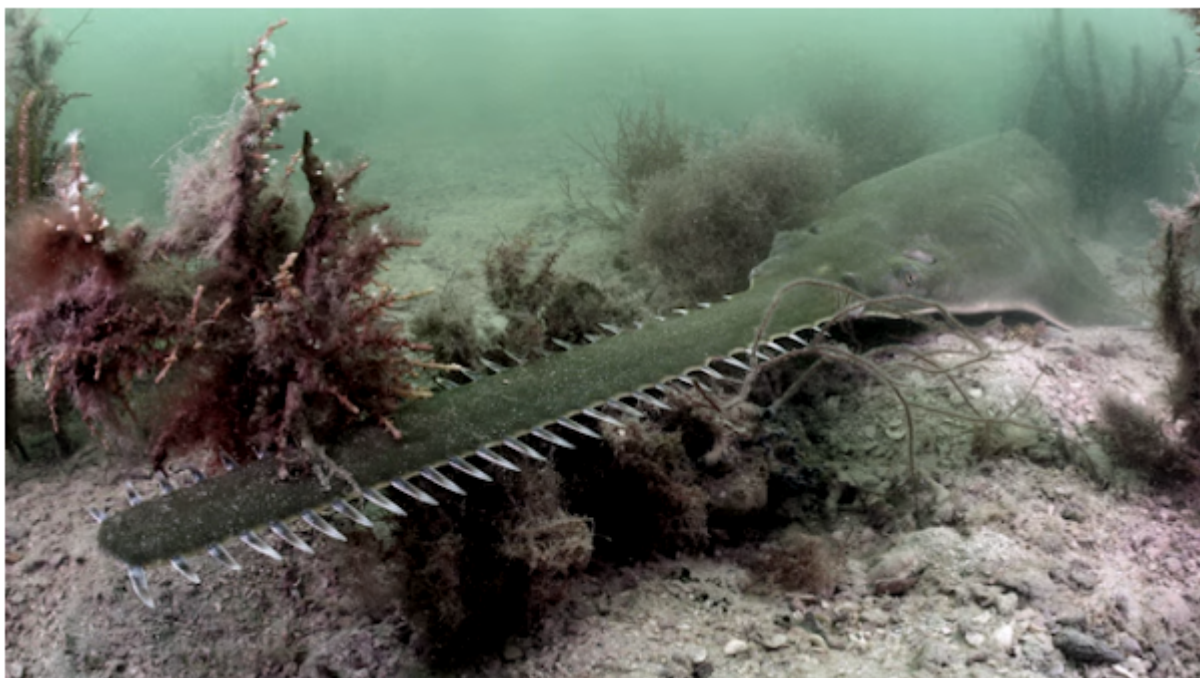


# Whirling Fish, Bees, Worms, Sheep, Turtles, Penguins

[Whirling Fish, Bees, Worms, Sheep, Turtles, Penguins](#)

by [Arthur Firstenberg](#), [Cellular Phone Task Force](#)

April 16, 2024



## More Than Fifty Species of Fish Circling and Spinning Until They Die

**Several of my subscribers** have called my attention to this. In February 2023, in the middle of the Florida Keys – a long, narrow string of islands hooking down into the ocean from Miami – many different kinds of fish, both common and rare, began spinning round and round, or swimming frantically in circles, until they beached themselves and died. This has continued, and as of April 5, 2024 has [been observed](#) in more than 50 species, including: sharks, rays, snappers, pilchards, grunts, blue runners, squid, Goliath grouper, tarpon, snook,

redfish, leatherjacket, yellowfin mojarra, scaled sardine, toadfish, mullet, permit, ballyhoo, jack crevalle, yellow jack, bonefish, pinfish, bigeye scad, sand perch, needlefish, spadefish, and the critically endangered smalltooth sawfish, which is pictured above.

No cause for this has been found. There is no evidence of a red tide, low oxygen levels, high temperatures, or parasites in the dead fish.

I was skeptical that RF radiation from cell towers could be causing this because water reflects the radiation and it shouldn't be killing fish like it is killing birds. But I decided to investigate. Because the greatest number of reports have come from a 10-mile-long stretch of the Keys between Big Pine Key and Sugarloaf Key, I wondered if there is a military facility in that area, and there is, or was. On Cudjoe Key, located between Big Pine Key and Sugarloaf Key, there was an Air Force Base that is now operated by the Department of Homeland Security. And above Cudjoe Key floats a radar blimp, called an "aerostat", that is part of U.S. border surveillance and scans an area around it for 200 miles in every direction. Powerful radar can injure fish when they swim to the surface in these shallow waters, called the Florida Keys flats, where the water is only a few feet deep. Local residents call this blimp Fat Albert.



