

RMBL Scientists Contribute to Understanding of Global Food Supply

RMBL scientists were co-authors of a major international assessment on pollination and the global food supply ([Thematic Assessment of Pollinators, Pollination and Food Production](#)) that was released Friday, Feb. 26th, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia and which received broad media coverage, including the NY Times. Three current RMBL scientists (Dr. David Inouye, and University of Maryland; Dr. Berry Brosi, Emory University, and Dr. Robert Paxton, Martin Luther Univ., Germany) and one past scientist (Dr. Taylor Ricketts, Univ. of Vermont) were part of an 80 member Pollination Assessment Expert Group that included 7 US members.

The report notes that 75% of the world's food crops depend in part on pollinators, valuing global crops that depend in part or whole on animal pollination at hundreds of billions of dollars. Important to the valley, almost 90% of wildflowers depend upon pollinators.

The intent of the report is not to advocate for specific policies, but rather to provide policy-makers an overview of our best understanding of the science and status of pollinators. It also identifies options for the maintenance of global food supplies through pollinator management. Options for maintaining pollination services include maintaining a diversity of pollinator habitats and improvement management of commercial bees to minimize the spread of pathogens. According to Dr. Brosi, "Reversing pollinator declines is critically important for our agricultural systems, which in turn has massive implications for our economy and quality of life. Given RMBL's role as a global center of pollination research, it isn't surprising that many of the studies that are cited in the report were carried out at RMBL."

RMBL has long been a leading research institution for the study of pollination, attracting one of the largest collections of pollination biologists in part because the introduced honeybees and their associated pathogens have largely been absent from Gunnison County. "Much of the important field research in pollination biology has been based at RMBL over the past five decades", said Dr. Inouye.

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Dr. Berry Brosi conducting field research above Gothic. Credit: Karen Levy.



Dr. David Inouye observing pollinators at aspen sunflowers.