



***** NEWS RELEASE *****

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

29 April, 2019

**“Honey Bees and Bumble Bees:
Beekeeping Association Promotes Bumble Bee Watch Monitoring Program”**

FLAT ROCK, NL: The Newfoundland and Labrador Beekeeping Association (NLBKA) has joined a pan-North America collaboration to track and conserve the continent’s bumble bees. Developed by the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation and other partners, it’s a citizen science, interactive, on-line website and data base called “*Bumble Bee Watch*” — <https://www.bumblebeewatch.org/>

Association president, Catherine Dempsey, said “Our Association’s mandate includes the protection of our native pollinators because we recognize that honey bees and other pollinators share the same flowers and other parts of the provincial ecosystems. Our province has about 80 native bees of which about 12 are bumble bees. We know very little about how they are distributed across the province or their numbers. It’s almost impossible to get funding from governments or academic bodies to do baseline research to inventory native pollinators. That’s why this citizen-science project is so important. It allows us to advance our knowledge of at least some of our native bees, bumble bees in particular.”

Dempsey continued, “Along with honey bees, bumble bees and other native pollinators pollinate numerous crops, garden flowers, wild flowers, and deciduous trees. Without them, we wouldn’t have almonds, alfalfa, apples, blueberries, canola, carrots, cranberries, pumpkins, squash, strawberries, watermelons, and many other crops. Insect pollinators in addition to birds and bats affect 35 percent of the world’s crop production, increasing the output of 87 of the leading food crops worldwide.”

“There’s no doubt that insect pollinators are vital to the world’s food supply,” said Dempsey. “However, many such pollinators are in serious decline in North America, Europe and elsewhere, for reasons that are not fully understood. Likely culprits include climate change, habitat loss, the spread of exotic pathogens and pests, and insecticides.”

“Here in Newfoundland and Labrador we have no baseline data against which to monitor trends in pollinator abundance. *Bumble Bee Watch* will help us build a monitoring data base, help researchers determine the status and conservation needs of bumble bees, and

locate rare or endangered populations of them,” said Dempsey. “This is especially important as we ‘grow forward’ in the development of agriculture in the province, particularly in sectors where crops are dependent on pollinators. Farmers dependent upon pollination of their crops may benefit from knowing more about the bumble bee populations in their areas.”

Bumble Bee Watch allows individuals to:

- upload photos of bumble bees to start a virtual, on-line bumble bee collection;
- identify the bumble bees in their photos and have their identifications verified by experts;
- learn about bumble bees, their ecology, and ongoing conservation efforts; and
- connect with other citizen scientists.

Local entomologist, Dr. Barry Hicks, Barry.Hicks@cna.nl.ca, has volunteered to be the regional expert to identify citizen-science bumble bee sightings. He is also in the process of setting up a network of native bee collection sites across the province with the view to accurate identification and long-term monitoring. Information from this more systematic research will be entered into *Bumble Bee Watch*.

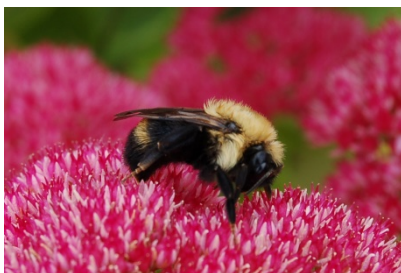
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FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Catherine Dempsey, 709-437-5155

NLBKA Website - <http://www.nlbeekeeping.ca/>

(three pictures included)



Bombus fernaldae - Barry Hicks



Bombus ternarius - Leah Madore



Bombus ternarius in pollen - Barry Hicks