There may be underwater sonar in use at this facility as well, which would be likely to affect all the fish, either alone or in combination with the radar. In November 2022, the Tethered Aerostat Radar System (TARS) at Cudjoe Key began recruiting for a variety of positions, including Flight Director, Site Laborer, Logistics Supply Coordinator, Logistician, General Maintenance Worker, and one position that [was advertised](#) as **“Electronic Technician – Aerostat Sonar / Radar – Blimp Surveillance System – Cudjoe Key, FL”**.

The sudden large number of job openings makes one suspect that this facility has recently been upgraded and has increased the scope of its operations, which evidently now includes ocean sonar.

The person who first observed fish circling to death, and called attention to it, was Gregg Furstenwerth, a diver who lives in Cudjoe Key.

### **Circling Worms and Sheep**

As I [reported three years ago](#), the launching of almost 100 satellites by SpaceX and OneWeb on a single day on March 24, 2021 caused illness all over the planet in both humans and animals. Among the effects on animals was a spiraling, or

circling phenomenon in worms (photo taken in Hoboken, New Jersey on March 25, 2021):



and in sheep (photo taken in England on March 26, 2021):



## **Circling Turtles, Seals, Penguins, Sharks and Whales**

In 2021, [Japanese scientists reported](#) on bizarre circling behavior of green sea turtles, Antarctic fur seals, king penguins, a whale shark, a tiger shark, and a Cuvier's beaked whale. This was observed in the seas off Oahu, Hawai'i; Okinawa, Japan; Moheli Island, Comoro; Chichijima Island, Japan; Possession Island in the Indian Ocean; Bird Island in South Georgia; and the Ogasawara Islands in the western North Pacific Ocean. The animals circled round and round for up to an hour. *"One turtle swam in large circles 76 times, with each loop taking 16 to 20 seconds"*, [reported New Scientist](#). This behavior was also caused by radiation: all these different whirling sea animals wore computers ("multi-channel data loggers") and VHF transmitters, and the sea turtles also wore GPS devices. Instead of enabling them to study the animals' behavior, the devices were *causing* the bizarre behavior.

## **Circling Bees**

**Grayson in North Carolina is one of my subscribers who sent me information about the circling fish in the Florida Keys. He reports also on circling bees:**

*"I still have the sample of carpenter bees harmed by a wi-fi light sensor at my home in 2016ish. They did the same thing. They passed through the sensor's field and dropped to the base of the light and crawled around in circles for days... There were 23 total and they did not respond to water or honey and water or anything. They just crawled around in circles."*

## **Arthur Firstenberg**

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*Cover image credit: [Forrest Samuels](#)*

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# Magpies Outwit Scientists, by Helping Each Other Remove Tracking Devices

[Magpies Outwit Scientists, by Helping Each Other Remove Tracking Devices](#)

by [Andy Corbley](#), [Good News Network](#)

originally published February 25, 2022



*Image credit: [Buntysmum](#)*

Australian ornithologists have stumbled upon an extremely rare cognitive ability in magpies after fitting five of the birds with little backpack tracking devices.

Demonstrating a mix of rescue behavior/altruism and clever problem solving, the magpies saw their friends had a strange metal parasite on them, and within hours the group had cut them free from almost all of the trackers.

Australian magpies live in social groups of up to 12 individuals. They display group behavior through things like defending their territory with swooping, and through sharing child-rearing responsibilities with their siblings.

When Dominique Potvin, Senior Lecturer in Animal Ecology at the University of the Sunshine Coast, came up with the unique harness design for her team's GPS trackers, she was excited to gather data and learn how far magpies travel, whether they have patterns or schedules throughout the day in terms of movement and socializing, and if age, sex, or dominance rank affected their activities.

"Within ten minutes of fitting the final tracker, we witnessed an adult female without a tracker working with her bill to try and remove the harness off of a younger bird," said Potvin in [The Conservation](#), noting in a [different sort of study](#) than she planned to write that they figured out to target the only weak point in the harnesses' design.

"Within hours, most of the other trackers had been removed. By day three, even the dominant male of the group had its tracker successfully dismantled."

As well as intelligence, this demonstrates a behavior that's extremely rare in birds, which is the attempt to help another individual out of a period of distress, known as "rescuing." This has been seen only once before in the Seychelles warbler, which [has been documented](#) rescuing its neighbors if they get sticky and prickly seed clusters stuck on their wings, which

can actually lead to mortality in some cases.

Magpies are corvids, one of the most successful and intelligent families in the animal kingdom. Including recognizing oneself in a mirror test, they regularly display [tool-use](#), tool-crafting, joking around, social cooperation, the [concept of zero](#), and much, much more. New Caledonian Crows, a relative of the magpie, are widely-regarded as the smartest of all birds.

Now scientists can add rescuing to the repertoire.

This research has been published in [Australian Field Ornithology](#).

