

Friends of the Earth national poll finds majority of Canadians believe pesticide exposure most important threat to bees

Most Canadians (89 per cent) believe 'pesticides' are the most important threat to bees, according to a poll conducted on behalf of Friends of the Earth Canada in May by Oracle Poll Research.

Almost eight out of 10 believe the loss of suitable floral resources was important (79 per cent). More than six out of 10 also cited other threats as important: Habitat loss ? 68 per cent; disease ? 67 per cent; climate change ? 66 per cent; and modern intensive agriculture ? 65 per cent. Friends of the Earth believes that all these threats to bees are very important and are cause for urgent action by all concerned.

In total, 68 per cent of all Canadians surveyed said that they were concerned or very concerned, compared to only 11 per cent not or not at all concerned, while 20 per cent had a neutral opinion (neither concerned nor unconcerned) and two per cent were unsure.

Total concern was highest in Quebec (76 per cent) and B.C. (75 per cent), followed by Ontario (66 per cent), and Manitoba and Saskatchewan (65 per cent). Concern was lowest in Alberta (60 per cent) and the Maritimes (59 per cent).

'We are impressed with the depth of concern for bees from Canadians across all ages and backgrounds and, that people in urban and rural settings share the same levels of concern for bees,' Friends of the Earth Canada CEO Beatrice Olivastri said. 'But, we do need to help Canadians better understand the importance of wild, native bees.'

Almost seven out of 10 Canadians don't know that the pollinating role of wild, native bees cannot be replaced by honey bees.

Despite high public concern, Environment Canada has not acted to protect six wild, native species recommended for protection by the scientists working as the Committee on the Status of Endangered Wildlife in Canada (COSEWIC).

'In fact, our poll demonstrates more than enough public concern and support for the federal government to act comprehensively to protect all wild, native pollinators,' Olivastri said. 'We need to invest in science, policy and practical measures to protect Canada's over 855 species of wild, native bees from pesticides, habitat loss and other big threats.'

Other countries like the United States and the United Kingdom have national pollinator policies designed to protect bees. Canada does not.

Friends of the Earth Canada (www.foecanada.org) is the Canadian member of Friends of the Earth

International, the world's largest grassroots environmental network campaigning on today's most urgent environmental and social issues.