

From Tim Tetzlaff, Director of Conservation and Communications

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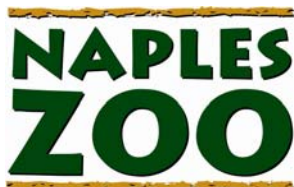
Learn about the Birds and the Bees during National Pollinator Week at Naples Zoo

Naples, FL – Whether you prefer chocolate or vanilla, you have a pollinator to thank. In fact, one out of every three bites of food we take comes to us courtesy of pollinating species like birds, bees, bats, and butterflies. We receive billions of dollars of economic and ecological benefit from pollinators, but the nation’s pollinators and thus all of us are facing troubling times. To raise awareness, the country will celebrate National Pollinator Week for the second consecutive year. Proclaimed by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture and a unanimous vote of the U.S. Senate, Florida Governor Charlie Crist also declared June 22-28, 2008 Pollinator Week in the State of Florida. All week long at Naples Zoo, guests can learn how they can help pollinators with University of Florida Master Gardeners.

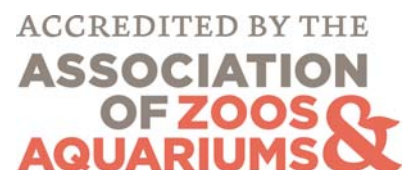
Many of our fruits, vegetables, nuts, and numerous other food products rely on pollinators. Pollination occurs when pollen grains are moved between two flowers of the same species by wind or animals. The National Academy of Sciences has reported that there is direct evidence of the decline of some pollinator species in North America. And, recently, Colony Collapse Disorder of domesticated bees has alarmed the agricultural industry in Florida and across the country. An Apiary Inspectors of America survey shows a 34% loss rate over the 07 to 08 winter season worsening from 23% the season before.

Among the country’s bats, another mysterious issue known as White-nose Syndrome has killed at least tens of thousands and possibly hundreds of thousands of hibernating bats in the northeastern United States during the past two winters. Mortality rates over 90 percent have been reported in some hibernation caves. Because a nursing mother bat can eat as much as her own weight in insects in a single night including many of the nation’s leading crop pests, this could have a profound agricultural impact since some nursery colonies include millions of bats.

“These are challenging issues,” explains Naples Zoo’s Director of Conservation and Communications Tim Tetzlaff, “but the good news is that all of us can help these important species right in our own backyard.” The purpose of Pollinator Week is to teach pollinator-friendly practices and raise public awareness of the importance of birds, bees, bats, beetles, butterflies, and moths that are needed to produce about 80 percent of our flowering plants. Along with the various events planned across the nation, Naples Zoo is joining in by highlighting the role of pollinators



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during its Tropical Plant Trek. This daily botanical tour is guided by Master Gardeners from the Collier County Extension of the University of Florida's Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences.

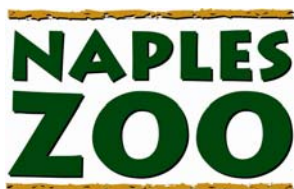
As part of the tour, guests will explore the Zoo's Backyard Wildlife Habitat, a model garden that provides food and other benefits to pollinators. Certified by the National Wildlife Federation, the site illustrates how individuals can help make their own yards attractive to birds, butterflies, and other important pollinators. A display coordinated by Mike Malloy of www.naplesbutterfly.com allows visitors to get an up close look at living butterflies as they go through their growth stages. Guests can also pick up a free list of plant species which indicates how they help wildlife as well as pick up information about creating their own certified habitat. "For those who want to start right away," Tetzlaff says, "they can purchase native plants right here for their own backyard. And to help our birds, they can enjoy a cup of shade-grown coffee at the SUBWAY restaurant at the Zoo or purchase the beans in the gift shop." Shaded coffee plantations provide homes for numerous bird species.

From the nation's capitol, the Pollinator Partnership is launching a call-to-action to plant for pollinators. Featured this National Pollinator Week is the roll-out of a series of 35 eco-regional guides that, for the first time, match people, place, plant and pollinator by personal zip code. Called "Selecting Plants for Pollinators," the planting guides are being funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the C.S. Fund, the Plant Conservation Alliance, the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Bureau of Land Management. They will be available as a free download from www.pollinator.org starting on June 22.

Naples Zoo is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization cooperating in conservation programs both in and outside the wild for endangered species. Daily presentations include Alligator Bay Feeding, Meet the Keeper Series, along with two premiere presentations: Planet Predator and Serpents: Fangs & Fiction. Both of these feature shows take place in the Safari Canyon Theater where guests see live animals along with exciting video footage. For those looking for more on the historic botanical garden, the Tropical Plant Trek offers guests a short tour led by University of Florida Master Gardeners. And one of the zoo's most popular activities is the Primate Expedition Cruise where guests embark on a guided cruise through islands inhabited by monkeys, lemurs, and apes. The all day pay-one-price ticket includes admission to both the nationally accredited zoo and historic garden along with all shows, tours, exhibits, and the boat ride. (\$18.75 adults age 13+/ \$10.50 children 3 to 12, under 3 free. Children under the age of 16 must be accompanied by an adult at least 18 years of age). **Annual memberships and discount tickets are also available online at www.napleszoo.org.** Naples Zoo welcomes guests daily from 9:30 to 5:30 with the last ticket sold at 4:30 and is located at 1590 Goodlette-Frank Road across from the Coastland Center mall in the heart of Naples. To learn more, click www.napleszoo.org or call (239) 262-5409.

Print Quality Image of the Zoo's Backyard Wildlife Habitat and pollinators available for immediate download at www.napleszoo.org/press

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