggling simply to survive,” said Steve Blackledge, Environment America’s senior conservation program director. “When new oil drilling proposals further threaten these magnificent animals, it’s critical that we hold federal agencies accountable to the laws intended to ensure their survival. Extinction, after all, can’t be rectified.”

Our Conservation team hopes that the courts will find that the regulation doesn’t offer sufficient protection for polar bears, forcing the agency to issue a new rule that is far more protective of polar bears.

Across the country, supporters submitted photo petitions in support of protecting the Arctic and its polar bear population.