

Media Release

For Immediate Release: Issued by the Secretariat of the
Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES)

Ref: PA/16/03

Promote Pollinators to Protect People: Food, Jobs and Health All at Risk

Bonn (IPBES News) – A growing number of pollinator species worldwide are being driven towards extinction by a range of pressures – many of them human-made. Eleven experts from around the world have advised that, without urgent action, this threatens the livelihood of millions and places hundreds of billions of dollars of food production at risk. The loss of pollinator-dependent crops could also lead to high levels of vitamin A deficiency, which could result in a substantial rise in the global rate of preventable diseases, such as heart disease, potentially resulting in 1.4 million additional deaths per year and approximately 29 million lost years of healthy life.

Published online on Monday in *Nature*, the review paper ‘Safeguarding Pollinators and Their Values to Human Well-Being’, summarizes key scientific evidence underpinning the landmark *Assessment on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production*, issued earlier this year by the Intergovernmental Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES).

“Pollinators are vital contributors to world food production and nutrition,” said Professor Simon Potts, Lead Author of the *Nature* review, and Co-Chair of the IPBES Assessment. “Their health is directly linked to our own well-being. Without pollinators, many of us would no longer be able to enjoy coffee, chocolate and apples – let alone many other foods that are so important to our daily lives. Yet global knowledge and actions have not kept pace with the threats to pollinators and pollination services”.

Highlighting the importance of the review, Dr. Anne Larigauderie, the Executive Secretary of IPBES, said: “The IPBES Assessment was the first of its kind - a critical evaluation by 77 international experts, drawing on many thousands of the best scientific studies available, as well as indigenous and local knowledge systems, to present a coherent picture of what we know and what we don’t about pollination around the world. We welcome the *Nature* article, which builds on the IPBES Assessment, suggesting Government options to protect and promote pollinators”.

“Protecting pollinators is an urgent challenge for policymakers, farmers and the wider public”, added Potts. “With so many studies, anecdotal evidence and opinions on the causes of bee declines and how to respond, it has been almost impossible for decision-makers to know what their best options would be. IPBES has critically evaluated the available evidence – separating facts from speculation – and by doing so has identified policies and practices that are genuinely effective in safeguarding pollinators.”

This groundbreaking effort to better understand and manage a critical element of the global ecosystem will also be a central theme in Mexico next month, when leaders meet for the thirteenth Conference of the Parties (COP13) to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.

Note to Editors:

The authors of the *Nature* review (with the location of their respective institutions) are: Simon Potts (UK), Vera Imperatriz-Fonseca (Brazil), Hien T. Ngo (Germany), Marcelo A. Aizen (Argentina), Jacobus C. Biesmeijer (Netherlands), Thomas D. Breeze (UK), Lynn V. Dicks (UK), Lucas A. Garibaldi (Argentina), Rosemary Hill (Australia), Josef Settele (Germany), Adam J. Vanbergen (UK).

IPBES is an independent intergovernmental body, established by member States in 2012. It provides policymakers with objective scientific assessments about the state of knowledge regarding the planet's biodiversity, ecosystems and the benefits they provide to people, as well as the tools and methods to protect and sustainably use these vital natural assets. To some extent IPBES does for biodiversity what the IPCC does for climate change.

The abstract of the *Nature* review may be accessed at <https://goo.gl/oh0p0g>

To access the full Report and the Summary for Policymakers of the IPBES *Assessment on Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production*, go to <https://goo.gl/5GTK7U>

ENQUIRIES & INTERVIEWS:

Rob Spaul - IPBES Head of Communications
media@ipbes.net
+49 174 356 6551
www.ipbes.net

Follow Us:

Twitter: @IPBES
www.facebook.com/ipbes
youtube.com/ipbeschanel