[Connect with Good News Network](#)

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# **Fish and Wildlife Is Taking Comments on Environmental Threats to the American Bumble Bee**

[Fish and Wildlife Is Taking Comments on Environmental Threats to the American Bumble Bee](#)



## [Fish and Wildlife Service Taking Comments on Threats to Bees](#)

by [Arthur Firstenberg](#), [Cellular Phone Task Force](#)

October 2021

On September 29, 2021, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service published a [notice in the Federal Register](#) saying that it is proposing to list the American bumble bee as a threatened or endangered species, and that it is requesting comments and information about threats to the existence of this species. The agency is taking this action in response to a [petition](#) submitted by the Center for Biological Diversity.



Until 2002, the American bumble bee was the most common species of bumble bee in the United States, occurring in every state except Alaska, Hawaii and Washington. But in the past 20 years its numbers have plummeted nationwide by almost 90%. It has disappeared entirely from Connecticut, Idaho, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, Wisconsin and Wyoming, and has almost vanished from New York, Michigan, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

The Fish and Wildlife Service lists four threats to the existence of the American bumble bee: habitat destruction, loss of genetic diversity, climate change, and competition from nonnative honey bees. But the agency has failed to explain why any of these threats should have caused a once-abundant species to suddenly begin to vanish, throughout the United States, in the year 2002. Radiation from cell towers can explain this. 2002 is the year that what we now call 3G

technology was introduced in the United States, which turned every cell phone into a computer and connected every cell tower to the Internet. The number of cell towers and cell phone users began to increase tremendously.

Yesterday I submitted [my comments to the Fish and Wildlife Service](#) [see Arthur's letter below] summarizing the threat to bees posed by radio frequency (RF) radiation from wireless technology. This is an opportunity for us to take collective action to bring this threat to bees, and to all life, out into the open. I have received hundreds of emails from people all over the world in recent years about bees suddenly vanishing from their yard and their neighborhood as soon as a cell tower was built nearby. I encourage everyone who has observed this happening to send comments to the Fish and Wildlife Service telling exactly what you saw happen to the bees after a cell tower was erected – the honey bees, the wild bees, and the bumble bees. Whatever you observed.

To submit your comments electronically, go to <https://www.regulations.gov/document/FWS-R3-ES-2021-0063-0001> and click on "Comment." Or, you can submit comments by mail to

Public Comments Processing Attn: FWS–R3–ES–2021–0063  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service MS: PRB/3W  
5275 Leesburg Pike Falls Church, VA 22041–3803

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## **Submission to Fish and Wildlife Service on the American Bumble Bee**

October 6, 2021

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
MS: PRB/3W

5275 Leesburg Pike  
Falls Church, VA 22041-3803

Attention: Louise Clemency, Chicago Ecological Services Field Office

**Re: American Bumble Bee**

**Docket No. FWS-R3-ES-2021-0063**

## **THREAT TO THE AMERICAN BUMBLE BEE FROM RF RADIATION**

In response to a petition from the Center for Biological Diversity, the Fish and Wildlife Service published a Notification of Status Review on September 29, 2021 in the *Federal Register*. The Service proposes to list the American bumble bee as a threatened or endangered species and requests comments and new information concerning threats to the existence of that species. In its Notification, FWS lists four threats that to the American bumble bee that it has identified: habitat destruction, loss of genetic diversity, climate change, and competition from nonnative honeybees.

I submit the following information regarding a fifth threat to this species: radio frequency (RF) radiation. RF radiation is a threat to both honeybees and bumble bees and is a greater and more urgent threat to the American bumble bee than any of four threats the Service has listed. This pollutant has been responsible for reducing both domestic and wild bee populations for more than a century. This threat to bees has intensified since the beginning of the wireless revolution in 1996, with the construction of hundreds of thousands of cell towers and antennas in all areas of the United States including farmland, forest land, parkland, and nature preserves. It has become an emergency in the past two years with the national rollout of 5G technology, which is multiplying the density of antennas tenfold and more, as well as increasing the frequency, bandwidth, and effective radiated power from each antenna. Cell towers are already exposing the

entire world to levels of RF radiation that are up to ten million times stronger than the natural radiation that comes from the sun and stars.

## **Mechanisms of Action**

RF radiation is a form of electromagnetic energy that is used for communication. It is emitted by radio and TV towers, radar stations, cell towers, cell phones, and all of the other wireless devices that are proliferating in today's world. It interferes with navigation, communication and metabolism in bees. It is the effect on metabolism that is killing bees the quickest and driving them to extinction.

## **Metabolism**

Electronic devices and systems manufactured today must be hardened against electromagnetic interference (EMI) from RF radiation coming from so many sources today. A living organism is also electronic in nature and is also subject to EMI. However, life evolved in the virtual absence of RF radiation and is not hardened against it. This radiation affects biology in many ways, but most critical for bees is the interference with electron transport in the mitochondria of cells. The electron transport chain is which is where the last, energy-producing step in metabolism takes place. It is where electrons generated by the metabolism of the sugars, fats and proteins we eat are transferred to the oxygen we breathe, resulting in the generation of ATP. Interference with metabolism affects bees more than other creatures because bees have such a high metabolic rate. It deprives them of energy by starving them of oxygen.

