

Montana Bumble Bee Atlas - A Collaborative Effort to Conserve Bumble Bees Through Community Scientist Observations (Oral & Poster Presentation)

Michelle Toshack*, The Xerces Society, Livingston, MT
Rich Hatfield, The Xerces Society, Portland, OR

*Indicates Presenter

**Indicates Student Presentation

The Montana Bumble Bee Atlas mobilizes hundreds of community scientists to help track and conserve the state's bumble bees. In its inaugural field season in 2024, participants submitted 2,412 observations, documenting 21 species across diverse landscapes. This effort is part of a broader initiative, with Bumble Bee Atlases currently active in 20 states. Each regional or statewide Atlas generates data on bumble bee distribution, phenology, and habitat associations. Participants are trained through workshops that provide foundational knowledge on bumble bee ecology, conservation strategies, and standardized sampling protocols. By engaging volunteers and addressing data gaps, the Atlas can supplement data in areas where recent survey effort is lacking. The standardized methodology ensures consistent data collection on habitat characteristics, land management, and non-detection, providing information for status assessments and conservation decision-making. The data can also inform best management practices, guide conservation practitioners and policy makers, and foster public awareness of pollinator conservation. This presentation will highlight the project's inception, design, and outcomes to date, while providing information on the upcoming field season.