Insect Pollinators Initiative

The Insect Pollinators Initiative (IPI) of the United Kingdom funds research into the causes and consequences of changes to insect pollinator populations and communities; and the findings will inform efforts to do something about it. Nine projects were funded running from early 2011 to 2014. The IPI is jointly funded by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC), the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), the Natural Environment Research Council, the Scottish Government and the Wellcome Trust, under the auspices of the Living With Environmental Change programme. The funders came together because innovative research was urgently needed to provide a solid evidence base with which to inform new policies and approaches to reduce threats to pollinator insects.

The IPI has assembled top UK and international researchers from a range of disciplines integrating the latest techniques, such as those of genetic sequencing, and epidemiological and ecological modelling, with the skills and expertise of the pollinator research community. These research teams are using multidisciplinary and systems-based research approaches to further our understanding of the causes and consequences of changes to pollinator populations and communities. These IPI funded researchers have engaged from the outset with policymakers, NGOs, farmers, growers and other businesses in the agri-food industry who have an interest in insect pollinators. By establishing a strong network of people the IPI aims to ensure that the outcomes of the research can be effectively applied to addressing the various pressures on pollinators.

While there is still some way to go for the majority of the projects, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce some of the advances in understanding insect pollinators that have been made and the approaches being used in the research in a special supplement starting on page 21. If you want to keep up to date with the research of the IPI please visit us at: http://www.insectpollinatorsinitiative.net

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The Tongue and Licking Cycle
Find out how bees get at all that lovely nectar in our anatomy article on page 5.

Apimonia 2013
The 43rd International Apicultural Congress was held in Kiev this year. Read what was on offer on page 8 and perhaps visit in 2015.

Uganda Honey Trade Project
Bees for Development are working to expand a small cooperative of Ugandan bee farmers, see page 17.