That this actually happens was proved in 2011. N. Kumar, S. Sangwan and P. Badotra, "Exposure to Cell Phone Radiations Produces Biochemical Changes in Worker Honey Bees." *Toxicology International* 181(a):70-72 (2011). These researchers exposed bees to an ordinary cell phone and sampled

their hemolymph. After 10 minutes of exposure to a cell phone, the concentration of total carbohydrates in their hemolymph increased from 1.29 to 1.5 mg/ml. After 20 minutes it increased to 1.73 mg/ml. The glucose content rose from 0.218 to 0.231 to 0.277 mg/ml. Total lipids rose from 2.06 to 3.03 to 4.50 mg/ml. Cholesterol rose from 0.230 to 1.381 to 2.565 mg/ml. Total protein rose from 0.475 to 0.525 to 0.825 mg/ml. In other words, after just ten minutes of exposure to a cell phone, metabolism of sugars, fats and proteins was severely inhibited.

If bees cannot metabolize their food they cannot fly and they will crawl on the ground and die.

## **Science**

The quickest way to destroy a bee hive, scientists have found, is to place a wireless telephone inside it.

In 2009, VP Sharma and N Kumar placed two cell phones each—one in talk mode and one in listening mode in order to maintain the connection—in two of four hives. They turned them on at 11:00 in the morning for 15 minutes, and again at 3:00 in the afternoon for 15 minutes. They did this twice a week between February and April. As soon as the phones were turned on the bees would become quiet and still. During the course of three months fewer and fewer bees flew in and out of those two hives. The number of eggs laid by the queen declined from 546 to 145 per day. The area under brood declined from 2,866 to 760 square centimeters. Honey stores declined from 3,200 to 400 square centimeters. “At the end of the experiment there was neither honey, nor pollen nor brood nor bees in the colony resulting in complete loss of the colony,” wrote the authors.

The following year Kumar performed the experiment described above in which she demonstrated that electromagnetic fields from a cell phone interfere with cellular metabolism in bees and cause them to become oxygen starved.

Daniel Favre, at the Apiary School of the City of Lausanne, Switzerland, observed that bees exposed to a cell phone would become quiet and still at first, but within 30 minutes they would start to produce loud, high frequency sounds like worker piping, which is usually produced by bees when they are preparing to swarm.

Sainudeen Pattazhy, a professor at Sree Narayana College, placed one cell phone inside each of six bee hives and turned the phone on for just ten minutes, once a day for ten days. While the phone was on, the bees became still. The egg-laying rate of the queen declined from 355 to 100 per day. After ten days no bees were left in any of the hives.

German biologist Ulrich Warnke has published a booklet titled *Bees, Birds and Mankind: Destroying Nature by 'Electrosmog'*, in which he reviews the science on the effects of electromagnetic pollution on orientation, navigation and communication in birds and in bees. "Animals that depend on the natural electrical, magnetic and electromagnetic fields for their orientation and navigation through earth's atmosphere are confused by the much stronger and constantly changing artificial fields created by technology and fail to navigate back to their home environments."

Russian researchers EK Eskov and AM Sapozhnikov found in 1975 that bees generate electromagnetic signals with a modulation frequency between 180 and 250 Hz as they perform their waggle dance, and that hungry bees react to the frequencies by holding their antennae erect.

## **History**

Bees began disappearing at the dawn of the radio age. On the small island lying off England's southern coast where Guglielmo Marconi sent the world's first long-distance radio transmission in 1901, the honey bees began to vanish. By 1906, the island, then host to the greatest density of radio

transmissions in the world, was almost empty of bees. Thousands, unable to fly, were found crawling and dying on the ground outside their hives. Healthy bees imported from the mainland began dying within a week of arrival. In the following decades, Isle of Wight disease spread along with radio broadcasting to the rest of Great Britain, and to Italy, France, Switzerland, Germany, Brazil, Australia, Canada, South Africa, and the United States. In the 1960s and 1970s its name changed to “disappearing disease.” It became urgent in 1996, when cell towers began to be erected throughout the United States, and became a worldwide emergency by 2006, when it was renamed “colony collapse disorder.” Today not only domestic bees, but also all wild bees are in danger of extinction.

In the winter of 1995-1996, beekeepers lost 45 percent of their hives in Kentucky, 60 percent in Michigan, and 80 percent in Maine. By 1997, 90 percent of all feral honey bee colonies had disappeared nationwide.

Europe’s first UMTS network—what is now known as “3G” technology, which greatly expanded the network of cell towers and connected them all to the Internet, enabling the operation of smartphones—went into service in the fall of 2002, just before the disastrous winter during which so many of Europe’s honey bees vanished.

