

WILLINGNESS OF RURAL AND URBAN CITIZENS TO UNDERTAKE POLLINATOR CONSERVATION ACTIONS ACROSS THREE CONTRASTING EUROPEAN COUNTRIES

Costanza Geppert, Cristiano Franceschinis, Thijs P.M. Fijen, David Kleijn, Jeroen Scheper, Ingolf Steffan-Dewenter, Mara Thiene, Lorenzo Marini

Background

Over the last few years, interest in the conservation of insect pollinators has grown due to major concerns about their decline. However, a key piece of missing information for implementing conservation actions is an understanding of what motivates people to protect pollinators.

Objective

We investigated what drives people's willingness (or reluctance) to engage in pollinator conservation across Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands. Using an online questionnaire, we surveyed 4,541 citizens through stratified sampling, ensuring a diverse mix of age, gender, nationality, and urban–rural residence. This is the first study on this topic with such a large and structured sample.



Results

-  People across Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands shared similar motivations to protect pollinators, regardless of urban or rural residence.
-  Moral obligation, shared responsibility, and awareness of pollinators' ecological importance were key drivers of conservation behavior.
-  Social support and belief in the effectiveness of personal actions further encouraged engagement.
-  Individuals active in outdoor nature activities (e.g. hiking, gardening) were more likely to support pollinators.
-  Planting nectar- and pollen-rich flowers was the most popular conservation action, while participation in monitoring programs was the least.

Sources

Geppert, C., Franceschinis, C., Fijen, T. P., Kleijn, D., Scheper, J., Steffan-Dewenter, I., ... & Marini, L. (2024). Willingness of rural and urban citizens to undertake pollinator conservation actions across three contrasting European countries. *People and Nature*, 6(4), 1502-1511. <https://doi.org/10.1002/pan3.10656>.

Key messages

-  Raising awareness about pollinators' ecological importance and promoting nature-based experiences that build emotional connection and appreciation are key strategies for encouraging public support.
-  These approaches are promising and broadly applicable, even in countries with differing socio-cultural and economic backgrounds.

