



**Department of
Environmental
Conservation**



**Agriculture
and Markets**

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POLLINATOR AWARENESS WEEK PROCLAIMED IN NEW YORK STATE

Events being held Statewide to Celebrate and Educate the Public on Importance of Pollinators

The week of June 20-26 is proclaimed Pollinator Awareness Week in New York State with several events highlighting the importance of key species such as bees, butterflies and hummingbirds to the state's environment and agricultural economy, state Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) Commissioner Basil Seggos announced today. As part of this national celebration, Governor Cuomo signed a proclamation commemorating the week and affirming that New York is committed to the promotion of the health and recovery of the pollinator population, which is the focus of a state agency task force. The task force is expected to shortly release its recommendations for actions to protect New York's pollinator populations.

"Pollination is the cornerstone of most ecosystems," said DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos. "Native pollinators, such as bees, butterflies and moths, beetles and other insects, and birds and small mammals, are critical to the health of our crops and natural resources. We are just beginning to understand how climate change, pesticide misuse and habitat loss – among other factors – affect pollinator health. I want to thank Governor Cuomo for designating this week as Pollinator Week to bring the attention of New Yorkers to the challenge of maintaining healthy pollinator populations."

"Pollinator Week is a great reminder of the importance of pollinators to our food supply and the agriculture industry, as well as the need to address their declining population," said State Commissioner of Agriculture, Richard A. Ball. "These birds and insects provide a critical service to all of us as they make it possible for New York farmers to offer an amazing array of flowers and food. I applaud Governor Cuomo for making this designation to raise awareness about this issue, and for establishing an interagency task force to help identify ways to prevent the loss of more pollinators."

"Pollinators are at the core of a healthy environment which in turn promotes a healthy community. I commend Governor Cuomo for his consistent efforts to inform New Yorkers on pollinator populations and programs that teach us the impact they have on everyday life," said State Parks Commissioner Rose Harvey.

DEC and Agriculture and Markets are leading the Pollinator Protection Taskforce to examine and develop short and long-term solutions to address pollinator losses in the state and develop a statewide Pollinator Action Plan. Co-chaired by Commissioners Basil Seggos and Richard Ball, the taskforce consists of agency officials from the Department of Agriculture & Markets, DEC, Department of Transportation, Offices of General Services, State Parks, and key stakeholders. The Pollinator Taskforce focused on protecting New York's managed and native pollinators and stressors which harm their populations.

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The Governor's Pollinator Week proclamation recognizes the importance of pollinators to the state's economy and biodiversity. The number of pollinators, including honey bees, native bees, bats, hummingbirds and butterflies, has dropped significantly over the past 50 years. Losses are likely caused by a combination of factors such as poor nutrition, loss of foraging habitat, parasites, pesticides, pathogens, lack of genetic diversity and poor land management practices. Pollinator Week provides an opportunity for New Yorkers to learn about the value of pollinators to our state's agricultural industry and ecosystems, and about how all can work to increase pollinator levels.

Pollinators contribute substantially to the state's economy. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, pollinators provide approximately \$344 million worth of pollination services to New York and add \$29 billion in value to crop production nationally each year. New York's ability to produce crops such as apples, grapes, cherries, onions, pumpkins and cauliflower relies heavily on the presence of pollinators.

To celebrate Pollinators Week, events highlighting the importance of pollinator planned across the state this week include:

Monday, June 20, 2016

- Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar: 7:00 p.m.
Flowers of the Solstice: Celebrate pollinator week with a walking tour of the natural and cultural history of wildflowers.
- Full Moon Walk at Amherst State Park: 8:30 p.m.
Look for nocturnal pollinators like moths and bats by the light of the full moon. Note: This program takes place at Amherst State Park. Registration required; call 716-683-5959

Tuesday, June 21, 2016

- Clay Pit Ponds State Park: 10:00 a.m.
Learn about native New York pollinators by making crafts, playing games, and socializing with other toddlers. Parent or care giver is required to stay. Ages 1-3 (flexible.) Register by calling 718 605-3970 ext. 201.
- Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar: 8:30 p.m.
Bats are Beneficial: Indoor presentation on bats then an outdoor tour at Five Rivers to search for bats.

Wednesday, June 22, 2016

- Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar: 1:00 p.m.
Citizen Science: Monarch Monitoring Larva Project (MLMP): Learn how you can help monitor the monarchs at Five Rivers and at home.

Friday, June 24, 2016

- Five Rivers Environmental Education Center, Delmar: 2:00 p.m.
Family Fun: Bees and other pollinators (space is limited, call 518-475-0291 by Wed., June 22 to register). Learn about pollination and the insects that serve as pollinators. Try on a beekeeping suit, use a "smoker," and observe the honey bees
- Saratoga Spa State Park: 2:00 p.m.
Butterfly Walk: Did you know restoring a habitat is like building a neighborhood? Enjoy a light hike at the Karner Blue site and learn what butterflies live in the same neighborhood as the Karner Blue butterfly. Registration is required. Please call 518-584-2000 ext. 122. This program is free.

Saturday, June 25, 2016

- Reinstein Woods Nature Preserve and Environmental Education Center, Depew: 10:00 a.m.
Using Native Plants to Attract Pollinators: Planting native species is a great way to attract beautiful hummingbirds and butterflies to your yard.

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Explore which plants might be appropriate for your area and where to find them. For adults and children ages 12 and up. Registration required; call 716-683-5959.

- Thacher Nature Center: 2:00 p.m.
Honeybees Are Buzzin': Learn all about honeybees as you view the colony in our indoor observation hive. See the busy workers, the specialized drones and the ever-important queen bee in action! Learn how to dance like a bee, and view the world from a bee's perspective. Afterwards, take a walk to observe our honeybees at work in the gardens. Please register by calling 518-872-0800.

Sunday, June 26, 2016

- Letchworth State Park: 2:00 p.m.
Butterfly Beauties: Study the beauty and composition of hundreds of dried butterfly specimens representing most of the world's butterfly families. Dozens of local and New York species, as well as those found in the Niagara Parks Butterfly Conservatory, are specially noted. Butterfly structure and local natural history will be featured in two new butterfly videos. This is an excellent primer for the Butterfly Walk on July 9th. (Look for details in the upcoming summer issue of The Genesee Naturalist.) All workshops meet in the Conference Room in the Visitor Center and Regional Administration Building located in Letchworth State Park. Register by calling 585- 493-3680.

NYS Excelsior Conservation Corps Pollination Education Video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v6W5VRrIGec>

To view the Pollinator Week Proclamation, visit

<https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/PollinatorWeek2016.pdf>

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