Ferdinand Ruzicka, a medical physicist and beekeeper in Austria, wrote an article in *Bienenwelt* (“Bee World”) about this problem in 2003 and published a survey form in *Bienenvater* (“Beekeeper”) requesting to be contacted by beekeepers with antennas near their hives. Ruzicka’s colonies had collapsed after telecommunications antennas appeared in a field near his hives. The majority of *Bienenvater* readers who filled out his form similarly observed that their bees had become suddenly aggressive when antennas appeared, had begun to swarm, and that their healthy colonies had vanished for no other reason.

In 2003, Swedish beekeeper Börje Svensson published an article titled "Silent Spring in northern Europe?"

During the winter of 2006-2007, when disappearing disease was renamed "colony collapse disorder," a team of researchers examined thirteen large apiaries owned by eleven different commercial beekeepers in Florida and California, and could not find any specific nutritional, toxic, or infectious factor that differentiated bees or colonies with and without colony collapse disorder. Tracheal mites were more than three times as prevalent in the *healthy* colonies as in the decimated colonies. The supposedly devastating *Varroa* mite was not more prevalent in collapsed or collapsing colonies. The only specific observation they were able to make was that colony collapse disorder was location-specific, and that colonies with this disorder tended to cluster together. The colonies in those locations not only died, but tended to be left alone even by the parasites that normally infest dead honey bee colonies.

Simultaneous to the disappearance of honey bees, bumble bees also disappeared. The Franklin bumble bee, formerly prevalent in southwestern Oregon, has not been seen since about 2005. Until the mid-1990s, the western bumble bee was abundant in forests, fields, and urban backyards throughout western North America, from New Mexico to Saskatchewan to Alaska. It has vanished except for small pockets in the Colorado Rockies. The rusty-patched bumble bee has not been seen in New York State since 2004. Once common in 26 states and two Canadian provinces, this bee has disappeared from the eastern United States and Canada and has drastically declined in the American midwest.

And, the FWS's 90-day finding reports that the American bumble bee, formerly the most common species of bumble bee in the United States, has disappeared entirely from 12 states and is in severe decline in the 35 states in which it is still found. The petition from the Center for Biological Diversity reports

that this species exists at only 11% of its former abundance, and that its rapid decline began only 20 years ago, in 2002.

## **Conclusion**

The Service has failed to provide any reason why any of the four threats to this species that have been identified so far—habitat destruction, loss of genetic diversity, climate change, and competition from nonnative honey bees—should have suddenly cause the American bumble bee's population to plummet after 2002. RF radiation can provide that reason. 3G cell towers and smartphones were introduced in that year in the United States as well as in Europe. On January 28, 2002, Verizon launched 3G service in Utah; in a corridor from Norfolk, Virginia to Portland, Maine; and in the San Francisco/Silicon Valley area. Sprint launched a nationwide 3G network on August 8, 2002.

The American bumble bee should be listed as an endangered species. This listing should occur as quickly as possible. And the FWS should investigate the urgent threat to this species from RF radiation, in addition to the threats that it has listed in its Notification of Status Review.

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Respectfully submitted,

Arthur Firstenberg, President  
Cellular Phone Task Force

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*cover image credit: [Miriams-Fotos](#) / pixabay*

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# Scientific Bigfoot Research

[Scientific Bigfoot Research](#)

by [Coast to Coast AM Official](#)

Recorded October 10, 2020

COAST TO COAST AM – October 10, 2020. First-hour guest, Dr. Jeffrey Meldrum presented an objective look at the Sasquatch mystery as one of few credentialed scientists looking at the issue. Meldrum also discussed a giant Bigfoot skeleton that was 3D-printed for a TV production, based on reports and detailed research on sightings and footprints. He lamented that there is still prejudice in academia against Sasquatch research even though, based on his decades-long study, "the evidence is compelling if not conclusive" for the existence of large, hairy hominids in North America.

[Read More & See All Images at Coast to Coast AM](#)

*Cover image credit: [Coast to Coast AM](#)*

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# Weather Warfare & Food Rationing | Corn Shortage: Grand Solar Minimum Kills Crops

[CORN SHORTAGE: Grand Solar Minimum Kills Crops \(New Study\)](#)

by [Christian Westbrook](#), [Ice Age Farmer](#)

October 16, 2020

The media is blaming shortages of corn on the virus, but both common sense and a new study out of Canada attribute massive crop losses to the fact that our sun is dropping into a modern Grand Solar Minimum. It is this that is driving the timeline for totalitarian takeover and lockdowns, even when it seems less than ideal – the technocrats have a deadline: the food is running out. Spread the word and start growing food today.

Video available at Ice Age Farmer [BitChute](#) and [YouTube](#) channels.

