

## Viewpoint: ‘Misguided enthusiasm’ to save honeybees threatens wild pollinators

The [rise in hobby beekeeping](#), now a trendy activity for [hundreds of thousands](#) of Americans, followed strong awareness campaigns to “save the bees.” But as a species, honey bees are least in need of saving. Media attention [disproportionately covers](#) them over native pollinators, and murky messaging has led many citizens—myself once included—to believe they are doing a good thing for the environment by putting on a beekeeper’s veil. Unfortunately, they are probably doing more harm than good.

“Beekeeping is for people; it’s not a conservation practice,” says Sheila Colla, an assistant professor and conservation biologist at Toronto’s York University, Canada. “People mistakenly think keeping honey bees, or helping honey bees, is somehow helping the native bees, which are at risk of extinction.”

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Despite intense public interest in bees and pollination and strong support of tighter pesticide regulations, Colla and her colleagues found that citizens had a [surprisingly poor understanding of the diversity of pollinators](#) and their roles in pollination.

“The focus on neonics [a kind of pesticide] and honey bees has taken a ton of resources away from conserving wild pollinators from their most important threats,” Colla says. She is justifiably frustrated at the misappropriated attention on saving honey bees when, from a conservationist’s point of view, native bees are the ones in more dire need of support.

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