

Environmental activists are ignoring the real bee killer

Posted on *July 31, 2015* by *admin*



Greenpeace really loves bees – so much that they regularly hold bee “die ins” where they dress up in bee costumes and lie on the ground to be sprayed by faux pesticides. Environmental activists have also given eulogies and created memorials for dead bees, as well as organized petitions to ban “bee killing” pesticides. These events followed instances where 400 – 50,000 bees were found dead. (50,000 Bees is basically the size of one hive).

So why are such activists ignoring a killer that is causing the deaths of tens of millions of bees? An [article](#) on Science 2.0 addresses these bee killers – truck accidents – and why – if the bees are in such danger – there isn’t a wave of protest from activists? Or at least better focus on transportation safety?

The author wonders: *“Could it be that they really don’t care about bees after all, and they are just creating one more trumped up crisis with a cute mascot in order to raise money?”*

Not that this matters – as we’ve written before, the **bees** are **fine**. There are 81 million commercial honeybees in the world, and each hive contains about 50,000 bees. Of course, acknowledging this won’t get environmental NGOs funding, so the myth is perpetuated.



Bees: Activists Remain Silent While This Pollinator Killer Decimates Millions

By News Staff | July 31st 2015 06:31 AM | 5 comments | Print | E-mail | Track Comments

We know that Greenpeace and other activist groups really, really care about bees. Really. Not only do they [organize petition drives](#) to gather signatures demanding bans on “bee killing” pesticides, they also regularly hold bee “die ins” where they [dress up in bee costumes and lie on the ground to be sprayed by faux pesticides](#). Concerned onlookers hold banners imploring the world [to mend its heartless ways and “Give bees a chance”](#) (sing it to the tune of any John Lennon song.)



In 2013, about 200 such activists gathered for a solemn funeral for 50,000 bumblebees (basically one full hive) that died under some linden trees in a Target parking lot in Oregon. Eulogies [were read to commemorate the fallen bees](#) and condemn the use of pesticides. As the local media reported, the “bee kill” was so traumatizing that the state of Oregon decided to take precipitous action.

The bee deaths - equivalent to one hive - marked what is being considered the largest “bee kill” on record. And the Oregon Department of Agriculture isn’t taking any chances. [It is now temporarily restricting the use of 18 pesticides which contain the active ingredient dinotefuran.](#)

Two years later, when a total of 400 bumblebees were found dead in a Portland park – once again at the foot of some linden trees -- [the Oregon Department of Agriculture conducted a full-blown CSI-style investigation.](#)



Activists even create memorials for the bees. One was presented at an event held at the state capitol in St. Paul, Minnesota in June 2013. [A participant described it as follows:](#)

We read some facts about bees; tied black ribbons to a small wheel to recognize recent bee die offs; and tied yellow ribbons on the same wheel to recognize the hope that still lives on when each of does our part.

This is all very solemn, and we would be the last to mix animal metaphors and suggest these activists are only crying crocodile tears. But why then were they silent in response to the tragic events that took place just a month earlier on Highway 33 in eastern Idaho? On that fateful day, a truck carrying hundreds of bee hives – a common site in summer months when bee keepers rent out their bees to orchards across the country – flipped over, releasing the precious pollinators into on-coming traffic. Again, precipitous action had to be taken, [but of a different kind:](#)

With advice from Browning Bees and the permission of KatieBee Raw Honey, the bees had to be exterminated due to their fierce swarming pattern that was a road hazard for motorcyclists.

How many bees died that day? Not 400. Not 50,000, like a whole hive. **20 million died [in that incident.](#)** But did they get a funeral? Even a sympathy card from Greenpeace? Nope.

Just a few days before that, another truck collision on Highway 90 let loose bees in scorching, 100-plus degree temperatures that put them in a foul mood. After firefighters and police officers who arrived on the scene were stung multiple times, [action had to be taken.](#)

Crews were unable to upright the truck with all of the hives inside, foam was brought in to kill the bees and take them to a landfill.

Four million pollinators met an untimely end that time. But once again, there was no memorial service from Greenpeace or NRDC or any group who otherwise claim to care in their monthly fundraising letters.

In fact, these sorts of incidents are surprisingly common. In April 2015, 13.7 million bees spilled onto Interstate 5 in Seattle after an 18-wheeler overturned. It's unclear what the final death toll was, as beekeepers had time to undertake a partial rescue, but not all made it.

Many boxes of bees remained on the road after sunrise, and the agitated bees began to swarm. At 6 a.m., at the request of Belleville Bees, the fire department began putting a thick layer of fire suppression foam on the boxes of bees, killing them.

In July 2015, a late-night highway traffic crash in Wisconsin affected over one million bees. A wayward sedan crossed over the center median and struck the semi-truck hauling the pollinators. Because it was dark, the bees were less active in the chaos and a local beekeeper was able to save about a quarter of the bees.

In February 2015, a tractor-trailer carrying frozen chickens collided with another tractor-trailer carrying 25 million bees on Interstate 10 near Palm Springs. The California Department of Transportation sent out a warning Tweet after the incident:

Update WB 10 @ Dillon (semi accident) - Traffic is being detoured through the median around the incident KEEP YOUR WINDOWS UP DUE TO BEES.

The bees were more fortunate than the frozen chicken. Still, the final death toll was **3.6 million**.

Amidst all this carnage, we have not heard a word from the environmentalists. Could it be that they really don't care about bees after all, and they are just creating one more trumped up crisis with a cute mascot in order to raise money?

As we know, there actually is no bee crisis. Managed bee populations are rising. And wild bees are doing just fine too.



Maybe linden trees are the problem, rather than pesticides or mites

But what about those bumblebee deaths in Oregon? While activists and even government officials have been quick to blame pesticides for the deaths of the bumblebees in the Target parking lot, there's quite a bit more to the story. In a document condemning neonicotinoids, the Oregon Department of Agriculture slips in this admission:

Tiliacordata, the Littleleaf Linden tree is native to Europe. It has been at the center of several bumble bee kills in Oregon. T. cordata often produces more flowers than other linden trees. It also produces mannose in its nectar that may be slightly toxic. Many native bees and wasps do not have the enzyme to break down mannose.

In other words, the tree may have poisoned the bumblebees, though since we are not an environmental fundraising group we will note it's far from clear what the full effects of a particular species of tree nectar are on a particular species of wild bees. Either way, if activists were truly concerned about the health and wellbeing of the bees, they might better focus on transportation safety.

Maybe they would even consider planting non-toxic trees.

NRDC, you don't need to ban trucks to save bees either

Even with the highway death toll, bees aren't exactly endangered white rhinos. There are 80,986,086 commercial honeybee hives in the world, and as noted each hive at full strength contains about 50,000 bees. Assuming conservatively that each of those hives is only half full, that's 2 trillion commercial honeybees on the planet. That's enough bees, laid end-to-end, to wrap around the Earth 500 times.

That's a lot of bees.

And there are 4,000 more species besides the European honeybee.

If we hold a funeral for each and every one of them, like residents of Oregon seem to want to do, well, their lifespan is measured in weeks, so we'll be very busy.