# \$18 Billion COVID Vaccine Gold Rush Threatens Horseshoe Crabs, Ocean Ecosystem

## [\\$18 Billion COVID Vaccine Gold Rush Threatens Horseshoe Crabs, Ocean Ecosystem](#)

by [Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., \*Children's Health Defense\*](#)

October 16, 2020

The annual spring congregation of egg-laden horseshoe crabs on the east coast provide a vital food source for annual migrations of millions of shore birds.

The [\\$18 billion gold rush](#) for [liability free COVID vaccines](#) now threatens that ancient Atlantic coast ritual. COVID vaccine makers plot to harvest tens of thousands of these primitive and beloved sea creatures. The horseshoe crab's blue blood is the only known natural source of [limulus amebocyte lysate](#), a substance that detects and eliminates a potentially deadly vaccine contaminant called [endotoxin](#).

Every year, pharmaceutical companies corral [half a million](#) Atlantic horseshoe crabs, bleed them, and return them to the ocean – after which [many will die](#). This practice, combined with [overharvesting of the crabs for fishing bait](#), has caused a precipitous decline in the species.

In 1990, biologists estimated [1.24 million crabs spawned in](#)

[Delaware Bay](#), a main egg-laying nursery grounds and prime collection point for the companies. By 2019, that number had dropped to [335,211](#). Conservation groups feel that the planned harvest by vaccine manufacturers may lead to the species' extinction.

Starting in July, Swiss-based [Lonza will begin](#) manufacturing a COVID-19 vaccine for human clinical trials. The company will use lysate in the vaccine it plans to sell it in the U.S.

The horseshoe crab is already on the brink of extinction. Conservationists fear that the demand for horseshoe crab blood for COVID-19 vaccines may exterminate the crabs and destroy the shore birds and the marine ecosystem that depend on them.

Conservationists observe that the harvesting of wild animals [like sharks](#) and horseshoe crabs for exploding vaccine manufacturing is unsustainable.

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# Ambitious Reforestation Project Will Plant 3 Million Trees in Uganda

[Ambitious Reforestation Project Will Plant 3 Million Trees in Uganda](#)

by [The Optimist Daily](#), [optimistdaily.com](#)

October 8, 2020

Successful efforts of reforestation and wildlife conservation typically go hand in hand with involving local communities in

the process. Not only does this tap into valuable local knowledge around the issue but it also enables local communities to sustain these efforts in the future.

This is exactly the line of thought behind the newly launched “Wildlife Habitat & Corridor Restoration Project” in western Uganda, which puts local communities at the heart of its ambitious reforestation approach.

The project is the fruit of a strategic partnership between the [Jane Goodall Institute](#) and reforestation non-profit [One Tree Planted](#) and will focus on restoring habitat for endangered chimpanzees by adding 3 million trees to the Albertine Rift Forests.

An important ecoregion, the targeted area is home to endangered chimpanzees, as well as more than 50 percent of birds, 39 percent of mammals, 19 percent of amphibians, and 14 percent of reptiles and plants of mainland Africa.

By working together, the two groups aim to both restore and manage these ecosystems as well as support the local communities that have been affected by the area’s degradation over the last decades as a result of illegal logging and deforestation.

As One Tree Planted explains, the program will work to “ensure the long-term protection of wild chimpanzee and other ape populations and their habitat, through promoting local governance and management of natural resources, and advancement of alternative sustainable livelihoods.”

“We need to protect the existing forests. We need to try and restore the forest and the land around the forest that has not been degraded for too long, where the seeds and roots in the ground can sprout up and once again reclaim that land and make it an amazing forest ecosystem,” says Dr. Jane Goodall.

The key goals of the project include restoring degraded areas

on community land by planting native seedling; rebuilding devastated zones; educating farmers on how to integrate trees into their agriculture practices, and providing technology and training to local enforcement groups to monitor the forests.

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# Why Bats Are Ecological Superheroes

## [Why Bats Are Ecological Superheroes](#)

by [Dr. Joseph Mercola](#), [mercola.com](http://mercola.com)

June 20, 2020

### STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- Bats are ecological superheroes. They feed on agricultural pests and pollinate many popular food crops including bananas, cacao, mangos, peaches and figs
- Did you know that without bats, we wouldn't have tequila? Bats pollinate agave, the primary ingredient in tequila, which blooms at night in the Desert Southwest
- "Bats – Unsung Heroes" highlights several hotspots for bats, including the South Congress bridge in Austin, Texas, and Bracken Cave, near San Antonio, Texas
- About 20 million bats live in Bracken Cave. Each night they eat 147 tons of insects, most of which are agricultural pests
- Bats save farmers in the U.S. up to \$53 billion per year

Bats are sometimes feared and greatly misunderstood. They've been particularly vilified in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, as many are falsely pushing the narrative that bats, and the sale of bats and other animals in wet markets, are to blame for the outbreak. We now have proof that's simply not true. For more information, be sure to check out tomorrow's interview with virologist and molecular biologist Jonathan Latham, Ph.D.

