

Environmental education and Raising awareness about pollinators and beneficial insects

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Polyommatus icarus
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Background:

Insects support many functions and services essential to the life of humans, animals and ecosystems. Climate change, degradation and fragmentation of natural habitats, urbanization, agricultural intensification with extensive use of pesticides negatively affect insect biodiversity globally and Cyprus is no exception to the rule. Cyprus is considered a biodiversity “hotspot” rich in insect biodiversity and endemism. The island host also a huge number of insect species, including many endemics; 369 species of wild bees have been recorded, with 21 of them are endemic (Varnava, 2020). Through actively engaging young children and other members of the public in pollinator recording and story telling we aim to improve knowledge and help the conservation of insect pollinators and other beneficial species.

Aim:

to fill the gap in lack of education about the beneficial insects and pollinators. Also to study the impacts of urbanization and roadside verges on pollinators and create a database.

Objectives:

- 1) Fill knowledge gaps regarding beneficial insects,
- 2) record the impacts of urbanization and roadside verges on pollinators,
- 3) Create a database of plant-pollinator

Methods

- 1) Promote environmental literacy through educational tools and the use of narrative to children of young age.
- 2) Undertake FIT Counts on road verges of rural and urban areas.
- 3) Run citizen science activities using iNaturalist and FIT Counts.

Results:

To date 3 children's stories have been produced on the topic of beneficial insects and they will be available in Greek and English and a snake and ladder game focusing on pollinators in on the way.

589 FIT Counts have been undertaken and 2 events with citizen science activities

Future work:

1. We will analyze the data from the results of the FIT Count application and creation of statistical data on the pollinators and beneficial insects of Cyprus.
2. We will visit Primary schools: the younger children will be told fairy tales and the older children will be presented with pollinators and beneficial insects.
3. Extracting results from the answers to the questionnaires that the children will give.

References

The wild bees (Hymenoptera, Apoidea) of the island of Cyprus, Zookeys, 2020; 924: 1–114. Androulla I. Varnava,¹ Stuart P.M. Roberts,² Denis Michez,³ John S. Ascher,⁴ Theodora Petanidou,⁵ Stavroula Dimitriou,⁵ Jelle Devalez,⁵ Marilena Pittara,¹ and Menelaos C. Stavrinides

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Haplomalachius flabellatus
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