



Western Honey Bee

Apis mellifera

Order	Hymenoptera
Family	Apidae
Genus	<i>Apis</i>
Species	<i>mellifera</i>

Geographic Range

Native to the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa, in the early 1600s they were introduced to North America

Habitat

Forest or fields where they can find flower nectar and honey

Niche

Terrestrial, herbivore, pollinator

Wild Diet

They love of flower nectar and honey

Life Span

122 - 152 days

Appearance

Bright color pattern, they have compound eyes

Adaptations

They create elaborate nests called hives containing up to 20,000 individuals during the summer months. They work together in a highly structured social order. Each bee belongs to one of three specialized groups called castes. The different castes are: queens, drones, and workers.

Fun Facts

Honey is a thick liquid produced by certain types of bees from the nectar of flowers. Honey bees refine and concentrate nectar to make honey. Honey bees are not aggressive by nature, and will not sting unless protecting their hive from an intruder or are excessively provoked.

At the Zoo

Honey bees can be found in the Exploration Zone (formerly known as the Children Zoo) and in Greene's Conservation Corner.

Comparison

Although bees and wasps belong to the same order of insect, Hymenoptera, they have many physical and behavioral differences. A physical difference includes bees having a rounder body with more hair giving them a fuzzy appearance and wasps having a slimmer body with less hair. As we know, bees are pollinators and are herbivores. Wasps are also pollinators, but they are carnivores preying on other insects. Bees also tend to be more social living in a group, while wasps vary species to species either being social or solitary. These are a couple of differences between bees and wasps.

Status and Conservation

Least concern, not endangered

Threats

Habitat loss, malnutrition, pollution (pesticides, etc.), parasites

Bibliography

<http://www.sfzoo.org/animals/invertebrates/bees.htm>, IUCN Red List,

<http://easyscienceforkids.com/difference-between-wasps-and-bees/>,

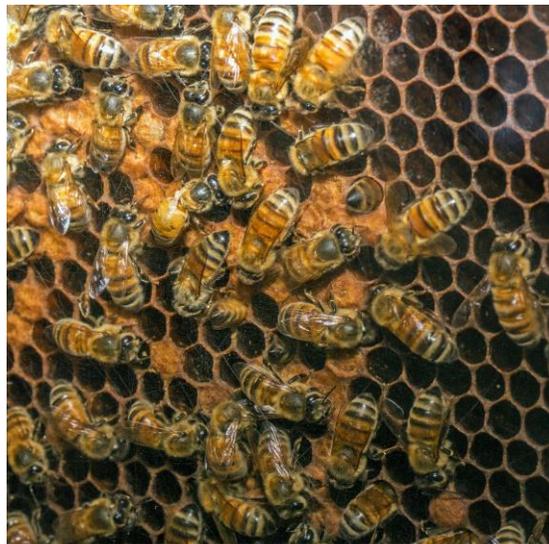


Photo by Marianne Hale