In that interview, he presents evidence showing SARS-CoV-2 is highly unlikely to have a natural origin, and stresses that we must not blame the wildlife trade. It's merely a ruse to cover up compelling evidence showing it's a lab-created virus that somehow escaped the confines of the laboratory.

So, please, leave bats alone, both figuratively and literally. Avoid them, don't eat them, don't hold them – and let scientists know we do not want them to harvest them for culturing and manufacturing new viruses.

What many people don't realize is that bats serve an important purpose, both to humans and the environment. Bats are ecological superheroes that pollinate many of our favorite foods. They also feed on agricultural pests that damage food crops, saving farmers hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of dollars each year.

The featured film, "Growing a Greener World: Bats – Unsung Heroes," explores the benefits bats have on our environment, their role in food production, and what some scientists are doing to protect this important species.

The film starts out in San Antonio, Texas, at Bracken Cave, a major tourist attraction that is home to the world's largest bat colony. The cave provides shelter for about 15 to 20 million Mexican free-tailed bats, according to the film. Each night at sunset during the warmer months, the bats gracefully fly out of the cave in masses to begin their nightly hunt.

Bracken Cave was purchased by Bat Conservation International (BCI) in 1991. It now owns nearly 1,500 acres of former ranchland surrounding the cave, which is in the process of being restored to its natural state.

The land lost some of its original plant and animal diversity when it was being utilized for other purposes such as ranching. But thanks to the conservation work done by BCI, the area is now also home to many bird species, including endangered golden-cheeked warblers.<sup>1</sup>

## **Bats Are the Only True Flying Mammal**

In the film, Fran Hutchins, director of Bracken Cave Preserve, reveals that bats are the only true flying mammal. Mexican free-tailed bats weigh just half an ounce, or the equivalent of holding 50 cents in your hand, says Hutchins.

Despite being in the same genetic class as humans, bats are often lumped in with animals like snakes and sharks, some of the creatures we fear the most. But once you start to take a closer look at bats and their unique habits, it's clear there is nothing to fear about these beneficial animals.

There are many fun facts about bats you may not know. For example, despite what you may have heard, bats are not blind. They can see very well. They also have excellent flying abilities and an impressive range of motion.

Bats can fly up to 50 to 60 miles per hour, and travel distances of up to 30 to 50 miles in radius before returning back to their home. Bats are more maneuverable than birds. They use a combination of echolocation and sense receptors that allow them to easily navigate through the night sky.

Their echolocation abilities work by emitting a sound out of their mouth, which bounces off an object. When it returns, it is received and processed by their ears and other facial features. This echolocation technique is what helps bats hunt

for food.

Bats emit sounds slowly and repetitively, as they navigate through the environment. However, when bats home in on an insect, the sound increases in frequency right up until they reach their prey. They then use their wings to snatch up the insect before eating it.

## **Without Bats, We Wouldn't Have Tequila**

Bats as a species are incredibly diverse. There are an estimated 1,400 species of bats worldwide. They live on various parts of the planet and range in size. For example, the Kittie's hog-nosed bat, also called the Bumblebee Bat, weighs less than a penny, making it the world's smallest mammal next to the flying fox, according to the U.S. Department of the Interior.<sup>2</sup>

While bats are expert hunters, they are also important [pollinators](#). Just like birds, butterflies and bees, bats pollinate many important food crops, but because they do so at night under the cover of darkness, they don't get as much recognition.

More than 300 species of food-producing plants depend on bats for pollination. Some of these include [guavas](#), [bananas](#), mangos, [figs](#), dates, cashews and peaches. Bats also pollinate other flowering plants including agave, the key ingredient in tequila.

Without bats, we would not have tequila. Bats are the main pollinator of agave, which blooms at night in Desert Southwest, according to the film. [Agave plants](#) are a major food source for bats. Unfortunately, in an effort to maximize profits, some big-time tequila producers are cutting down agave stalks before they have a chance to flower.

This is a big problem for bats. Luckily, some producers are

being a little more responsible in the way they grow agave and produce tequila. They are allowing some of the agave plants to flower so that bats have a food source along their migratory pathway.

Some sustainable tequila producers have even branded their products “bat-friendly.” Bat-friendly tequila can be found at various specialty bars and restaurants around the U.S., including San Antonio’s Esquire Tavern, which serves a spicy cocktail called the “Batman of Mexico.” It’s made with Tequila Ocho, which can be found at some U.S. liquor stores for about \$45 a bottle.<sup>3</sup>

## **Austin’s South Congress Bridge Is Home to 1.5 Million Bats**

The next stop in the film is Austin, Texas. The capital city is best known for its laid-back atmosphere, tasty tacos and its “Keep Austin Weird” slogan. It’s also known for its bats, which reside under the South Congress Bridge.

The bridge was constructed using cast-in-place concrete to expedite the construction. Little did they know the design would create tiny spaces underneath the bridge that serve as the perfect bat house.

An estimated 1.5 million Mexican free-tailed bats migrate north to Austin and call the bridge home during the warmer months of March through October.<sup>4</sup> Like they do at the Bracken Cave, millions of bats descend from under the bridge at sunset, swirling in a mesmerizing tornado-like shape.

Mylea Bayless, senior director of Networks & Partnerships Bat Conservation International, says in the film that the bats stay together like a school of fish in order to avoid predators. They fly downstream along the tree line out to the corn and cotton fields where they primarily feed on agricultural pests. The viewing draws thousands of people who

line up along the bridge each night, waiting to watch the bats.

## **Bats Save Organic Pecan Farm in Texas**

While bats get a lot of recognition in some of Texas' largest cities, they are equally as honored in the Texas Hill Country. The featured film visits John Byrd, a pecan orchardist and owner of King's Crossing Farm, an organic farm located in San Saba, Texas.

The 109-acre farm was established by Byrd's grandfather in 1944, who was also one of the founders of the Texas Pecan Growers Association. Texas is one of few states where pecans are indigenous.<sup>5</sup>

Byrd's 1,200 pecan trees are part of the family legacy. But they are also an attraction for pests. In the film, Byrd explains that the biggest pest threat to his pecans is the casebearer moth, which can lay 100 eggs at a time. Each egg makes a little caterpillar that goes into a pecan nut and kills it.

If all 100 eggs are able to successfully make their way into a cluster of pecans, they can kill 100 pecans, says Byrd. That's about 1 pound, which costs about \$1.50. So, for every moth, the farm stands to lose \$1.50. Byrd uses organic growing methods on his farm,<sup>6</sup> which means pesticides are not an option for dealing with the moths.

## **Bats Are Nature's Exterminator**

"I have 400-year-old pecan trees that have been doing well without chemicals or people, and they produce pecans," he says. "There is a way to do it without pesticides. I want to promote life, not death, in my orchards."

In an effort to deal with the moths naturally, Byrd started building bat houses in hopes of attracting the animals to his

orchard. He started out with a small bat house, which was quickly filled with bats. He then built a bat house three times the size as the first. It too filled almost immediately with bats.

Finally, he built one of the largest bat houses available, which can hold up to 30,000 bats. It took a while longer, but it too, eventually became full. Byrd says the large bat house now holds about 20,000 bats. They're doing their job, too, he says. DNA analysis found the bats were in fact eating the casebearer moths. Byrd now has fewer pests and more pecans.

Bats are one of nature's best exterminators. The bats that live in Bracken Cave outside of San Antonio eat an estimated 147 tons of insects per night, most of which are agricultural pests, according to the film. As a result, bats save farmers in the Texas Hill Country about \$750,000 a year in crop damage and pesticides. In the U.S, bats are estimated to save farmers anywhere from \$3.7 billion to \$53 billion per year.<sup>7</sup>

## **Bats Are Threatened Worldwide**

Despite their importance, bats worldwide are at risk for a number of reasons including habitat loss, climate change, disease, deforestation and the bushmeat trade.<sup>8</sup> Scientists report a loss of 50% of the world's insects since 1970,<sup>9</sup> a disastrous estimation that's predicted to affect all types of wildlife, including bats.

Another major threat to bats is white-nose syndrome, a fungal disease that eats away the tissue of North American bats. The pathogen gets its name from the appearance of a fuzzy white material that grows on the bats' snout, ears, wings or feet.

The pathogen prefers cold temperatures, which means bats are most susceptible when they are hibernating and their body temperature is reduced, explains Chris Cornelison, Ph.D., a research assistant professor at Kennesaw State University.

“From a wildlife disease standpoint, we’re experiencing some of the most precipitous, severe-associated declines of wildlife that have ever been recorded,” says Cornelison in the film. “In some of the worst cases, we’ve observed over 99% declines in those populations.”

The good news is that scientists are working hard on solutions. One solution involves the use of naturally occurring VOCs that can be used in conjunction with a nebulizer to produce an aerosol volatilized gas to spray on the bats. This represses the growth of the fungus while they hibernate.

This is sometimes challenging, as bats hibernate in caves that are inaccessible to humans. For example, at the Black Diamond Tunnel in North Georgia, scientists had to develop the infrastructure to mount a nebulizer on a boat in order to send it autonomously into the cave to distribute the antifungal gas.

## **Want to Help Protect Bats? Here Are Some Things You Can Do**

As you can see, bats are incredibly important for maintaining a healthy ecosystem. If you want to help protect bats, one thing you can do is to plant an organic, pesticide-free garden with night-scented flowers. If you are able, it’s also helpful to leave dead and dying trees, as these spaces create perfect roosting sites for bats.<sup>10</sup>

You can also put up a bat house. Click [here](#) for information on where to purchase a bat house or build one yourself.